

Overview of observational results from the Superconducting Submillimeter-Wave Limb-Emission Sounder (SMILES)

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The Superconducting Submillimeter-Wave Limb-Emission Sounder (SMILES) was developed to be aboard the Japanese Experiment Module (JEM) on the International Space Station. It is a cooperative project of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT). The key concept of SMILES is its high-sensitivity measurement of minor species in the middle atmosphere by a receiver using superconductor-insulator-superconductor (SIS) mixers which are cooled to 4.5 K by a mechanical cryocooler. SMILES was successfully launched on September 11, 2009, and started atmospheric observations on October 12. Unfortunately, SMILES observations had been suspended since April 21, 2010 due to the failure of a critical component in the submillimeter local oscillator. Furthermore, the cooler stopped its operation due to the failure of the JEM thermal control system on June 5, 2010.

The mission objectives are as follows: i) To demonstrate a 4-K mechanical cooler and superconducting mixers in the environment of outer space for submillimeter limb-emission sounding in the frequency bands of 624.32-626.32 GHz and 649.12-650.32 GHz and ii) To measure atmospheric minor constituents in the middle atmosphere globally (O₃, HCl, ClO, HO₂, HOCl, BrO, O₃ isotopes, HNO₃, CH₃CN, etc.) in order to get a better understanding of factors and processes controlling the stratospheric ozone amounts and those related to climate change. Though future states of the ozone layer have been investigated using coupled chemistry-climate model, there are still considerable uncertainties in factors affecting ozone levels, especially the bromine budget and inorganic chlorine chemistry. The SMILES mission can contribute to the detailed halogen chemistry by providing useful constraints for these issues. In this presentation, we will give a brief description of the SMILES observations, and on the basis of the version 2.1 level 2 data which is released to the public this spring, we will present some results that demonstrate SMILES abilities to observe the atmospheric minor constituents in the middle atmosphere.

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