

ANT/XII/18

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ITEM 6: DRAFT RECOMMENDATION ON MAN'S IMPACT ON THE
ANTARCTIC ENVIRONMENT

(Submitted by the Environment Working Group)

THE_ANTIARCTIC_ENVIRONMENT

The Representatives,

Recalling Article II of the Antarctic Treaty, Recommendations VI-4, VIII-11, VIII-13 and IX-5;

Noting that in these Recommendations, which have become effective in accordance with Article IX, Paragraph 4 of the Antarctic Treaty, certain principles were elaborated and adopted, namely that:

- (i) the ecosystem of the Antarctic Treaty Area is vulnerable to human interference;
- (ii) the Antarctic derives much of its scientific importance from its uncontaminated and relatively undisturbed condition;
- (iii) in considering measures for the wise use and protection of the Antarctic environment their Governments shall act in accordance with their responsibility for ensuring that such measures are consistent with the interests of all mankind;
- (iv) no act or activity having an inherent tendency to modify the environment over wide areas within the Antarctic Treaty Area should be undertaken unless appropriate steps have been taken to foresee the probable modifications and to exercise appropriate controls with respect to the harmful effects such uses of the Antarctic Treaty Area

may have;

Recalling that in accordance with these principles there has been established for the Antarctic a substantial series of measures for the protection, conservation and wise use of Antarctic fauna and flora consisting of the Agreed Measures for the Conservation of Antarctic Fauna and Flora, the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources;

Noting that the States involved in Antarctic research activities are in the best position to assess potential environmental impacts of such activities and to develop assessment procedures which might, with benefit, be applied to determining whether the activities they plan to conduct are likely to have significant impacts;

Considering that a measure of comparability between such procedures might, in the future, become desirable;

Affirming that environmental assessment procedures should not prejudice one of the fundamental principles of the Antarctic Treaty providing for freedom of scientific investigation as set out in Article 2 of the Antarctic Treaty and that such procedures should not encroach upon nor prejudice provisions for the protection of the environment and the conservation of living resources contained in instruments that have been or may, in the future, be negotiated as parts of the Antarctic Treaty system;

Recommend to their Governments that:

1. In relation to any scientific activity they plan to conduct, including the planned provision of logistic facilities to support such activity, they urge their respective national organizations responsible for Antarctic activities to continue to scrutinize the plans for such research and logistic activities, in accordance with procedures they have developed or may develop, to determine whether the planned activities are likely to have significant impacts;

2. If a preliminary determination indicates that a planned research or logistic activity could have potentially significant impacts on the environment, their relevant agencies undertake a detailed environmental assessment in accordance with procedures they have developed or may develop, with a view to determining the factors likely to cause such impacts and, if the seriousness of such impacts so indicates, to elaborating feasible research and logistic alternatives aimed at minimizing harmful effects on the environment. In the event that such an assessment is completed they notify other Consultative Parties;

3. Through their National Committees, they invite the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) to:

- (i) offer scientific advice regarding the definition of categories of research and logistic activity in Antarctica which might reasonably be expected to have a significant impact on the environment;
- (ii) offer, bearing in mind, inter alia, the discussion at this Meeting as reflected in paragraphs to of its Report, such advice as seems to SCAR to be relevant to the elaboration of assessment

procedures which may be applied by the relevant agencies of the Consultative Parties, on an experimental basis, with regard to research and logistic activity;

4. The question of Man's Impact on the Antarctic Environment should be considered further at the next Consultative Meeting.