



**Statement by the International Astronomical Union
The 68th Session of COPUOS
Agenda item 4: General Exchange of Views**

Chair, distinguished Delegates,

The International Astronomical Union is committed to achieving a balance between the increasing population of satellites in Low Earth Orbit and the need to protect the science of astronomy and society in general from interference by satellite constellations.

I am pleased to report encouraging progress by the IAU Centre for the Protection of Dark and Quiet Sky (or CPS), which is fostering collaboration between the astronomical community at large and satellite companies for studying and implementing mitigating measures of the constellations' impact. The CPS has just been confirmed for five more years, and more Partners are expected to be joining US NOIRLab and the SKAO in sponsoring the activities.

The fast evolution of the situation, with over 700 new satellites launched since the STSC meeting, makes it important that all COPUOS Delegations are kept apprised of the challenges that the increasing number of objects in LEO is posing to the progress of science, and of the actions that Member States can take in the near term to enable more effective mitigation of impacts on astronomical observations. For this reason, the IAU has co-signed and fully supports Conference Room Paper XX presented by the Group of Friends on “Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society”.

The IAU is grateful for the leadership of the Permanent Missions of Chile and Spain in making the Group of Friends a collegial and productive alliance on this issue. The side event on Tuesday, July 1st, will be an excellent opportunity for all Delegations to learn more about the purpose and scope of the Group of Friends.

The IAU urges Member States to consider seriously the practical recommendations of the CRP. We also note the opportunity for astronomers, industry and policy makers to continue their interaction in the upcoming workshop co-sponsored by UNOOSA and the Square Kilometre Array Observatory, to be held here in the VIC on 9-11 December.

In addition, the IAU notes that there is no means of mitigating the potential harm to astronomy of obtrusive space advertising. It represents the ultimate light trespass because its purpose is to be visible as widely as possible on the surface of the Earth. The IAU urges COPUOS national delegations to consider a prohibition on this technology that creates the risk of unwanted messaging and disruption of the dark night sky.

The IAU notes that the Moon is a uniquely advantageous platform for facilities to observe astronomical phenomena in low-frequency radio, gravitational waves and the thermal infrared. The needs of astronomy coincide with those of lunar surface science to designate Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Other legitimate activities on the Moon, such as landings, exploration, and resource extraction, could interfere with sensitive observations by lofting dust, generating seismic noise, or broadcasting radio interference from noisy electronics. The IAU has therefore submitted CRP XX in partnership with COSPAR, the Moon Village Association and the International Academy of Astronautics. It highlights the need for developing an approach to reserve sites in advance for scientific use, internationally agreed to be consistent with the principles of non-appropriation and free access.

Thank you for your kind attention.