Report of the Intersessional Contact Group on Permanent Facilities for Tourism and other Non-Governmental Activities in Antarctica

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Summary

ATCM XLIII (§ 227 of the Final Report) agreed to establish an Intersessional Contact Group (ICG) on permanent facilities for tourism and other non-governmental activities in Antarctica. In four rounds of discussions, the ICG made an inventory of recent initiatives to establish such facilities, exchanged views on possible concerns relating to such facilities and discussed the question of whether the ATCM should take action on the issue. This report summarizes these discussions and proposes to continue the discussions at ATCM XLIV on the basis of a draft Resolution text (see the last page of this WP).

1. **Introduction**

ATCM XLIII (§ 227 of the Final Report) agreed to establish an Intersessional Contact Group (ICG) on permanent facilities for tourism and other non-governmental activities in Antarctica. For this ICG, the ATCM adopted the following Terms of Reference:[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. “To share and collate information on past and present initiatives to establish permanent facilities for tourism and other non-governmental activities in Antarctica;
2. To exchange views on the desirability and possible content of a definition of permanent facilities for tourism and other non-governmental activities in Antarctica;
3. To exchange views on possible concerns relating to such facilities, including, for instance, environmental concerns and pressure on the search and rescue capacity of national programmes;
4. To discuss the question of whether the ATCM should take action relating to future plans for permanent facilities for tourism and other non-governmental activities in Antarctica and, if so, what action might be appropriate; and
5. Depending on progress and outcomes of discussions on the previous item, to develop a clear proposal on the issue of permanent facilities for tourism and other non-governmental activities in Antarctica that may be submitted to ATCM XLIV.”

In October 2021, the ICG agreed on a work plan and schedule for its discussions and a first round of discussions focused on the first four components of the ToR. To stimulate and support the exchange of views, a discussion paper was uploaded to the ATCM forum (20 October 2021), which gave a short overview of existing information and raised one or more concrete questions for each of the first four ToR-components. Based on a summary of all contributions and a short note by the convener (uploaded on 23 December 2021), a second round of discussions focused on a possible working definition of permanent facilities for tourism and other non-governmental activities and the (interrelated) question whether the ATCM should take action relating to future plans for such facilities.

The ICG was characterised by a broad participation (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chili, Finland, France, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, United Kingdom, United States of America, ASOC and IAATO) and very constructive discussions. This report summarizes these discussions and proposes to continue the discussions at ATCM XLIV on the basis of a draft Resolution text (see the last page of this WP).

1. **Past and present initiatives to establish permanent facilities for tourism and other non-governmental activities in Antarctica**

*2.1 Plans which never materialised*

Examples of (plans for) facilities that have been considered permanent facilities for Antarctic tourism include a plan of Lars Erik Lindblad (1974) to lease Cape Hallett station in the Ross Sea region (capacity: 60 people) and a plan of Rhode and partners (1989) to establish ‘Project Oasis’, a joint science and tourism facility in the Vestfold Hills with an envisaged capacity of 344 tourists, 70 scientist and 174 staff. These plans have never materialised.

*2.2 Past and existing facilities*

Some overviews of facilities that could be considered permanent facilities for tourism have been established and tabled at previous ATCM,[[2]](#footnote-2) although such inventories depend on the definition used (see below). Initiatives at a small scale that have been implemented, includes the E(ducational)-Base by Robert Swan’s organisation ‘2041’. One participant added that - although not for tourism – “the Greenpeace Station on Ross Island, albeit carefully planned and removed, is an additional NGO facility” and that “[t]here are some modules on King George Island which are only utilised by DAP logistics staff.” During the ICG discussions it was noted that it might be useful to commission an inventory of “existing infrastructure used for tourism purposes, to any degree, already in Antarctica (permanent or in Antarctica temporarily, but for more than a single season).”

*2.3 Recent new plans*

Based on a previous investigation “through their networks with non-IAATO Operators and potential future Operators”, one participant stated that “it does not appear there has been any serious interest in permanent facility development specifically for tourism.” However, recently some initiatives have been developed. In Belgium a proposal was recently developed with the title ‘The Andromeda Project’. The project, initiated by the Belgium non-governmental ‘International Polar Foundation’, is presented as a new facility for science and education and is referred to as the first Antarctic University. The facility would be established near the Belgium Princess Elisabeth Station. The expected revenue for flights and visits exceeds 20 million Euro in 2030 (Brochure of the International Polar Foundation, ‘The Andromeda Project’, 2020).

Furthermore, one participant in the ICG shared that in 2016 a proposal was received from a company for the construction of tourist facilities near Marambio station, a proposal that was rejected by the national authorities.

This information is of great value for the ICG discussions as it shows that plans for permanent facilities for tourism or other non-governmental activities in Antarctica are not just theoretical. Importantly, some participants highlighted that the fact that it seems that to a large extent we are still ahead of the curve provides a good window of opportunity for action, prior to additional proposals and actual implementation of such plans.

1. **Working definition**

In the first round of discussions, most participants in the ICG considered a definition desirable or needed to ensure clear and focused discussions and/or to provide clarity on the scope of any future ATCM policy response. Several participants stated that it might be difficult to reach consensus on a definition, however, it was suggested that the adoption of a working definition could facilitate further discussions “without prejudice to any future definition that might be required for policy or regulatory purposes.” Based on the views expressed in the first round of the ICG, the convener proposed the following working definition for round II:

*“Permanent infrastructure” comprises any structure or facility in Antarctica:*

* *intended to serve tourism or other non-governmental activities,*
* *intended to be in place for longer than one Antarctic season, and*
* *[impossible or infeasible to decommission without a permanent physical or environmental impact],*
* *including, for instance, buildings, storage facilities, wharves and jetties, and runways, and*
* *excluding:*
  + *[existing] small scale infrastructure operated by a National Antarctic Program for education and outreach purposes, which does not imply a change to the currently existing type of tourism (on-board, self-sustained, with disembarkation only for short visits), and*
  + *Historic Sites and Monuments listed under Annex V to the Protocol.”*

In round II of the ICG, several participants considered this working definition as a good starting point, although some components and issues would require more thought (e.g. the issue of dual use infrastructure.

Several other participants proposed to delete the component “[impossible or infeasible to decommission without a permanent physical or environmental impact].” Arguments for deleting this restriction of the definition included:

* ”such infrastructure would lead to more permanent activities (overnight stays, sustenance services provided on land)”
* “the environmental impact of this structure or its decommission are not decisive, since not only the decommission has an impact, but already the constructing and maintaining of the structure are supposed to have an impact”. Relevant to this issue are the comments made during the first round of discussions that attention should not only be paid to permanent facilities as such, but also to “the traffic and activity they generate, and the implications for environment and safety.”
* “having a definition of “permanent facilities” that depends on the concept of “permanent…impact” is somewhat tautological. The same difficulties that appear now with the notion of “permanent facility” will also appear later on when trying to identify a “permanent…impact”

Broadening of the definition was also advocated in the form of including “field-camp structures that are erected at the same place every season” in the small list of examples of permanent facilities. In relation to the same bullet point it was further suggested to change “including” into “including but not limited to buildings,…”.

Other participants advocated for a more limited scope of the definition. Building on the definition proposed by IAATO, one participant suggested the following definition: “Permanent infrastructure” is any structure or facility designed to be operated in Antarctica over multiple seasons where its construction, operation or removal is expected to have more than a minor or transitory impact on the Antarctic environment. Examples include, but are not restricted to, buildings, wharves and jetties, and graded runways on exposed ground.” Another participant stated that it was quite comfortable with the definition proposed by IAATO proposed in IP101 (2009).

While the exceptions were considered important by some, one participant wondered whether the explicit exclusion of HSMs is indeed necessary because of their explicit regulation in the Protocol and what exactly the term 'small scale' in the other exclusion means. One participant suggested that it might be useful to use criteria such as “a maximum limit on the size of the facility and/or maximum quantity of beds allowed.” Another participant proposed to place the words ‘small scale’ between brackets.

Discussing the scope of the definition and the above raised issues appears complex as the scope of the definition and envisaged ATCM action are strongly intertwined: as one participant noted, “it is difficult to separate a working definition on permanent facilities for tourism and other non-governmental activities, from the more in-depth discussion that must be held with regards to which type of infrastructure we would seek to prohibit”. Some participants states that it might be useful to make an inventory of already existing infrastructure for tourism in the Antarctic and to further discuss main concerns. One participant acknowledged the importance of a definition but was “reluctant to spend too much time discussing definitions rather than working on achieving a common understanding of where the actual problems and challenges lie, and preparing for discussions on concrete needs for action and additional measures within our system”. This participant therefore suggested to “try to move beyond discussions on definition when preparing for addressing this issue in the ATCM”. Furthermore, having an agreed definition might not solve all interpretation issues. As noted by one participant, there may be “possible new initiatives in “grey areas” which could be difficult to frame within the established definition”.

Another participant stated that “[w]hile recognising, and to an extent sharing, the concerns expressed by others about the possible issues with shorter term and/or readily removable or reversible installations […] it would be helpful to focus on the issues that might arise from long term infrastructure which would have ongoing impacts – the ‘permanent’ aspect highlighted in the terms of reference for this ICG”. For this focused approach this participant considered the definition suggested by the United Kingdom very suitable, and a practical way forward. One participant “acknowledge that there seems to be a general sense that permanent buildings for the accommodation of tourists (hotels) have an undoubted environmental impact and hold no particular benefit”, while “[o]ther structures may require more analysis”.

The above summarized rich discussion on a working definition constituted one of the components for developing a proposal for ATCM action for Round III of the ICG. In the context of discussing this proposal further comments were made on a possible definition (see Section 5).

1. **Concerns**

During previous ATCM discussions (summarised in the Final Report of the XXVIIth ATCM, §195 and ATCM42/IP 26, p.35)) Consultative Parties and experts have expressed various concerns in relation to permanent facilities for tourism and other non-governmental activities in Antarctica:

* increasing pressure on the Antarctic environment, impacting biodiversity (entering of habitats, disruption, introduction of invasive species), as a result of the building and use of the facilities;
* (cumulative) impacts on Antarctica’s ecosystems and wilderness values;[[3]](#footnote-3)
* inconsistency with Antarctica's designation as a “natural reserve devoted to peace and science”;
* increasing air traffic to and from Antarctica, raising questions on air safety and impacts on Search & Rescue capacity, as well as impacting the climate (emissions);
* risks of negative effects for or disturbance of scientific research and/or scientific values of Antarctica;
* the potential assertion of private property rights, and the possible assertion of ‘rights to use’ through regular permitting, as well as related concepts such as mortgaged, leased, sold, and inherited non-governmental property, possibly also involving private parties from non-contracting parties.

Many participants shared the concerns described in the discussion paper. Several participants also provided concrete examples of mentioned concerns, some based on references to past Antarctic inspections. One participant noted that “some of the issues listed are not directly associated with permanent infrastructure, and (as needed) might require management or regulation via different mechanisms (that is, the concern could arise regardless of whether permanent infrastructure is permitted or not).” In relation to “the risk of adverse effects on scientific activities or values”, one participant pointed out that such effects “must be considered in the light of the specific location that would host the facility.” Some participants expressed the view that tourism, is a peaceful activity. Another participant acknowledged this but stated that tourism “seems to be on its way to become the dominant form of human activities within Antarctica with the potential to even disturb scientific activities.” Another participant expressed the view “that all human activity should be looked at holistically and “the general public does not necessarily make the distinction between Government activities or Tourism activities.”

As concerns that could be added to the inventory, participants mentioned:

* concerns regarding “the traffic and activities they produce, and their implications on the environment and safety” (in addition to concerns directly related to permanent facilities). One participant pointed at established deep-field tourism and the recent development of a regular flight route with a comfortable Airbus;
* safety issues related to flight operations and increasing air traffic, as well as SAR burdens on national program personnel due to increased activity and associated risk [relating] “to both permanent and semi-permanent facilities;” And similarly, “additional strain on National Antarctic Programs to respond to medical emergencies that cannot be handled by the tourist operator;”
* “direct impacts on environmental, scientific and wilderness values that would in many cases arise from the installation of such facilities” (in addition to cumulative impacts) and more generally, “concern to limit the human footprint in Antarctica;”
* more specifically, impacts on inviolate areas, including virgin summits;
* concerns relating to “ongoing responsibility”, “liability” and “its upkeep or removal” (presuming non-government ownership), for instance in case of bankruptcy;
* “permanent facilities may act as attractants for more/different forms tourism;”
* “disused scientific stations […] being repurposed for tourist purposes - either as accommodation or, through the detour of an HSM, as a visiting opportunity”;
* “the lack of larger scale area-based management plans for facilities. There are no mechanisms for designating areas for development, or for deciding whether development should be restricted to specific areas or spread out over the continent. There is also no mechanism for deciding who should be allowed to build if there are multiple Parties/actors interested in the same area.”
* Concerns regarding “core functions/established mechanisms and foras for cooperation” due to “a continued shift toward more complex ownership structures and more independent operations;”
* Concerns regarding “compliance with Art. IV of the Antarctic Treaty” in view of “the possibility of a party claiming sovereignty over the territory surrounding the facility or being considered as such by other Parties.”

Most participants did not mention or see any benefits from permanent facilities for tourism or other NGO -activities. Some participants mentioned that benefits from highly regulated and well managed land-based tourism more generally may include “the support such operators were able to give to national Antarctic programmes, including in bolstering search and rescue capabilities.” It was also noted that “non-governmental operators had […] introduced innovation and best practice that had also proved useful for national operators.” Nevertheless, the general impression from the discussion is that the concerns outweigh such possible positive benefits and - as summarised by one participant - “there were no obvious benefits identified from permanent tourism accommodation buildings, like hotels.”

1. **Views expressed regarding possible ATCM action**

The first two rounds of the ICG were used to generally explore the views on possible ATCM action on the issue of permanent facilities for tourism or other NGO-activities in Antarctica. With references to the discussed concerns, action in some form was considered desirable or necessary. One participant stressed that “[i]t seems appropriate to take action now, ahead of the development of such facilities.” Some explicitly stated that in their view legally binding measures should be taken promptly. One participant stated that “a moratorium on the establishment of permanent facilities for tourism and other non-governmental activities, as proposed by Germany and France at ATCM XXXI, could be a possible option for (re-)consideration.” Another participant supported this idea with reference to the concerns raised in the context of the recent development explained by Belgium. In this context, it was noted that “IAATO’s efforts cannot cover all activities of concern, inter alia because not all private actors are members of IAATO.” However, another participant stated that it would not prefer a moratorium.

Several other participants stated that “the further elaboration of a definition will be important in informing our subsequent discussion about potential ATCM actions” and that “an inventory of existing infrastructure used for tourism purposes […] would provide us with further clarity for a discussion on management options.”

Participants in the ICG also mentioned more specific issues for possible ATCM action. According to a participant, “Treaty Parties should also be encouraged to consider the possibility of establishing routines/mechanisms to ensure the availability of relevant information about ownership and management structures for all operations in Antarctica, incl. also contact points, permit information etc. to all Treaty Parties and national programs.” Another issue that was mentioned as a point of action was “the importance of Parties ensuring that non-governmental operators under their jurisdiction have sufficient and appropriate search and rescue capabilities at hand to cover all aspects of their activities, and that they do not rely on national operator resources for this purpose, as eg. specified in Measure 4 (2004).”

One participant stated that “[t]here may be different paths within the AT system to achieve the goal of no permanent facilities, such as altering language to say that NGO activities should have no more than a minor or transitory impact on the Antarctic environment, including natural wilderness and historical values.” According to this participant, “[c]oupled with a strengthened and consistent permitting/authorisation process, this may be helpful in counteracting the development of permanent infrastructure.”

Several participants explicitly referred to existing instruments, such as Resolution 5 (2007), Resolution 7 (2009). It was noted, however, that these Resolutions are not legally binding and in some Contracting Parties these tools “in principle, do not allow the NCA to prohibit such activities”. Some participants proposed the transformation of these resolutions into legally binding measures.

“Another issue that may be addressed as a point of action is the importance of Parties ensuring that non-governmental operators under their jurisdiction have sufficient and appropriate search and rescue capabilities at hand to cover all aspects of their activities, and that they do not rely on national operator resources for this purpose, as eg. specified in Measure 4 (2004)."

Based on these discussions in the first two rounds of the ICG, a two-step approach was proposed as input for the third round of discussions:

1. ***Immediate action:*** In light of recent plans and to ensure action prior to additional proposals and actual implementation of such plans, the transposition of Resolution 5(2007) into a Measure was proposed, including permanent facilities as defined by two participants of the ICG as an example of developments that would fall within the scope of such a Measure. Building on text proposals made by participants of the ICG, the following draft text for a Measure was proposed:

*“Parties prohibit any tourism and other non-governmental activities which may substantially contribute to the long-term degradation of the Antarctic environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems.*

*Such activities include, but are not restricted to:*

* *the construction and/or exploitation of permanent buildings for the accommodation of tourism and other non-governmental activities in Antarctica, other than [existing] small scale infrastructure operated by a National Antarctic Program for education and outreach purposes;*
* *the construction and/or exploitation of any other structure or facility designed to be operated in Antarctica over multiple seasons where its construction, operation or removal is expected to have more than a minor or transitory impact on the Antarctic environment or the intrinsic natural wilderness and historical values of Antarctica. Examples include, but are not restricted to, buildings, wharves and jetties, and graded runways on exposed ground.”*

As another immediate action it was also proposed to renewed encouragement of Consultative Parties to approve Measure 4 (2004) and Measure 15 (2009) to ensure that these Measures enter into force as soon as possible.

1. **Continuation of discussions:** It was proposed tocontinue discussions in relation to other issues, such as seasonal camping and related developments (e.g., air traffic), small scale infrastructure operated by a National Antarctic Program and the transposition of Resolution 7(2009) into a Measure (suggested in the ICG). Furthermore, the development of an inventory or possibly repository of existing permanent infrastructure used for tourism and other non governmental activities could also be considered. In such an exercise, due attention could be paid to issues of ownership as well as of adequacy of search and rescue facilities, as suggested by one participant.

In the third round of the ICG, several participants stressed again the urgency of action, not only in light of the recent concrete plans for permanent facilities but also in light of existing provisions of the Protocol, particularly Article 3. In this context, one participant highlighted the contrast between cruise-based tourism in the Peninsula with various kind of limitations (e.g., the number that can participate in landings at one time, the site guidelines that apply, etc.) and “the lack of such measures for regions where land-based tourism” takes place, particularly in light of the improved access by air.

***Immediate action***

In respect of possible immediate action, several participants stated that in essence they could agree with the proposed Measure. One participant characterized the proposal as an “ambitious, straightforward and effective approach, which allows for quick action and avoids the pitfalls of the sensitive side issues raised in the discussion”. Two of the participants that in essence supported the proposal for immediate action suggested some changes in the wording of the draft measure in order to ensure conformity with the Protocol and the ICG ToR, for instance, by replacing the word 'buildings' (in the first bullet point) by 'facilities' and suppressing the wording in brackets “[existing]”. One of these participants expressed the view that, in light of the discussions and the text of Resolution 5 (2007), “small scale infrastructure operated by a National Antarctic Program for education and outreach purposes” would not fall under the scope of (an inventory of) prohibited activities. One participant also noted that field camps on closer inspection function like lodges and that equipment remain in Antarctica after the end of the season.

Another participant also underlined the importance of considering binding measures to address concerns discussed in the ICG, but that more clarity on which type of infrastructure the ATCM would wish to ban is important. In this regard, it reiterated its support for an inventory of existing infrastructure that would help give a sense of where major issues exist. This participant stated also that it would be comfortable with the proposal of transposing Resolution 5(2007) into a Measure, although it agreed with the concern expressed by another participant that the phase “substantially leading to long term degradation” could lead to assessment difficulties.

Also other participants expressed the view that, before a legally binding measure could be adopted, it is important to ensure that the intent and operative wording is clear and unambiguous. These participants also stressed the importance of getting a better understanding of the current state of play, for instance through the proposed inventory of existing infrastructure supporting tourism. One of these participants expressed the view that wording should preferably be based on the ‘no more than a minor or transitory impact’ language of the Protocol” as this “would assist in consistent and clear application by Parties, and aid domestic approval processes”. In light of the significance of a Measure, requiring legislative implementation, this participant also stated that it would need to conduct a range of domestic consultations before coming to a firm position.

Also other participants supported the development as an inventory, although some would consider this an action additionally to the adoption of immediate action.

One participant reiterated its position that, before proceeding further, agreement should be reached on a definition of a permanent facility, for which purpose it would favor as a stand-alone definition:

“The construction and/or exploitation of any other structure or facility designed to be operated in Antarctica over multiple seasons where its construction, operation or removal is expected to have more than a minor or transitory impact on the Antarctic environment or the intrinsic natural wilderness and historical values of Antarctica. Examples include, but are not restricted to, buildings, wharves and jetties, and graded runways on exposed ground.”

It further explained that this definition also reflects IAATO’s mission and vision, as well as the current Bylaws of IAATO.

***Renewed encouragement of Consultative Parties to approve Measure 4 (2004) and Measure 15 (2009)***

In relation to Measures 4 (2004) and 15 (2009), several participants stated that they had already approved these measures and that they support a renewed encouragement of other Consultative Parties to approve Measure 4 (2004) and Measure 15 (2009) to ensure that these Measures enter into force as soon as possible. One participant observed that this renewed encouragement is a somewhat separate discussion to the focus of this ICG, but noted “that it may be useful to consider whether there are any ways that the Parties who have completed the approval process could assist those who remain to do so, by sharing their approaches, information or experiences”. Another participant supported this proposal and added that IAATO Operators are bound to Measures whether or not they have entered into force.

***Continuing discussion***

There was broad support for continuing the discussion in order to deal in depth with issues related to the question of permanent infrastructure and to enable such discussion the continuation of the ICG until ATCM 45 was proposed. Attention was also requested for other issues, such as coastal camping. One participant expressed the view that for the continuation of discussions, it remained of the view that it will be most productive to focus on permanent facilities themselves, and core issues directly arising from permanent facilities. In this light, this participant also stated that it acknowledged the relevance of Resolution 7 (2009) to many aspects of this discussion, but that the questions around permanent facilities seem to align most closely with Resolution 5 (2007). Another participant suggested to propose to the ATCM, as discussed in the Rotterdam workshop, contemplating an analysis of all existing tourism norms in order to increase their binding character.

1. **Conclusions and proposals to the ATCM**

Permanent facilities for tourism or other non-governmental activities in Antarctica may raise several concerns. Such concerns relate, for instance, to increasing (cumulative) impacts on Antarctica’s ecosystems and wilderness values, increasing air traffic to and from Antarctica, risks of negative effects for or disturbance of scientific research, potential property right discussions and additional strain on SAR support and National Antarctic Programs to respond to safety emergencies. Although in theory benefits from highly regulated and well managed land-based tourism may include the support such operators would be able to give to national research programs, the ICG observed that concerns by far outweigh such potential positive benefits.

In light of the concerns, as well as the development of some recent plans for permanent facilities for tourism or other non-governmental activities in Antarctica, and with a view to ensure precautionary action prior to additional proposals and actual implementation of such plans, there is a clear urgency to act. Several Consultative Parties have urged for the adoption of a legally binding Measure on the issue. An option discussed is the transformation of Resolution 5(2007) into a Measure, while making explicit that permanent facilities for tourism and non-governmental activities fall under the scope of such a Measure. However, some Consultative Parties stated that, before a legally binding measure could be adopted, it would be important to ensure that the intent and operative wording is clear and unambiguous. For this purpose, a clear definition for the terminology ‘permanent facilities for tourism or other non-governmental activities’ would be important. Meanwhile, a working definition developed by the ICG gained much support. To get more clarity on the current state of play and the scope of further action, several ICG participants advocated for the development of an inventory of existing infrastructure supporting tourism.

These outcomes of the constructive ICG discussions show a clear tension between urgent action and taking more time for discussing the precise scope of action. To address this tension, an option could be to discuss the possibility of a Measure with a precise and limited scope, however, the discussions make clear that also such an action would require an intensive and probably time-consuming process of consultation in some Consultative Parties. For this reason, a two tracks approach was proposed:

1. to adopt a Resolution at ATCM XLIV, urging Consultative Parties to prevent the establishment or operation of permanent facilities for tourism and other non-governmental activities, limiting the definition to those facilities that raise the biggest concerns;
2. to request the ATCM to extend the ICG to continue discussions, to develop an inventory of existing infrastructure supporting tourism and to discuss options for converting the Resolution under 1) into a Measure.

Based on the extensive and rich discussions in the ICG, it is proposed to continue the discussion at ATCM XLIV on the basis of the following draft Resolution text:

**Resolution X (2022)**

**Permanent facilities** **for tourism and other   
non-governmental activities in Antarctica**

The Representatives,  
  
Recalling the designation of Antarctica as natural reserve, devoted to peace and science in Article 2 and the Environmental Principles contained in Article 3 the of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty;  
  
Recalling Resolution 5(2007) and Resolution 7(2009);

Conscious of their responsibilities to ensure that tourism in Antarctica will not contribute to the long-term degradation of the Antarctic environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems, or the intrinsic natural wilderness and historical values of Antarctica;

Conscious of IAATO’s agreed principle that their planned activities will have no more than a minor or transitory impact on the Antarctic environment;

Desiring to take a proactive approach in order to prevent the further increase of unnecessary human footprint and wilderness degradation in Antarctica;

Aware that in the future a legally binding Measure to prohibit permanent facilities for tourism or other non-governmental activities may prove necessary, but that this needs further discussion.

Emphasizing however, that recent plans for such facilities and related risks require immediate action, also to provide clarity to national competent authorities;

Recommend that their Governments:

* make every effort to prevent the construction and/or exploitation of any structure or facility for tourism and other non-governmental activities designed to be operated in Antarctica over multiple seasons, where its construction, operation or removal is expected to have more than a minor or transitory impact on the Antarctic environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems, or the intrinsic natural wilderness and historical values of Antarctica. Examples include, but are not restricted to, buildings, wharves and jetties, and graded runways on exposed ground; and
* undertake further work on this issue, including the development of an inventory of existing infrastructure supporting tourism and other non-governmental activities, to inform discussions on additional policies, including, if appropriate, the adoption of a legally binding Measure.

1. The ICG components have been numbered for the purpose of easy referencing. The ATCM also agreed that Observers and Experts participating in the ATCM would be invited to provide input and that The Netherlands would act as convener and report to the next ATCM on progress made in the ICG (§ 228 of the Final Report). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See, for example, ATCM XXXII/IP 23 rev. 1 *Tourism and Land-based Facilities in Antarctica*, tabled by ASOC. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See, e.g., ATCM 43/IP14, ‘Antarctic wilderness and inviolate areas’, tabled by Australia, The Netherlands and New Zealand, based on Leihy et al., ‘Antarctica’s wilderness fails to capture continent’s biodiversity’. *Nature* **583**, 567–571 (2020a). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-2506-3>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)