



Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting XXXV

HOBART 2012

ATCM XXXV COMMUNIQUE

The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting XXXV (ATCM) was held in Hobart, Australia, for the first time in an eight day format from 11-20 June 2012 in conjunction with the Committee for Environmental Protection XV. The ATCM is the premier international forum on Antarctica through which Antarctic Treaty Parties come together annually to discuss and decide on measures to realise their vision for Antarctica as a natural reserve devoted to peace and science. The outcomes of ATCM XXXV reinforce and advance this vision. This year marks the centenary of the Amundsen and Scott expeditions to the South Pole and, for the host country of Australia, the centenary of its first Antarctic expedition led by Douglas Mawson.

Over 250 representatives from the Antarctic Treaty Parties, experts and observers, attended. The Meeting welcomed Malaysia and Pakistan as Parties to the Antarctic Treaty, taking to 50 the number of Parties.

The Parties recalled that, while they were meeting, in Antarctica national science program personnel were working in the middle of winter. They also recalled the spirit of community in Antarctica and expressed their condolences at the tragic loss of life at the Brazilian station Comandante Ferraz.

The following outcomes were among the highlights of the Meeting.

The ATCM continued to focus on understanding and addressing implications of climate change for Antarctica, including by identifying areas of conservation importance on account of their resilience to climate change. Parties reaffirmed their commitment to undertake and promote scientific research in Antarctica, to enhance understanding of global climate change and its implications for our planet.

The Meeting agreed on a number of actions to ensure that tourism activities in Antarctica are conducted safely and in a manner that protects the environment. The Meeting adopted check-lists for assessing land-based expeditions and for supporting inspections of tourist activities ashore. The Parties adopted three further guidelines for sites visited by tourists and revised the existing guidelines for one site. The first comprehensive study on the environmental aspects and impacts of tourism in Antarctica was considered and will provide a basis for future management decisions.

The ATCM agreed guidelines on the planning of safe and environmentally responsible yacht expeditions in Antarctic waters. Parties confirmed their commitment to promote safety in those waters, given recent serious incidents involving vessels in the Antarctic Treaty area. Parties decided to focus on steps to further enhance search and rescue coordination by bringing together experts at a special session during ATCM XXXVI.



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Parties agreed to initiate discussion aimed at promoting broader Antarctic cooperation.

Parties also agreed to start discussion on issues relating to the exercise of jurisdiction in the Antarctic Treaty area.

Parties discussed ways to enhance their scientific cooperation in Antarctica. Parties also shared information on major research activities – including Russia's achievement in accessing Lake Vostok, the world's largest sub-glacial lake located almost four kilometres below the ice, and the United Kingdom's final plans to drill into sub-glacial Lake Ellsworth for scientific research.

Recognising that the introduction of non-native species is one of the biggest threats to Antarctic ecosystems, particularly in a warming climate, the ATCM welcomed groundbreaking scientific research on non-native species and biogeographic regions, which will enable Parties to better manage the risks of non-native species and support further development of the protected areas system in Antarctica.

The ATCM welcomed news regarding India's recently completed research station and the Republic of Korea's final plans to construct a new research station. These facilities will use state-of-the-art technology to minimise environmental impacts and will provide additional capacity for globally significant science.

The ATCM agreed to develop a manual by 2013 on practical approaches to dealing with the cleanup of sites of past activity arising from the era before the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (Madrid Protocol), such as waste disposal sites and abandoned facilities. The ATCM also agreed to work intersessionally on approaches to repair and remediation of sites that may be subject to environmental damage.

Parties conduct inspections of Antarctic facilities as a vital part of promoting compliance with rules established in the Antarctic Treaty system. Parties welcomed the report on joint inspections conducted by the United States and the Russian Federation since ATCM XXXIV.

The ATCM designated a new Antarctic Specially Protected Area at Blood Falls in the McMurdo Dry Valleys. This brings the number of protected areas across the continent to 72. Parties also agreed on improvements to the ongoing management of several existing specially protected areas and one specially managed area.

Parties shared progress on implementing, and reaffirmed their commitment to ratifying, Annex VI of the Madrid Protocol, covering Liability Arising from Environmental Emergencies. The ATCM continued to encourage Parties to the Antarctic Treaty that are not yet Parties to the Madrid Protocol to accede. The Madrid Protocol provides for comprehensive protection of the Antarctic environment, including by prohibiting mining and providing a framework to assess the



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environmental impacts of activities in the Antarctic Treaty area (the area south of 60 degrees South Latitude).

The Meeting agreed to complement its existing agenda by developing a Multi-Year Strategic Work Plan.

Consistent with the Parties' commitment to protect the Antarctic environment, host country arrangements for the ATCM included actions to reduce its environmental impact, such as paper and waste minimisation and carbon offsets.

Parties reaffirmed their commitment to continue to work together in these and other areas. The next ATCM will be hosted by Belgium from 20-29 May 2013.

Parties expressed their gratitude for the generosity of the Australian Government and their great appreciation for the excellent facilities provided for the meeting in the beautiful and historic city of Hobart. Parties also expressed their warmest thanks to the Government and people of Tasmania.

Hobart, 20 June 2012