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# Declaration on the Reduction of Adverse Environmental Impacts on Astronomy

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We the participants at the IAU/ICSU/UNESCO Exposition on Adverse Environmental Impacts of Astronomy *declare* that the night sky, with its beautiful stars and its message of our place in the Universe, is a precious treasure of all humanity, on which we rely for our knowledge and understanding of our origins and destiny, and that astronomy is one of the most fundamental, appreciated and accessible of sciences.

However, we find that the effects of the civilisation which nurtures our science is producing an environment which is having a desperately serious negative influence on astronomical science. The skies, which have been, and are, an inspiration to all humanity, are becoming obscured and even unknown to the younger generation. An essential element of our civilisation and culture is rapidly becoming lost, and this loss will affect *all* countries of the Earth.

We believe that this is a global problem to be addressed by intergovernmental organisations, and accordingly request

UNESCO and ICSU to use all means at their disposal to assist the science of astronomy; to preserve the finest astronomical observatory sites by the additional protection of designation as World Heritage Sites; to urge member states to afford legal protection to their major observatories in their efforts to preserve unpolluted observing conditions; to urge the space agencies and the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to agree to the stabilisation of levels of space debris and to seek feasible ways to remove that threat to astronomical observation; to urge all governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies whose activities may impact the astronomical environment to use their best endeavours to ensure that such impact is minimal and to pursue the investigation of potential international legal protection.

Paris, 2 July 1992