**STATEMENT BY THE SQUARE KILOMETRE ARRAY OBSERVATORY**

The 65th Session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

**AGENDA ITEM 5: General Exchange of Views**

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Check against delivery.

Chair and distinguished delegates,

Thank you for allowing me the floor. Chair, as this is the first time that I take the floor, allow me to congratulate you on your election and again to assure you of the SKAO's support during this session.

Chair,

The Square Kilometre Array Observatory is an intergovernmental organization headquartered in the United Kingdom and created by the entry-into-force on the 15th of January 2021 of our multilateral constitutive *Convention Establishing the Square Kilometre Array Observatory*. The Observatory Convention has been ratified by Australia, China, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. We currently have cooperation agreements with scientific institutions in four other countries, pending their accession to the Observatory Convention. All our Members, Cooperating Partners, and Observers, participate actively in COPUOS.

Chair,

The SKA Observatory will be a unique research infrastructure, driven by a global collaboration of member governments and scientists, to examine the most fundamental questions in science. However, radio astronomy instruments are extremely sensitive to artificial radio signals from terrestrial, aerial or space born transmitters. To avoid interference, radio astronomy relies on special spectrum bands protected by the Radiocommunication Sector of the ITU (ITU-R), which are of utmost importance for specific observations and calibration purposes. Radio observatories also locate their instruments in areas as remote as possible (ideally protected by national legislation as "radio quiet zones"), and significantly radio astronomy continuously advances radio receiver technology, increasing in resilience and flexibility, and software techniques to mitigate the effects of interference. The combination of these mitigations has allowed radio astronomy to make great advancements in our knowledge of the Universe. A few recent examples include obtaining the first two real images of a black hole by the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT), the most detailed observation of the centre of our galaxy in L-band by

the MeerKAT telescope in South Africa; and the discovery of a new kind of astronomical objects with an 18-minute period rotation by the Murchison Widefield Array (MWA) telescope in Western Australia.

Chair,

There is a need for coordinated dialogue between COPUOS Member States and relevant actors within their domains. Also, in this regard, we believe it may be time to consider whether orbital space should not be considered an additional ecosystem within the human environment of Earth, to permit protection from environmental treaties/legislation and enable a new framework of legal protection.

Chair,

We will give statements under Item 9: Space and sustainable Development, and Item 16: “Space 2030” Agenda.

I thank you, chair.