

STATEMENT BY THE AFRICAN GROUP

THE 60th SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

06-17 FEBRUARY

AGENDA ITEM 12: PROTECTION OF DARK AND QUIET SKIES

Delivered by Ambassador RS Molekane (South Africa)

On behalf of the Chair of the African Group

Thank you Chair, South Africa is delivering this statement on behalf of the African Group.

The Low Earth Orbit (LEO) is becoming increasingly congested with satellites and mega-constellations resulting in several challenges, amongst those, are the sun-reflected luminosity and radio-frequency emissions negatively impacting astronomical observations. The African Group is equally concerned about degrading interference on astronomical observations and is of the view that the matter merits urgent discussion.

In this regard, the Group affirms its support for the maintenance of the agenda item on Dark and Quiet Skies within the STSC as well as the establishment of an Expert Group to explore a comprehensive approach that assesses the impact of the mega-constellations on astronomical observations with the aim of implementing mitigating measures and ensuring the long-time sustainability of outer space.

The African Group is of the firm view that collaboration between all relevant stakeholders should be encouraged to ensure that the benefits of outer space and space-derived data continue to benefit all and prevent the deterioration and visibility of the night sky and enabling conditions for the exploitation of space, thus preserving outer space for future generations.

I thank you.