

57TH SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (STSC)

SOUTH AFRICA

COMMENTS AGENDA ITEM 11

SPACE WEATHER.

Delivered by Ms Fikiswa Majola

Madam Chair,

South Africa continues to monitor space weather effects, and to raise awareness of space weather nationally and regionally, for the benefit of our nation and continent and in contribution to the improved global understanding of the space environment. In order to establish capability to predict and forecast the regional impact of space weather over the African region, South Africa is undertaking various research and application development projects in partnership with industry and other global space weather centres.

Madam Chair,

The South African National Space Agency (SANSA) is working with the aviation and power sectors within South Africa to establish a local capability for the interpretation, forecasting and prediction of the regional impacts of space weather events. South Africa is proud to have SANSA designated as a regional center for the provision of space weather information for international air navigation as decided by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in November 2018. SANSA has been working with the other four designated centers to establish protocols and procedures in space weather information provision as per the ICAO regulations, and was part of the coordination committee that led to the issuing of the first advisories to aviation in November 2019.

Madam Chair,

South Africa has embarked on a three-year plan to grow its capability in space weather operations and research, and with national government and industry support, plans to

launch a full 24/7 operational space weather center in 2022. The ICAO designation, coupled with SANSAs recognition as one of 19 global Regional Warning Centers for Space Weather under the International Space Environment Service, has provided SANSAs with international credibility that will assist in driving this initiative forward. South Africa appreciates the support and confidence shown by the international space community in our capability with regards to space weather information provision.

Madam Chair,

South Africa recognizes the importance of developing capabilities, strategies and action plans around space weather in order to protect the technological systems we depend on for economic vitality and national security. In this regard, South Africa continues to work with international partners to improve the understanding of space weather and to determine the economic benefits and impacts that arise from space weather events.

Furthermore, South Africa values SANSAs global partnerships which have assisted to develop a national capability within a reasonably short space of time. Through these global partnerships, South Africa participates in significant international projects related to space weather operations and research. For example, SANSAs will again partner with the German Aerospace Centre and the University of Huntsville in the USA in 2020 to ensure that South African students learn about the field of space weather through international camp exposure.

Madam Chair,

In closing we are proud to report that SANSAs operates the only Space Weather Regional Warning Centre in Africa and together with our African partners we will be ensuring that we contribute towards the global challenge that arises from space weather events.

Thank you