

**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Sixty-first session**

Vienna, 29 January–9 February 2024

Item 12 of the provisional agenda*

Future role and method of work of the Committee

Non-paper by the Chair of the Working Group of the Whole

1. The Committee at its sixty-sixth session requested the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to consider at its sixty-first session, in 2024, under the item entitled “Future role and method of work of the Committee”, the scope, duration and title of an agenda item related to dark and quiet skies and large constellations, with a view to recommending the item to the Committee, at its sixty-seventh session, for inclusion on the agenda of the Subcommittee.(A/78/20, para. 176)

2. The Subcommittee, at its sixty-first session, reconvened the Working Group of the Whole to consider the item on the future role and method. At the third meeting of the Working Group on 31 January 2024, the Chair of the Working Group has opened the floor to hear proposals with regard to the scope, duration and title of an agenda item related to dark and quiet skies and large constellations.

3. The Working Group heard four proposed titles for an agenda item, namely: (1) “Exchange of views on Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society”; (2) “Dark and Quiet Skies: Exchange of views on astronomy and large constellations”; (3) “Dark and Quiet Skies: impacts of space objects on astronomy”; and (4) “Addressing emerging issues on large constellations including preserving Dark and Quiet Skies”. There was no consensus in the Working Group on the title.

4. The Working Group heard different proposals with regard to the duration of the agenda item. Those proposals ranged from the item being on the agenda for three years, to the item being a regular item on the agenda. There was no consensus on the duration of the item.

5. With the view of advancing negotiations on this topic, the Chair puts forward the following proposal for consideration by the Working Group:

Title: “Exchange of views on dark and quiet skies and large constellations”.

Duration: The agenda item is to be included as a single item/issue for discussion in the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in 2025, 2026, and 2027. The Subcommittee is to consider, at its session in 2027, if the item is to (a) remain on its agenda as a regular item, or (b) continue to be a single item/issue for discussion (and for which period), or (c) should no longer be discussed by the Subcommittee; and if any further amendments to the title be necessary.

Scope [option 1] The scope of the agenda item is closely linked to its title / determined by what delegations consider relevant to this item.

Scope [option 2] The scope of the agenda item includes the exchange of views on impact of the large satellite constellations on astronomy and on the visibility of the night sky, as well as on challenges posed to the progress of science by the number of objects, which emit radio signals and reflect sunlight into astronomical telescopes or crossed their field of view, in the LEO shell, given that that number was growing due to an ever-increasing number of stakeholders, including private entities, launching spacecraft and large constellations into orbit. The agenda item could provide a

* [A/AC.105/C.1/L.412](#).



platform to exchange views, inter alia, on efforts to balance the provision of satellite services, including large constellations, with astronomical observation activities, fostering dialogue among stakeholders, the development of regulations and legal frameworks, the establishment of dark sky conservation areas and radio quiet zones, research on technologies to mitigate light pollution, the monitoring of the impact of satellite constellations on astronomy, and other related matters.

6. Rationale behind the draft proposed title: formulation used in the report of the Committee (A/78/20, para.176):

176. The Committee requested the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to consider at its sixty-first session, in 2024, under the item entitled “Future role and method of work of the Committee”, the scope, duration and title of an agenda item related to **dark and quiet skies and large constellations**, with a view to recommending the item to the Committee, at its sixty-seventh session, for inclusion on the agenda of the Subcommittee.

7. The text used in the scope for the agenda item is based on the agreed language from the report of the Committee, A/78/20, paras.164–165:

164. The Committee noted that because an ever-increasing number of stakeholders, including private entities, were launching spacecraft into orbit, concerns had been raised about spacecraft that emitted radio signals and reflected sunlight into astronomical telescopes or crossed their field of view, thereby degrading astronomical observations. Thus, the importance of implementing measures to mitigate factors that could hinder scientific discoveries was highlighted.

165. The Committee took note of various national and international efforts to balance the provision of satellite services with astronomical observation activities, including the hosting of events to foster dialogue among stakeholders, the development of regulations and legal frameworks, the establishment of dark sky conservation areas and radio quiet zones, research on technologies to mitigate light pollution and the monitoring of the impact of satellite constellations on astronomy.