



**Statement by the International Astronomical Union
The 61st Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS
Agenda item 4: General Exchange of Views**

Madame Chair, distinguished Delegates,

The International Astronomical Union wishes to congratulate you for your election to chair the Subcommittee as well as Mrs. Aarti Holla-Maini for her appointment as Director of UNOOSA. We are confident that under your leadership, the Office will pursue its fundamental mission constructively and efficiently.

The IAU is also confident that your demonstrated sensitivity about science and society will help us to achieve a fair compromise between the increasing population of satellites in Low Earth Orbit and the need to protect the science of astronomy and the society in general from the interference of satellite constellations.

Indeed, the latter continues to be the subject of major attention by the IAU, and I am pleased to report about 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 satellites companies for studying and implementing mitigating measures of the constellations' impact.

The results so far achieved are detailed in the Technical Presentation "Cooperation to protect Dark and Quiet Skies, outcomes of the IAU Symposium 385 - Astronomy and Satellite Constellations: pathways forward". The Symposium, organized by the Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, took place last October in the island of La Palma.

Even though the current results are encouraging, the fast evolution of the situation and the entry into operation of new constellations make 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 they should be provided the opportunity to adequately and fully express their positions on this complex matter.

For this reason, the IAU has co-signed and fully supports the Conference Room Paper presented by the Delegations of Chile, Spain, and other Delegations and Observers, which proposes to introduce a single-item in the agenda of the next STSC Sessions, with the scope to discuss the effects of constellations of satellites on astronomy and the night sky.

The IAU is conscious that the issues connected with the deployment of a large number of satellites in Low Earth Orbits are numerous and complex. The IAU welcomes with satisfaction the consensus that the SubCommittee has recently reached on the title of the Agenda Item “Dark and Quiet Sky, astronomy and large constellations: addressing emerging issues and challenges” and the duration of the Item, and it is looking forward to continuing its contribution in the discussion of this vital matter for science and society. The IAU is pleased that the wording “Dark and Quiet Sky” is explicitly and prominently included in the title. Dark and Quiet Sky has by now become an iconic wording and is implicitly referring to the protection of the sky that concerns both the science of astronomy and the cultural value of the night sky.

The IAU also praises the initiative by the Delegations of Chile and Spain to constitute the Group of Friends of the Dark and Quiet Sky for Science and Society. The Group, which admits delegates and experts from academia and the private sector, will meet in the STSC intersessional periods to promote global awareness about the impact on astronomy of the satellite constellations and review best practices and mitigation suggestions.

The side event co-organized by the Permanent Missions of Spain and Chile, with ESO, SKAO and the IAU CPS on Thursday February 1st, has been an excellent opportunity for all Delegations to learn more about the purpose and scope of the Group of Friends.

The IAU welcomes and endorses the Conference Room Paper presented by the distinguished Delegation of Romania which proposes the establishment of an Action Team on Lunar Activities Consultation and assures its active collaboration on the initiative.

Thank you for your kind attention