

THE MAIN INTERNATIONAL EVENTS ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ANTARCTIC TREATY

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The Antarctic Treaty was signed by twelve nations in Washington, DC on 1 December 1959. For the past five decades, the Antarctic Treaty has provided a firm foundation for ongoing international cooperation for “*peaceful purposes only... on the basis of freedom of scientific investigation in Antarctica*”. 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. Growing from seven claimant and five non-claimant signatories, the Antarctic Treaty now engages 47 nations, which together represent nearly 90% of the global human population.



Signing of the Antarctic Treaty on 1 December 1959 in Washington, D.C. by Ambassador Herman Phleger from the United States, who chaired the *Conference on Antarctica* from October 15 – December 1, 1959.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Antarctic Treaty, during the 32nd Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, held in Baltimore, US in April 2009, the 28 Consultative Parties agreed the Washington Ministerial Declaration which affirming key elements of the Antarctic Treaty. 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*”. There are several conclusions emerged from an examination of the operation of the Treaty.



Hillary Rodham Clinton, the Secretary of State, US, gives an address at the 32nd Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting on the 50th anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty.

First, the Treaty has preserved 10% of the Earth's surface exclusively for peaceful purposes, including the prohibition of military and nuclear (it is the first nuclear-free zone in the world) activities and promoted international cooperation, in particular rights of on-site inspection, and the freedom of scientific research in Antarctica.

Second, these provisions combined with the juridical accommodation reflected in Article IV have made the Treaty a continuing and outstanding mechanism for resolution and prevention of international conflict.

Third, the Treaty has instituted an unprecedented international scientific collaboration in order to a growing understanding of Antarctica and its surrounding marine ecosystem, as well as of the global environment, including Earth's climate. This has established an important basis for environmental protection and resource conservation.

Fourth, the ATCM has been proactive in managing human activities in Antarctica, and such management will continue to be important in Antarctica in the future. All of these Treaty's basic obligations remain as relevant today as in 1959.

At the 32nd Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting the Ukrainian Delegation, besides participation in the celebration of the Treaty's 50th anniversary, introduced broad-scale management system within the area of Ukrainian scientific interests in Antarctica. In addition, the Guidelines for visitors at the historic site "Base F", developed jointly with UK, were appreciated and adopted by all Consultative Parties.



The Ukrainian Delegation at the 32nd Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (from left to right):
Viktor Nikitiuk Minister-Counselor, Embassy of Ukraine in US;
Dr Andriy Fedchuk, an expert on tourist and non-governmental activities in Antarctica;
Valeria Savchenko, International Department officer, National Antarctic Scientific Center of Ukraine

Reflecting the development and resilience of the Antarctic Treaty in the global context – as an endorsed project of the International Polar Year – the *Antarctic Treaty Summit: Science-Policy Interactions in International Governance* (held in the Washington in November 30 – December 3, 2009) was provided an unique international, interdisciplinary and inclusive forum for scientists, legislators, administrators, lawyers, educators, students to openly draw out lessons learned from the Antarctic Treaty experience that have practical value for the governance of international spaces beyond national jurisdictions across nearly 75% of the Earth. Areas such as the Arctic, the deep seas, fisheries and even outer space are all likely to become more contested in the future as climate change takes effect and finite natural resources become scarce.

The anniversary conference has garnered considerable international support. The United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, and United States Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, have both given it their support. Attendees include Barack Obama's science adviser, John P. Holdren, as well as Prince Albert II of Monaco, one of the world's most prominent activists on climate change issues.

The “Forever Declaration” was introduced at the Antarctic Treaty Summit on December 1, 2009 for signature by anyone anywhere in our world (see www.atsummit50.aq). The Declaration acknowledges the importance of the Antarctic Treaty and calls for “enduring world peace and co-operation to resolve the transboundary, international and global challenges of our civilisation”. Organisers of an international summit have expressed the hope that it might eventually be formally recognised by the United Nations.