



XXXIX ANTARCTIC TREATY  
CONSULTATIVE MEETING  
SANTIAGO - CHILE 2016  
25 YEARS PROTOCOL ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Agenda Item: ATCM 16  
Presented by: United Kingdom,  
Argentina,  
IAATO, ASOC  
Original: English  
Submitted: 20/04/2016

## The Future of Antarctica Forum



# The Future of Antarctica Forum

Information Paper submitted by the United Kingdom, Argentina, IAATO, and ASOC

## Summary

The first Future of Antarctica Forum, which involved the participation of individuals from a range of Antarctic stakeholder groups, noted that the Antarctic Treaty System needs to continue evolving in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; and that increasing and enhancing the use of the scientific data and information available to assist decision-making and ongoing, improved cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders will be essential to ensuring that Antarctica remains a continent of peace, science, and conservation. The key roles of Antarctic science, management and diplomacy in addressing climate change emerged as a central theme and the notable warming trend in the western Antarctic Peninsula was identified as a significant concern. In this regard, it was agreed that future policy decisions would be significantly aided by an interdisciplinary, international effort that seeks to “*distinguish the direct and interactive effects of climate change, fishing, tourism, and national operations on ecosystems in the Antarctic Peninsula region for improved environmental management,*” with participants suggesting that Oceanites pursue development of a project along these lines, working with relevant stakeholders in the collaborative spirit of the Antarctic Treaty System.

## Background

From February 28 – March 9, 2016, Oceanites, Inc. convened the first Future of Antarctica Forum, which was hosted by IAATO Member One Ocean Expeditions Inc., onboard the *MV Akademik Ioffe* during an Antarctic Peninsula expedition. Participants included individuals from a range of stakeholder groups, with a shared objective of upholding the principles of the Antarctic Treaty System, notably in relation to peace, science, and conservation.

The Forum provided a unique opportunity to discuss collaborative ways in which the protection and conservation of Antarctica, as envisioned by the Antarctic Treaty, its Protocol on Environmental Protection, and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), could be secured into the future. Most notably, the Forum provided a rare opportunity for participation by representatives from both the tourism and fishing industries in discussions about the future management of human activities in Antarctica.

## Participants

**Ray Arnaudo** (Former US head of delegation to ATCM and CCAMLR); **Steven Chown** (Monash University, Australia, former SCAR member of the CEP); **Claire Christian** (Acting Executive Director, ASOC); **Kim Crosbie** (Executive Director, IAATO); **Harriet Getzels** (Getzels Gordon Productions, producer, *The Penguin Counters*); **Peter Getzels** (Getzels Gordon Productions, producer, *The Penguin Counters*); **Máximo Gowland** (Antarctic Directorate, Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs); **Cilia Indahl** (Director of Sustainability, Aker BioMarine); **Denzil Miller** (Director, Antarctic Tasmania and Science Research and former Executive Secretary, CCAMLR); **Ron Naveen** (President/Founder, Oceanites, Inc.); **Andrew Prossin** (Managing Director, One Ocean Expeditions Inc.); and **Jane Rumble** (UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Polar Regions Department).<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Mark Epstein, formerly the Executive Director of ASOC could not attend, but greatly assisted Ron Naveen and Oceanites in planning for and organizing the Forum.

## **Program of work**

Seven Future of Antarctica Forum sessions were held privately during the 10-day trip, under Chatham House Rules.

The Forum was organized around three topics:

- Antarctic Governance
- Science in Antarctica
- Education and Communications about and for Antarctica

These private sessions ran in parallel with public presentations, discussion sessions, and after-dinner chats by Forum participants and facilitators with the ship's guests and passengers.

## **Outcomes**

The participants concluded that the basic principles expressed in the landmark international agreements governing Antarctica – the Antarctic Treaty, its Protocol on Environmental Protection, and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) – had been successful in the governance and environmental protection of the Antarctic, to date.

However, participants also noted that to meet the challenges associated with a rapidly changing world, the Antarctic Treaty System needs to continue evolving in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Increasing and enhancing the use of the scientific data and information available to assist decision-making, and ongoing, improved cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders will be essential to ensuring that Antarctica remains a continent of peace, science, and conservation.

The key roles of Antarctic science, management and diplomacy in addressing climate change emerged as a central theme of the discussions. In the context of broader overall changes across the Antarctic and Southern Oceans, the notable warming trend in the western Antarctic Peninsula, and its implications for ecosystems, was identified as a significant concern. The participants also concluded that it would be crucial to ensure that human activities in this region are managed in a way that does not exacerbate climatic stresses on the ecosystem. It was agreed that future policy decisions in this regard would be significantly aided by an interdisciplinary, international effort to seek to:

*“Distinguish the direct and interactive effects of climate change, fishing, tourism, and national operations on ecosystems in the Antarctic Peninsula region for improved environmental management.”*

Given Oceanites' Antarctic Site Inventory project, which, over the past 22 years has delivered sustained scientific monitoring across the Antarctic Peninsula (the results of which have been regularly presented to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting), the participants suggested that Oceanites pursue development of a project along the above lines, working with relevant stakeholders in the collaborative spirit of the Antarctic Treaty System.

Participants suggested that the outcomes of such work would further provide Antarctic Treaty Parties with the best possible scientific data and information to inform evidence-based decision-making. Moreover, public communication of the outcomes would help improve global understanding of the role of Antarctica in the climate system, of the impacts the region is already experiencing, and the work being done through the Antarctic Treaty System to mitigate these impacts. In conclusion, all of the participants agreed that the Future of Antarctica Workshop forum had been stimulating, valuable and highly productive.

## **Next Steps**

Oceanites accepted the challenge of establishing an international interdisciplinary effort to bring together available scientific, tourism and fisheries data for the Antarctic Peninsula region, in an attempt to distinguish the direct and interactive effects of climate change and other human activities on the ecosystem. **The other forum participants agreed to support Oceanites in this work, as appropriate; and also expressed their hope that other Treaty Parties would also agree that such a project would be useful, and to share any requested data, as far as possible.**