



STATEMENT BY THE SQUARE KILOMETRE ARRAY OBSERVATORY

The 61st session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the United Nations
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

**AGENDA ITEM 5: Space for sustainable development: technology and its
applications, including the United Nations Programme on Space Applications**

Read by: Federico di Vruno (SKAO Spectrum Manager)

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Chair,

On behalf of the Square Kilometre Array Observatory (the SKAO), an intergovernmental organisation tasked with constructing and operating two of the largest radio telescopes in the world, I am honoured to address the sixty first Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of UN COPUOS. We extend a warm welcome to Ms. Holla-Maini, and her team, and assure you, Chair, of our fullest cooperation during this session.

Esteemed Chair and Delegates,

I present our perspective on the profound relationship between Astronomy, as a form of space exploration, and sustainable development, with a focus on Education, Equality, Innovation, and Science. As the oldest and most accessible form of space exploration, astronomy plays a pivotal role in driving sustainable development. The SKAO stands as a testament to this relationship, emphasizing its commitment to advancing humanity's understanding of the cosmos while actively contributing to the betterment of local communities and society at large.

Chair,

Education is a cornerstone for progress, and SKAO actively contributes to global knowledge through initiatives such as the SKA Summer Schools in China, which have trained over seven hundred students since 2013, and the African SKA Human Capital Development Programme which has awarded more than 1000 grants to astronomy and engineering students. Education is not only a means of imparting knowledge but a powerful tool for promoting equality and inclusion.

Chair,

A scientific mega-facility such as the SKAO requires years of planning and development of new technology. In our 20-plus years we have seen four precursor telescopes, such as the MeerKAT telescope in South Africa, which serves as a beacon for economic and scientific growth. Beyond its scientific achievements, MeerKAT has catalysed significant economic investment in South Africa, creating a ripple effect of benefits at both the local

and national levels. With more than 8700 direct and indirect job opportunities and the equivalent to 9.1 million Euro in local suppliers.

Chair,

As a vast, international collaboration, SKAO celebrates diversity in all its forms. This commitment finds expression in the art-astronomy exhibition called “Shared Sky”, showcasing the cultural wisdom of Indigenous Australian and South African artists living near SKA telescope sites. Touring the world since 2014, Shared Sky has transcended borders, captivating the minds and hearts of over 50,000 people in seven countries. The exhibition reflects the richness of ancestral astronomy, developed across countless generations as these communities observed the night sky.

Chair,

SKAO's impact extends beyond scientific boundaries; it is a driving force for both scientific and economic development, particularly in areas where the telescopes are to be constructed and operated. The observatory serves as a catalyst for technological innovation, creating job opportunities, and fostering economic growth within these regions and worldwide.

In conclusion, the SKA Observatory stands as a beacon of exploration, sustainable development, and collaboration. As we unveil the mysteries of the cosmos with our unwavering commitment to education, equality, innovation, and scientific advancement.

Thank you for your attention