

South Africa moves closer to establishing world's largest radio telescope observatory



This week, South Africa moved closer to establishing the world's largest radio telescope observatory, the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) Observatory, as the national parliament ratified on Wednesday the convention for its creation, Xinhua reports.

The parliament's Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology approved the convention signed by officials in Rome this year to create the inter-governmental governing body for the SKA.

South Africa became a founding member of the SKA Observatory by signing the convention in March, along with six other countries, including China, Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Britain.

The convention needs to go through national parliaments to be ratified for the SKA Observatory to come into existence.

The adoption of the convention "will facilitate the biggest scientific collaboration the world has ever seen, and help attract foreign direct investment into South Africa," said Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee

Philly Mapulane.

The SKA, a collection of telescopes spread over long distances that will combine to unlock the universe's mysteries, will be constructed in South Africa and Australia, with later expansion planned for both countries as well as other African countries.

The project is envisaged to act as a catalyst for science, technology and engineering business opportunities, jobs and innovation, with the potential to put Africa on the map as a world Big Data and analytics hub, Mapulane said.

The SKA, about 50-100 times more sensitive than any other radio telescope on earth, is designed to probe the edges of the universe and help scientists answer fundamental questions in astronomy, physics and cosmology, including the nature of dark energy and dark matter.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/ciencias/204657-south-africa-moves-closer-to-establishing-worlds-largest-radio-telescope-observatory>



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