



STATEMENT BY THE SQUARE KILOMETRE ARRAY OBSERVATORY

The 63rd session of the Legal Subcommittee of the United Nations Committee on the
Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

AGENDA ITEM 4 : *General Exchange of Views*

Read by: Dr Theunis Kotzé (SKAO Head of Legal)

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Chair and distinguished delegates,

Thank you for allowing me the floor. On behalf of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) Observatory (SKAO), I am pleased to address the 63rd Session of the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS. We would like to express our gratitude to Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini, and the Secretariat, for arranging this meeting. Chair, I congratulate you on your election and assure you of our full cooperation during this session.

Chair,

The SKAO is a scientific international intergovernmental organisation created to drive a 50-year radio-astronomy project. All our members participate in COPUOS Main and Subcommittee meetings. Headquartered in the United Kingdom, the collection of our scientific data will take place via our instrument(s) situated in promulgated Radio-Quiet Zones (RQZs) in Australia and South Africa. Globally, there are sixteen countries that are part of SKAO's effort to build telescopes. Last month, in Western Australia's Murchison desert, the first of the 131,072 two-meter-tall, Christmas tree-shaped antennas were erected, which will make up the Low-frequency radio telescope. Across the Indian Ocean in South Africa, a similar milestone is imminent for the SKA-Mid frequency telescope, which will ultimately comprise 197 dishes. Components for the first SKA-Mid dishes have arrived on site in the Karoo and are being assembled. Our Director General stated:

“These telescopes are next-generation instruments, allowing us to test Einstein's theories, observe space and understand our place in the Universe in an unprecedented way.”

Construction will continue over the coming years, and we look forward to completion and the beginning of routine science operation and release of data to our global community in 2029.

Chair,

We would like to extend an invitation to delegations to participate in *the International Astronomical Union General Assembly* scheduled to be held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 6–15 August 2024. This important meeting will bring together the world’s astronomers to discuss the latest research and progress in the field, and SKAO will be prominent there. There will be a dedicated sub-meeting of *the Centre for the Protection of the Dark and Quiet Skies* and interested delegations are encouraged to participate.

Chair,

We will also give a statement under Agenda 13. *General exchange of views on the application of international law to small-satellite activities.*

I thank you, Chair.