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Statement Item 15: Dark and Quiet Skies

Honourable Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

It is a privilege for the Italian delegation to address you today on the agenda item “Dark and Quiet Skies”—a subject of growing importance that we are pleased to see on the agenda of Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of UNCOPUOS. We gather at a pivotal moment when the challenges of preserving our natural nightscapes converge with the rapid expansion of space activities and technological advancements. Italy is deeply committed to leading initiatives that safeguard the dark and quiet skies. The sky is an indispensable resource for astronomy, astrophysics, and environmental studies, and they are central to our shared human heritage. Yet, they are under threat. The twin challenges of increasing light pollution on Earth and the proliferation of artificial objects in space that impact astronomical observations demand our urgent attention and coordinated international action.

Italy has embraced a multifaceted approach to this challenge. At national level, scientific institutions such as the National Institute for Astrophysics (INAF) and regional authorities, has taken proactive measures to mitigate light pollution and protect our dark and quiet skies. In recent years, Italy has implemented severe lighting regulations in areas surrounding our renowned astronomical observatories and designated dark-sky parks. These measures not only aim at reducing energy consumption and environmental degradation but also serve to preserve the integrity of our observational infrastructure, which is critical for both cutting-edge research and the training of our next generation of scientists. Organizations such as the Unione Astrofili Italiani and the International Dark-Sky Association also promote initiatives to raise public awareness about the importance of preserving the night sky and reducing light pollution.

Internationally, Italy has been engaged in bilateral and multilateral dialogues with partner nations and international organizations, seeking to establish best practices, technical standards, and policy guidelines that balance the needs of space exploration with environmental stewardship. Italy has actively contributed to working groups under the auspices of both the International Astronomical Union and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, while participating in the Group of Friends on Dark and Quiet Skies. These collaborations aim to build consensus on mitigating the adverse effects of satellite constellations and ensuring that space activities remain sustainable and safe for all.

The inclusion of the “Dark and Quiet Skies” item on the STSC agenda marks a significant step forward. It provides an opportunity for the international community to acknowledge and address an issue that transcends national borders and sectors. In our view, preserving dark and quiet skies is integral to the broader framework of sustainable space practices. We advocate for an approach that is holistic and inclusive—one that involves governments, industry, academia, and civil society. By

integrating efforts to reduce terrestrial light pollution with strategies to manage and regulate space activities, we can develop a comprehensive regime that protects our night skies while fostering innovation in the space sector.

In closing, allow me to reiterate Italy's firm commitment to the sustainable and responsible use of space. We are dedicated to preserving our dark and quiet skies not only as a scientific resource but as a cultural and environmental legacy for future generations. By working collaboratively, we can ensure that the beauty of the night sky continues to inspire wonder, discovery, and progress for all of humanity.

Thank you.