

South African Delegation at the 50th Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on Peaceful Use of Outer Space (COPUOS) in Vienna, Austria

From left to right: Zama Katamzi (SANSA), Peter Martinez (SACSA), Mpho Baleni (SA Embassy Vienna), Angus September (DIRCO), Andiswa Mlisa (SACSA), Humbulani Mudau (DST), Lesetja Teffo (DIRCO), Itumeleng Mokoloi (DST) and Lutando Mkumatela (DIRCO)

South Africa has in this meeting the biggest delegation since its participation in COPUOS. The delegation is composed of participants from government departments and institutions working in the space arena in the country. The first week of the subcommittee meeting held plenary discussions on matters such as, Nuclear Power Sources, Space Weather, Space Debris, Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) and Near-Earth Objects (NEOs). South Africa made a presentation of space weather activities in the country under the agenda item on space weather.

In addition to participating in the plenary sessions, the delegation joined the four Expert Groups of the Working Group (WG) on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. The Chairperson of the South African Council for Space Affairs (SACSA), Peter Martinez, is the Chair of the WG. The Expert Groups are currently working on guidelines and recommendations for long-term sustainability of outer space activities. The size of the delegation ensured South Africa's participation in all Expert Groups.

The South African Ambassador to the permanent mission in Vienna, Austria, Xolani Mabhongo, gave the South African statement on Friday, 15 February, at the plenary under the agenda item on General Exchange of Views. The statement will be made available on the SACSA website under COPUOS. In the statement, the Ambassador highlighted South Africa's space activities, at international, regional and national level. It further made interventions on the work of COPUOS in the S&T subcommittee.

In the coming week of 18 February, the delegation will further participate in the proceedings and make interventions in the various agenda items.