



Antarctic Treaty Secretariat Newsletter

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Mr. Johannes Huber, Executive Secretary

Foreword of the Executive Secretary

Dear colleagues and friends in the Antarctic community and beyond,

One of the basic tasks of the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat is to "circulate amongst the Parties ... relevant information and disseminate information on activities in Antarctica" (ATCM Measure 1(2003)). This Newsletter is one of the ways in which we will try to fulfill that task and keep Treaty Parties and the general public informed about our own activities, the Antarctic Treaty System and Antarctic activities in general.

Small as it is, as secretariat of the yearly Consultative Meetings and as repository of the documents of the ATCM the ATS clearly occupies a central place in the Antarctic Treaty System. Also, in the first few months of our existence we have already found that Buenos Aires is a strategic location, because quite a few old and new friends have visited us on the way to or from the Antarctic Peninsula. We would like to encourage you to continue this trend, not only by visiting us but also by sharing information, so that this Newsletter will become a useful and interesting forum for communication and exchange of

	<p>opinion.</p> <p>We will supply the news on our own activities, but for the general news section we are dependent on you. The Parties have supplied us with or pointed us to the items in this first issue. If you know of developments which are of interest to the Antarctic community, whether accomplishments in Antarctic science, newsworthy events or upcoming meetings, please let us know and we will gratefully make use of your information. News items can be contributed to secret@ats.org.ar.</p> <p>We don't know yet how often we will issue the Newsletter; maybe once every one or two months at first. A version will be put on the website of the Secretariat, which is under development. This first issue is available in English and Spanish versions. If Parties would like to receive the Newsletter in Russian or French versions, please let us know.</p> <p>You can subscribe to the Newsletter or have your name struck off the distributions list by an email to secret@ats.org.ar.</p>
 <p><i>The ATS office is located on the fourth floor of this building on Av. L.N. Alem in down town Buenos Aires</i></p>	<h2>Inauguration of the Secretariat</h2> <p>On September 1st, 2004 the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat was formally established in Buenos Aires, Argentina. An inauguration ceremony was held at the ATS headquarters on September 7th in the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic, Dr. Rafael Bielsa, representatives of the Argentine Parliament and various Argentine Government departments, the Heads of Mission of the Parties to the Antarctic Treaty in Buenos Aires, and the press.</p> <p>Minister Bielsa and Mr. Huber both delivered brief speeches marking the significance of the establishment of the secretariat. The event was reported in the major Argentine papers.</p>
	<h2>Current ATS activities</h2> <h3>Startup</h3> <p>As the Secretariat is not based on an existing institution, but is being built up from the ground, much of our attention in the first few months has been occupied with internal matters. We are lucky to have ample office space in a very convenient location in down town Buenos Aires, provided through the generosity of the Argentine Government, so we didn't have to worry about that, but the rest – whether it be personnel, computers, telecom equipment, legal advice, IT expertise - had to be acquired step by step: researching the market, thinking about the best modus operandi (lease/purchase? permanent staff/outsourcing? etc.), looking for possible suppliers, evaluating offers.</p> <p>Now, in the middle of February, we are gradually becoming an operational</p>

unit, with a small permanent staff, regular advisors on legal, financial and technical affairs, an up to date computer network and a fast connection to the Internet. The progress made so far would not have been possible without the constant assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina, and especially its Antarctic Department, who deserve great credit for their efforts.

Staff

The staff of the Secretariat at the moment consists of:

Jan Huber (Executive Secretary): general management, institutional and legal affairs;

José M. Acero (Assistant Executive Officer): scientific and environmental affairs;

José Luis Agraz (Information Officer): information and data management and

Ms. Gloria Fontan (Secretary/Administrative Assistant): administrative and secretarial support

Expansion of the permanent staff is not foreseen for the moment. However, in the coming months there will be opportunities for short term employment and traineeships, especially in connection with the build-up of the Secretariat's data structure. For details, please contact the Executive Secretary.

Tasks

The most urgent tasks for the Secretariat are at the moment:

- Preparation of the 28th ATCM (Stockholm, 6-17 June 2005)
- Collection of the documents of the ATCM. The Consultative Parties which have hosted meetings of the ATCM have all been requested to provide authentic copies of the Final Reports and other documents of those meetings. The Secretariat will store them in its archive, and also digitize the records, so they can be incorporated in databases and made accessible through the Internet.
- Development of the Secretariat website and, in connection with this, establishing the basic data structure underlying the website. These tasks are carried out by IT companies under contract.



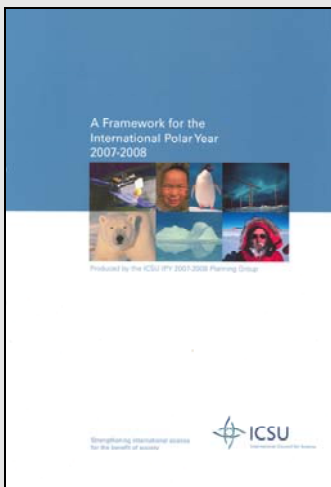
Mr. Stig Berglind, Mr Folke Löfgren and Mr. Greger Widgren at the ATS headquarters

Visit of Swedish Delegation

From February 9 to 16 a Swedish delegation consisting of Folke Löfgren (ATCM 28 Secretary General-designate), Greger Widgren (Swedish ATCM Representative) and Stig Berglind (Deputy Secretary General-designate) visited the AT Secretariat in order to discuss the preparation of the 28th ATCM. Issues discussed concerned the facilities, agenda, schedule, translation and interpretation, reporting, social program and public information connected with the upcoming meeting, which will take place in Stockholm from Monday June 6th to Friday June 17th.

Approval of Measure 1 (2003)

The measure establishing Secretariat, Measure 1 (2003) "Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty" will enter into effect when the 27 Consultative Parties who adopted the measure at the 26th ATCM in Madrid have completed their national approval procedures. Until then, the Measure is provisionally applied under Decision 2 (2003). Up till now, as far as we know, only seven Parties have approved the Measure. For the stability and proper functioning of the Antarctic Treaty System, an early entry into effect of the Measure will be crucial, so we urge all Parties concerned to complete their national approval procedures as soon as possible.



IPY Framework announced

The international Polar Year (IPY) 2007-2008 is a joint initiative of the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). An International Polar Year Planning Group of ICSU headed by the Director of the British Antarctic Survey, Prof. Chris Rapley, has been established. The IPY Science Plan and Implementation Strategy have been drawn up by the Group, with input from individuals from over 40 governmental and non governmental organizations and from 32 IPY National Committees or National Contact Point, and has been published in "A Framework for the International polar year 2007-2008".

This Framework represents a sound overview of key issues related to the IPY, like the Science Plan, Data Management, Education, Communication and Outreach as well as the Organizational Structure and Implementation of the IPY. It can be downloaded from www.ipy.org/concept/framework/index.htm



U.S. tanker Paul Buckand at the Mc Murdo Pier with the Krasin in the background

Russian Icebreaker Leads Vessels to US Antarctic Base

VLADIVOSTOK, (Itar-Tass) -- A Russian Far Eastern icebreaker for the first time in 20 years has been leading a convoy of vessels to the Antarctic coast to help U.S. polar researchers. The diesel icebreaker Krasin has lead the convoy of vessels to the U.S. McMurdo Antarctic station. The research vessel Nathaniel Palmer and a tanker loaded with 19,000 tonnes of fuel followed the Krasin.

The Krasin icebreaker is one of the world's three most powerful diesel icebreakers. It has nine engines of 42,000 horsepower, the full speed is 20 knots, the displacement is 20,000 tonnes, and its length is 135 metres. The icebreaker was built in Finland in 1976 and has led thousands of vessels through ice in the Bering Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk and the Arctic Ocean

	<p>since then. The operation near the Antarctic coast is the first in its history.</p> <p>The United States asked Russia for help in 2004, as the U.S. two icebreakers usually leading vessels through the ice were out of operation. The permanent station McMurdo working on the Antarctic coast since 1956 one of the biggest scientific research bases in Antarctica. There are more than one thousand polar researchers at the station at present.</p> <p>The second phase of an operation began on February 2nd. The Russian icebreaker piloted the containership American Term to the pier of McMurdo station. The motorship brought 10,000 tonnes of various cargoes -- food, medicines, and scientific equipment for polar researchers, according to Veronika Kazakova, press secretary of the Far Eastern Shipping Company. The pilotage of the dry cargo ship went off without complications. Following that, the Krasin piloted the containership back to ice-free waters. After he operation the Russian icebreaker will set out on a voyage back to Vladivostok. It is expected to arrive there in April.</p> <p>Subsequently, after a brief stay at the native port, the icebreaker will go to the Sea of Okhotsk for the pilotage of ships to the northern ports of Russia's Far East.</p>
	<p>Antarctic naval exercise involving “grounded cruise ship”</p> <p>In the framework of combined patrolling operations in Antarctic waters, the Argentine and Chilean navies participated in a contamination emergency exercise involving the Argentine ship “Suboficial Castillo” and the Chilean icebreaker “Almirante Oscar Viel”.</p> <p>In the exercise the Argentine unit played the role of a cruise vessel packed with tourists which runs aground, spilling fuel, undergoes flooding with several injured passengers and begins sending emergency calls requesting help.</p> <p>Chilean icebreaker “Almirante Viel” rapidly responded to the call and assumed control of salvage operations by first sending medical aid to assist and evacuate the wounded. The second step was to help with flooding and begin oil contamination containment operations setting up special barriers.</p> <p>According to the Chilean Navy report in Punta Arenas the exercise proved the response capability of the icebreaker in helping to combat the fuel spill in particularly adverse climatic conditions in an area of great sensitivity for the Antarctic environment.</p> <p>On February 9, “Suboficial Castillo” took over from the “Almirante Viel” as the main combined Antarctic patrol ship.</p>



Concordia Station Open

Concordia - First multinational Antarctic station open for winter operation

(Source: COMNAP Message 2005 – 6)

The French and Italian National Antarctic Programs on 15 February 2005 opened their joint Antarctic research station "Concordia" for winter operation. Concordia is located in the heart of the Antarctic continent at 75 deg 06 mins South and 123 deg 21 mins East in the Dome C region.

Concordia is the result of a collaborative project, on an equal terms basis, between the French Polar Institute (Institut Polaire Francais Paul-Emile Victor, IPEV, based in Brest) and the Italian National Antarctic Programme (Programma Nazionale di Ricerche in Antartida, PNRA, based in Rome). The project was started in the early 1990s and construction of the station took place over 5 Antarctic summer seasons of 10 weeks each. The construction involved numerous technological and logistical innovations and the intervention on site of teams with various of specific skills.

The first winter at Concordia will be both a 'validation' winter for the station installations and the start of a wide range of scientific research activities that will increase over the coming years. The winter team is composed of 9 technical staff and 4 scientific staff.

A strong emphasis has been placed on safety in the design of the station and in the preparations for this first winter at Concordia, a particularly remote and isolated site where winter temperatures can go below -80 deg C. This winter season the technical support team will complete some secondary fit-outs inside the station while monitoring and further testing, under actual winter conditions, the operation of the station's systems.

The scientific team will take advantage of this first winter to launch a number of research programs in astronomy, glaciology, atmospheric chemistry, earth sciences, microbiology and remote medicine.

<http://www.comnap.aq/comnap/comnap.nsf/P/News/>



The Xuelong at Ushuaia Port

Chinese Polar Explorers Climb Peak Of Dome A

On Friday, January 7th, the polar expedition ship Xuelong (Snow Dragon) of the Chinese Polar Administration arrived in Ushuaia, a port of southern Argentina in the course of China's 21st Antarctic expedition. A few days later, it was reported that in the framework of the Kunlun Dome A Inland Icecap programme, a Chinese team had mounted the 4,091 m. high North peak of Dome A. After a more exact survey of the North peak, the mission team set out to look for the South peak approximately 10 km. away.

Chinese scientists plan to stay in the peak area for about 10 to 15 days and build a temporary weather observatory to prepare for building a permanent research station in inland Antarctica.

Meanwhile, Yuan Shaohong, captain of the Xuelong, said the ship will be completely revamped in May or June this year after the expedition. The revamp will be completed by August 2006, when the Xuelong will have an increased laboratory area of 300 square metres, and its capacity for scientific research, safety and living conditions will all be greatly improved.

For more information, see <http://www.edu.cn/20050110/3126194.shtml>

Upcoming Meetings

Biological Monitoring Workshop

The Workshop "Practical Biological Indicators of Human Impact in Antarctica", sponsored by the SCAR, COMNAP and the US National Science Foundation will be held at Texas A&M University, College Station/Bryan, Texas, USA, from March 16 to 18, 2005.

The objective of the workshop is to provide practical guidance to National Operators as they design long-term monitoring programs to assess the impact of science and operations in Antarctica.

For additional information contact Mahlon C. Kennicutt II at

m-kennicutt@tamu.edu

Web Site: <http://vpr.tamu.edu/antarctic/workshop/workshop.php>

CCAMLR Symposium

The Chilean Antarctic Institute (INACH) and the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) are jointly sponsoring the XXVth Anniversary CCAMLR Symposium, to be held in Valdivia, Chile, on 4-7 April 2005.

For additional information contact inach@inach.cl

IAATO Annual Meeting

The 16th General Meeting of the International Association of Antarctic Tourist Operators (IAATO) will be held in Hamburg, Germany from May 2 to 5, 2005.

For additional information contact Denise Landau, IAATO Executive Director at iaato@iaato.org

Web Site: www.iaato.org

XXVIII ATCM

The XXVIII Antarctic Meeting Consultative Meeting will be held in Stockholm, Sweden from June 6 to 17. The Meeting will take place at the Technical Museum in the Eastern museum area close to downtown Stockholm.

For additional Information Contact: secret@ats.org.ar

Website: www.ats.org.ar/28atcm

COMNAP

The 17th Meeting of the Council of Managers of national Antarctic Programs (COMNAP) will be held in Sofia, Bulgaria from July 11 to 15, 2005.

For additional information contact, Antoine Guichard, COMNAP Executive Secretary: sec@comnap.aq

Web Site: www.comnap.aq