



Agenda Item: ATCM 10,  
CEP 5  
Presented by: IPY-IPO  
Original: English

# Antarctic Treaty Summit: Science-Policy Interactions in International Governance



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The *Antarctic Treaty* was signed by twelve nations in Washington, DC on 1 December 1959. Less than two years later, on 23 June 1961, these twelve nations (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Union of South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) unanimously ratified the *Antarctic Treaty* to establish “a firm foundation for the continuation and development of such cooperation on the basis of freedom of scientific investigation in Antarctica as applied during the International Geophysical Year.”

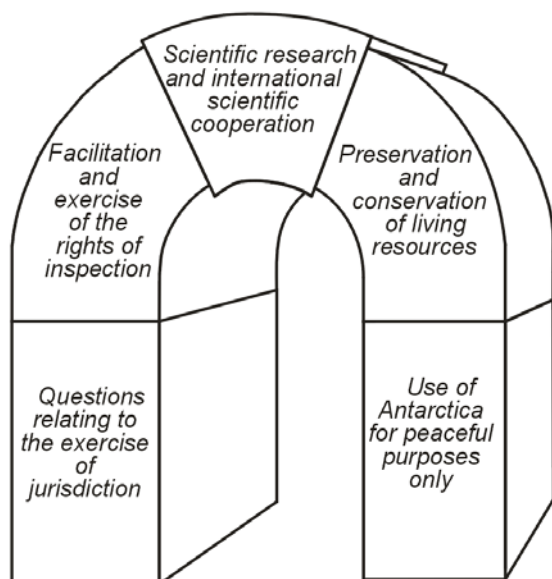
Building on the original fourteen Articles of the *Antarctic Treaty*, the Parties have developed a successful system of international governance for the continent and its surrounding seas. Today, the *Antarctic Treaty* involves 46 nations, which together represent nearly 90% of the global human population. Throughout, the Parties to the *Antarctic Treaty* have recognized the importance of “substantial research” that contributes to continuous consultation as well as ongoing policy formulation and implementation “in the interest of all mankind.”

As a key regime dealing with the management of international areas the *Antarctic Treaty* has evolved into a system covering not just governance but also resource management (such as the *Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Seals* and the *Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources*) and has close links with international organizations with a scientific or technical interest in Antarctica (such as the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research and the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs). As observed by the eminent polar explorer and former SCAR President, Laurence Gould:

*“The Antarctic Treaty is indispensable to the world of science which knows no national or other political boundaries, but it is much more than that... it is a document unique in history.”*

Such a successful international instrument seems certain to have some valuable lessons for future global management regimes. To assess these legacy lessons and to look forward to the next 50 years the *Antarctic Treaty Summit: Science-Policy Interactions in International Governance* will be convened at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC from November 30 to December 3, 2009.

The Antarctic Treaty Summit will focus on science as the common interest that has facilitated ongoing cooperation, consultation and constructive interactions among diverse parties to preserve Antarctica “for peaceful purposes only” (Fig. 1).



**FIGURE 1:** “Matters of common interest pertaining to Antarctica” (from Article IX of the Antarctic Treaty) with science as the ‘keystone common interest.’

The Antarctic Treaty Summit aims to provide a unique open forum for diplomats, scientists, legislators, administrators, lawyers, historians, artists, writers, educators, students and other members of civil society to explore science-policy achievements and precedents for international governance from one of our civilization’s three global commons (i.e., outer space, the deep sea and Antarctica).

The Antarctic Treaty Summit is of particular relevance to Antarctic Treaty Parties as it is targeted at looking for legacy lessons from the Treaty System, as highlighted in the Edinburgh Declaration on IPY from XXIX ATCM. It is the only IPY project focused specifically on this Antarctic legacy and the lessons for the future. Moreover, the Antarctic Treaty Summit is at present the only non-governmental, international, interdisciplinary and open celebration that has been planned on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its signature-day in the city where it was signed.

Initial funding for the Antarctic Treaty Summit has been provided so far through the US-UK Fulbright Commission, by the United States Marine Mammal Commission, by the Tinker Foundation and by the American Geophysical Union. Further funding is at present under negotiation. Oversight of the Antarctic Treaty Summit is by an international board that at present includes natural and social scientists, representatives from non-governmental organizations and government-program directors from Brazil, Chile, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom and the United States.

The Antarctic Treaty Summit is specifically intended to complement the official government celebrations of the Antarctic Treaty, particularly those associated with XXXII ATCM, which will be hosted by the United States in Baltimore in April 2009. It will involve the next generation of Antarctic scientists as well as representatives of countries that have yet to acceded to the Treaty in an effort to communicate the values of the Antarctic Treaty more widely.

It is hoped that representatives of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties will wish to actively contribute to the Antarctic Treaty Summit to ensure that both their expertise in governance and their diversity of national interests is fully reflected in the discussions, which will be broadcast through the Internet as well as published in various forms for international distribution.

Further details about the Antarctic Treaty Summit can be found at [www.atsummit50.aq](http://www.atsummit50.aq).