



**STATEMENT BY THE SQUARE KILOMETRE ARRAY OBSERVATORY**

The 60<sup>th</sup> session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the United Nations  
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

**AGENDA ITEM 3:** General Exchange of Views

**Read by:** Theunis Kotze (SKAO legal Manager)

**Date ... February 2023**

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Chair,

On behalf of the Square Kilometre Array Observatory (the SKAO), I am pleased to address the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC) of UN COPUOS.

We wish to assure you of our cooperation during the STSC60. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Mr. Niklas Hedman as the designated Acting Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and as Secretary to the STSC. In particular we wish to thank Mr Niklas Hedman and Ms Tanya Keusen of UNOOSA with their guidance in preparing the *Conference Room Paper on the Protection of Dark and Quiet Skies from Satellite Constellations Interference, presented by Chile, Spain, Slovakia, Bulgaria, IAU, ESO and SKAO* (Doc. A/AC.105/C.1/2023/CRP.18).

Chair,

The SKAO is the international intergovernmental organization created via our multilateral constitutive *Convention Establishing the Square Kilometre Array Observatory* as the legal entity to drive the Square Kilometre Array project (the ‘SKA’), envisaged as one of the largest scientific projects ever undertaken and under construction as a next generation astronomical research infrastructure for a global community. The collection of scientific data will take place via our instrument(s) situated in promulgated Radio-Quiet Zones (RQZs) in Australia and South Africa. The SKAO is headquartered in the United Kingdom. Our governing Council Members are Australia, China, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom; And our Council Observers are Canada, France, Germany, India, Japan South Korea, Spain, and Sweden. We also have cooperation agreements with scientific institutions in other countries. All our Members, Cooperating Partners, and Observers participate in UNCOUOS.

Chair,

We are proud to announce that on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022, the SKAO Construction Commencement Ceremonies were held simultaneously in our three sites, marking a new

era for the project: the formal start of construction of what will be the most advanced radio telescopes in the world. This momentous event followed eighteen months of preparatory activities to ensure that construction can begin with the consent and support of the indigenous peoples in regions where the SKA will be sited. In addition, the effort of the global SKA community since the approval of construction activities in June 2021 has enabled the award of more than 400 million Euros of contracts, covering major infrastructure and the antennas for both the SKA-Low and SKA-Mid telescopes.

Chair,

The SKAO will not only be the most sensitive instrument in the world in its frequency of operation but will also advance technology in the private sector. During its design and prototyping phase, it has already influenced the creation of several high-tech spin-offs developments: such as novel antennas for 4 and 5G technology in Italy, receivers for multi-satellite tracking in Australia, and advanced software and networking techniques which will impact society in a variety of ways.

Chair,

The SKAO applauds the recognition from the 65<sup>th</sup> session of UN COPUOS that astronomical observations for both optical and radio astronomy are an essential aspect of space activities and should be protected from interference. As a permanent observer in UN COPUOS, the SKAO stands fast to collaborate with the committee in matters related to the sustainable use of space and the protection of the dark and quiet skies.

Chair,

We look forward to the European Space Policy (ESPI) events, and would like to highlight in particular the 9 February ESPI evening event, *Dark and Quiet Skies: The Way Ahead* co-sponsored by the IAU, ESO and SKAO. This event will provide an excellent

opportunity for delegates to informally exchange thoughts about the importance of astronomy and the night sky.

Chair,

The SKAO intends to make statements on Agenda Item 12: *Long-term sustainability of outer space activities*, and Agenda Item 17: *General exchange of views on dark and quiet skies for science and society*.

Chair, distinguished delegates, thank you for your kind attention.