

CELEBRATING ANTARCTICA

A vision for Antarctica and the Southern Ocean



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Antarctica is protected, but it is under intense local, regional and global pressures. A vision for Antarctica and the Southern Ocean is needed to act as a guiding beacon for activities for the next decades, and to ensure the long-term protection of this region.

Permanent protection for Antarctica

In the history of the Antarctic Treaty, the world has shrunk – now more than ever, Antarctica is the last great wilderness. It must be protected, understood and treasured for generations to come. This concept is no longer an aspiration - it is very much in our grasp.

ASOC contends that, in the future, Antarctica should be emphatically better than now – and certainly no worse than now – in terms of recognition and protection of Antarctica's intrinsic values, the integrity of its wilderness, the role it plays as a global pollution monitoring zone and as area devoted to peace and scientific cooperation, and the upholding of the key principles of the Antarctic Treaty, its environmental Protocol, and CCAMLR.

REAL INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Antarctic needs Treaty nations to move beyond present levels of 'cooperation' to a sincere commitment to tackle important governance issues together. This may require a modified consensus decision-making that will enhance collective decision-making for the greater good of all.

REINFORCING THE ANTARCTIC TREATY SYSTEM

Parties must reinforce the ATS, its objectives and principles. This requires the political will to ensure that the ATS remains stable, strengthens its governance role, prevents the erosion of its key principles, and resists commercial pressures to open up the Antarctic for development.

BALANCING QUANTITY AND QUALITY

Antarctica needs a change in the current international legal framework, from the present paradigm of a presumption of unregulated and continuous growth towards a new paradigm, recognising the global values of the Antarctic region as a near-wilderness and characterized by:

- Balancing quantity and quality of development;
- Stabilizing the human footprint;
- Greater international cooperation and sharing of Antarctic facilities; and
- Maintaining a strategic perspective with regards to the environment and other values of Antarctica. This may require the establishment of an Antarctic Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process.

IMPLEMENTING THE LETTER AND INTENT OF THE PROTOCOL

A better and more consistent implementation of the Protocol's letter and intent is required. This includes greater transparency in national implementation.

PERMANENT BAN ON MINING

Antarctica needs the Antarctic Treaty nations to acknowledge that mining is not necessary or relevant for the Antarctic and to extend the current stay on mining activity to a permanent ban.

BETTER USE OF PROTECTED AREAS

Greater systemic use by the ATCM and CCAMLR of the Protected Areas tool, including ASMAs, ASPAs, Wilderness ASPAs, Marine Protected Areas, and Marine Reserves.

FULLY PRECAUTIONARY AND ECOSYSTEM-BASED CONSERVATION OF THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

The Southern Ocean needs precautionary management based on well-reasoned argument and best available science despite data shortfalls, and an acknowledgement that it provides globally important values beyond its fish resources.

LIMITING AN EXPANDING KRILL FISHERY

Work is underway in CCAMLR's scientific working groups EMM and SAM to develop a small-scale management unit system for the krill fishery. ASOC hopes this work can be completed in 2010 for the initial areas and continue into the future.

BETTER INTEGRATION ACROSS REGULATORY BODIES

There is an urgent need for more effective integration of the many agreements covering elements of the Antarctic (Antarctic Treaty and its Protocol, CCAMLR, ACAP, IWC, MARPOL, etc.) in relation to environmental objectives.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

Developing and implementing dynamic management of the impact of climatic changes. Local and regional-level action in Antarctica is needed to mitigate the effects of climate change in Antarctica. This can be achieved through supporting global reductions in carbon emissions implementing strong measures to prevent the establishment of invasive species; and applying a precautionary approach to environmental management through the use of Marine Protected Areas and reductions in non-climate stresses.



Monument to the Antarctic Treaty (HSM 82), 2006

