ASOC Report

XXXIX Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting

Santiago, Chile

23 May – 1 June 2016

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Summary

The XXXIX Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) was conducted in Santiago, Chile from 23 May to 1 June 2016. ASOC was represented by 11 delegates (7 on the ASOC delegation and 4 as NGO representatives on national delegations). ASOC submitted 7 information papers (IPs) on topics including shipping, climate change, cumulative impacts, protected areas, and tourism, as well as the report of ASOC to the XXXIX ATCM. ASOC also participated in several intersessional contact groups (ICGs) during the intersessional period.

The selection of themes of the information papers reflected the key priority issues identified by the Coalition. Salient points of the ATCM from an ASOC perspective include:

- Adoption of a Resolution reaffirming the commitment of Antarctic Treaty Parties to uphold the Protocol's mining ban.
- A symposium on the 25th anniversary of the Protocol discussed the achievements of the Protocol as well as the challenges ahead.
- The release of a public declaration celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Protocol by the meeting.
- Updates on environmental impact assessment criteria.
- Progress on including climate change in the work of the CEP.

1 Introduction

The XXXIX Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) was conducted in Santiago, Chile from 23 May to 1 June 2016.

This Report on the XXXIX ATCM1 focuses on the key issues for ASOC member groups. It does not intend to be an exhaustive report, but rather to complement the official report of the ATCM. The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 contains an overview of the XXXIX ATCM.
- Sections 3 – 7 report in more detail on some of the key issues at XXXIX ATCM.
- Section 8 contains conclusions and identifies main areas of future action.
- Appendix 1 lists commonly used Antarctic acronyms. Appendix 2 contains a list of ASOC documents submitted to the meeting.

1 This report was written by Claire Christian, Jessica O’Reilly, Ricardo Roura, Sune Tamm and Barry Weeber.
2 Overview of the XXXIX ATCM

2.1 ATCM structure

ATCMs give effect to obligations under the 1959 Antarctic Treaty, and the 1991 Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.

ATCMs are hosted by Consultative Parties (the full voting members – currently 29)\(^2\) in English-language alphabetical order. There are also 21 Non-Consultative Parties\(^3\) – non-voting members, an increasing number of which are active in Antarctica and the Antarctic Treaty System although the majority are not. The ATCM lasts one and a half weeks, and conducts its business through a number of Working Groups – presently Legal and Institutional and Science, Operations and Tourism. An ad-hoc Working Group was convened to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the signature of the Protocol of Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (the Protocol). In addition, the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) meets during the ATCM.

The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC) is invited as an Expert to ATCMs, the only environmental non-governmental group with such access.\(^4\)

The ATCM received 52 Working Papers and 137 Information Papers submitted by Parties, Observers and Experts, as well as a set of Secretariat papers dealing with operations of the Secretariat and summaries of information relevant to the meeting. It produced a Final Report containing 19 Measures\(^5\) (mainly management plans for protected/managed areas and historic sites and monuments); 6 Resolutions\(^6\) (4 of which are of interest, in varying degrees); and 6 Decisions\(^7\) (of which 3 are of interest).\(^8\) Electronic copies of these documents are available on the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat website - http://ats.aq/. Information Papers are available in the original language, and Working Papers are available in the four official languages - English, French, Russian and Spanish.

The Final Report of the Meeting on the AT Secretariat website provides an official record of key discussions and decisions on all matters discussed. As an overall comment on how ASOC’s team performed, our 6 substantive Information Papers were praised, and were used and referred to in the ensuing debates. ASOC made numerous interventions at the ATCM Working Groups and the CEP, a number of which are reflected in the official reports, and participated in open-ended contact groups on the side of the meetings.\(^9\)

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\(^2\) Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Bulgaria, Chile, China, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the USA and Uruguay.

\(^3\) Austria, Belarus, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Korea (DPRK), Malaysia, Monaco, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Turkey, and Venezuela.

\(^4\) Formally ASOC is an “Expert” to the ATCM and an “Observer” to the CEP meetings. In practice the role of ASOC is that of observer, as the term is commonly used outside the ATS.

\(^5\) A Measure is legally binding once it has entered into force.

\(^6\) A Resolution is hortatory.

\(^7\) A Decision is an administrative action, usually relating to a short-term event, and like a Resolution, hortatory.

\(^8\) Exact text of these Resolutions and Decisions can be obtained from the ATS website’s official Report of the Meeting.

\(^9\) There are 37 entries for ASOC in the CEP Final Report and 25 in the ATCM Final Report, comparable in numbers to that of key ATCPs and exceeding some of them.
2.2 ASOC delegation

ASOC was represented by 11 delegates either on the ASOC delegation or as NGO representatives on national delegations. The ASOC delegation was composed of:

Claire Christian (ASOC Interim Executive Director and Head of Delegation, US); Svante Bodin (International Cryosphere Climate Initiative, Sweden); Ryan Dolan (Pew Charitable Trusts, US); Andrea Kavanagh (Pew Charitable Trusts, US); Dr. Ricardo Roura (ASOC Senior Advisor and CEP Representative, The Netherlands); Sune Tamm (Polar Law student, Iceland); Dr. Rodolfo Werner (Antarctic and Southern Ocean Advisor, Pew Charitable Trusts, Argentina)

In addition, four government delegations included NGO representatives from ASOC:

Lyn Goldsworthy (representing Australian NGOs) on the Australian delegation; Rod Downie (WWF-UK) on the UK delegation; Jessica O’Reilly on the US delegation; and Barry Weeber (ECO-NZ) on the NZ delegation.

2.3 Materials submitted

ASOC submitted 8 IPs, 7 on topical information and a report to the ATCM summarising its activities over the previous year.

The ASOC team published one issue of the international newspaper ECO.

The ASOC information papers and the ECO are available on the ASOC website10.

2.4 ASOC priorities

ASOC’s general priorities for the XXXIX ATCM were to promote:

• Initiation of a systematic conservation planning process to designate new Antarctic Specially Protected Areas (ASPAs).

• Decisions on the management of Antarctic tourism.

• Commitments from SCAR and ATCPs to contribute scientific information to two upcoming IPCC reports.

• Action from the ATCM to use AT instruments to address environmental and safety issues not resolved by the current Polar Code.

2.5 Key outcomes

Positives

• New Zealand, in the context of a discussion about how ATS could fill gaps in environmental and safety protection left by the current Polar Code, stated an intention to review Annex I of Decision 4 (2004) and discuss the issue at next year’s meeting. It is the New Zealand view that the decision and appendix is out of date given the decisions made by the IMO on the Polar Code and should be updated.

• SCAR agreed to consider how it could contribute to the IPCC reports.

• SCAR noted that it is researching systematic conservation planning and its applications to protected areas at the ATCM and will continue to update the CEP on that research.

• The ATCM agreed a Resolution confirming the ongoing commitment of ATCPs to the mining ban and a Declaration that also mentioned support for the mining ban. This indicates that there is a high level of support for keeping the mining ban in place beyond 2048.

• The ATCM agreed a Resolution on the revised Environmental Impact Assessment guidelines, which included some ASOC suggestions.

• The ATCM instituted an intersessional contact group (ICG) aimed at improving the inspections process, and despite some initial opposition, allowed participation by Observers and Experts.

**Negatives**

• There were no significant measures or decisions adopted at the meeting.

• No new special protected areas or proposals for SPAs.

**Key instruments approved**

The Measures, Resolutions and Decisions approved of particular importance for ASOC are:

• Resolution 1 - Revised Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment in Antarctica

• Resolution 6 - Confirming ongoing commitment to the prohibition on Antarctic mineral resource activities, other than for scientific research; support for the Antarctic Mining Ban

**2.6 Operation of the Antarctic Treaty System**

Belarus, Canada, Colombia, Turkey, Malaysia, Monaco and Venezuela sent delegations. All reported some level of Antarctic activity in cooperation with various ATCPs, and progress made on adhering to the Protocol. Malaysia will host the next SCAR Open Science Conference in August 2016.

Venezuela requested to become an ATCP but this request was denied pending discussions on new criteria for achieving this status.

Future ATCM hosts will be China (2017), Ecuador (2018) and Czech Republic (2019). The XL ATCM will be held in China on dates to be determined.

**3 Meeting of the Committee for Environmental Protection**

**3.1 Strategic Discussions on the Future Work of the CEP**

The only paper submitted under this agenda item was **WP 46 rev. 1 Report of the Intersessional Contact Group on the Development of a Publication on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Madrid Protocol**. The publication is being developed by a number of CEP representatives, including several former CEP chairs. The CEP endorsed the publication and recommended to the ATCM that it be launched on 4 October 2016, the official anniversary of the signing of the Protocol.

**3.2 Annex I – Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

*Draft CEEs and IEEs*
One draft CEE, WP 43 Draft Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation for the construction and operation of a gravel runway in the area of Mario Zucchelli Station, Terra Nova Bay, Victoria Land, Antarctica, was submitted to the meeting by Italy. France presented the WP that reported on the results of the ICG formed to discuss this CEE. ASOC participated in the ICG and expressed some concerns about the development of the runway, namely that in addition to the impact of constructing the runway itself, the runway would enable more activities with a potential for significant environmental impacts, such as a road to the base, which was not included in the CEE.

There was a robust discussion in CEP, and a number of recommendations for improving the draft CEE were developed, including the need to add cumulative impacts, to include more details on the direct impacts of construction on habitats and species, to add more information about the initial environmental reference state, and to include consideration of the construction and operation of the road to the runway in the CEE. At the CEP, ASOC expressed reservations about a project of this kind, and suggested that if the project goes ahead Italy should protect an equivalent area as an ASPA.

China's stated intention to establish a base in the Ross Sea region - the subject of an earlier CEE - was not discussed at this ATCM. The location chosen previously was discarded as it was too windy, and this past season (2015/2016) China was scouting for a new location.

EIA Guidelines

The other main issue on the agenda was the revision of the EIA Guidelines, in which ASOC participated since the previous ATCM. The CEP agreed to the revised guidelines and they were adopted by the ATCM via a Resolution. The new guidelines contain additional detail on cumulative impacts and include wilderness.

UAVs

The use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly known as drones, was also discussed at length and though this is an important issue, it appears to be getting a level of attention out of proportion to its potential impacts.

3.3 Annex II – Conservation of Antarctic Flora and Fauna

Quarantine and Non-native Species

The revised Non-Native Species Manual was endorsed by the CEP and adopted by the ATCM via a Resolution. But work on risk from non-native marine species will not occur until 2020.

Other Annex II Matters

SCAR presented IP 38 Antarctica and the Southern Ocean in the Context of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Introducing this paper, SCAR noted that to date, Antarctica and the Southern Ocean have not been adequately represented in global biodiversity assessments and efforts for its conservation. The CEP noted that it was important for Antarctica to be included in global biodiversity assessment exercises. Though a minor point, there can be resistance in the ATS to external bodies discussing or analyzing Antarctica, so it is positive that this initiative was well-received.

3.4 Annex V – Protected Areas (including Marine Protected Areas)

ICG on Outstanding Values in the Antarctic Marine Environment
This ICG reported on a two-year discussion on protecting these values through ASPAs in accordance to Annex V of the Protocol. The TOR made very clear that this discussion did not in any way compete or conflicted with a separate work done by CCAMLR on MPAs. (ASPs are typically several orders of magnitude smaller than the proposed CCAMLR MPAs, and do not cover fishing activities). In the second year (2015-2016) few Parties participated in this discussion, although these included interesting interventions.

At the ATCM itself the discussion was also inconclusive. Some Parties expressed the same reservations they have to the adoption of CCAMLR MPAs, some of which are based in particular interpretations of the Protocol (or the CMLR Convention), including the impact of area protection on science. This highlights how strongly opposed some countries are to any form of protection of the marine environment.

**ASPs and ASMAs**

Much discussion was on the review of existing management plans.

Of interest was an ASPA that the UK proposed to de-list (WP80) because of the almost total disappearance of the values the ASPA intended to protect (a colony of Emperor penguins). Eventually, after some discussion, the UK agreed to continue to monitor the colony for five years. The UK also supported developing criteria for delisting.

**Dome A discussion**

This discussion on this issue continued at this year's ATCM. Many Parties repeated what they have been saying for years i.e. that the proposal was not necessary since China was the only operator in that remote area. Some seemed to hint at options for co-management. China noted a "dramatic increase of human activity in recent decades, unlike earlier decades...especially aircraft...Code of conduct needed to avoid mutual interference between activities...".

China noted that Annex V refers to "Activities are or may be conducted..." and not exclusively to present activities. The Chair noted the Chinese infrastructure on site and China's intention to share facilities. Although Members recalled that proposal of ASMA had been discussed for some time, and at this time several members still had reservations, informal discussion will continue in the intersessional period 2016-2017.

**Historic sites and monuments**

An idea promoted in 2015 (by UK and Norway) to stop the adoption of new HSMs until there was more clarity about how these should be preserved resulted in several proposals being suspended until that discussion is completed in coming years.

**Revision of guide on protected area proposals**

The guide to presentation of WP on ASPA and ASMA was revised with new questions to consider Antarctic conservation biogeographic regions, environmental domains and identified important bird areas.

**Codes of conduct**

The SCAR *Code of Conduct on Activity within Terrestrial Environment* was endorsed. Other SCAR Codes in existence are also being brought forward to future ATCM.
3.5 CEP Five-year Work Plan

The CEP’s Five-year work plan was updated, and has some notable gaps, including no planned work on wilderness. Work on protected areas is limited, and over the next year will focus primarily on refining the process for proposing and delisting protected areas. Only in 2018 is the CEP planning to provide a report to the ATCM on the status of the protected areas network.

4 Multi-Year Strategic Work Plan

As with the CEP Five-year Work Plan, this work plan is not very ambitious and includes little substantive intersessional work on critical areas such as tourism and protected areas.

5 Climate Change Issues

In our view, the ATCM and CEP in particular are gaining capacity for discussing climate change: this is a maturing issue.

The CEP/SC-CCAMLR workshop on climate change, held ahead of the ATCM, was considered a success by the Meeting, forming some of the Meeting’s discussion on climate change this year. The outcomes of the workshop were organized into clusters indicating where they might be addressed, such as the CEP’s Climate Change Response Workplan or within SCAR.

ASOC submitted two Information Papers concerning climate change, IP78: Antarctic Climate Change, Ice Sheet Dynamics and Irreversible Thresholds: ATCM Contributions to the IPCC and Policy Understanding, and IP81, Antarctic Climate Change Report Card. IP78 was generally well received and attracted some discussion. It proposes that SCAR and others coordinate a rapid assessment report that will feed into the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Special Report on the oceans and cryosphere, currently in development. However, while there were thanks and support from the CEP (including SCAR), there was not formal movement on determining the process for contributing to such a report. That should not preclude this activity from happening.

ASOC’s Climate Change Report Card is intended to inform the Meeting and interested members of the public on key scientific findings related to Antarctic climate change, in an easy-to-understand brief. SCAR engages in a similar exercise but the paper is much more technical. We consider this IP to be an annual piece of delegate and public information. It did not generate discussion on the floor of the Meeting but informal comments suggest that it is read and appreciated.

The CEP continued discussions on progress towards completing the goals on the Climate Change Response Workplan (CCRWP). The pace of this work is generally slow, and some of the goals were moved to later dates, however, it seems to be an important symbolic organizing tool for the CEP to think through its response to climate change.

In an important development, the interim Secretary of the IPCC accepted the ATCM’s invitation to the Meeting for the first time. ASOC worked with Parties to ensure that IPCC secured CEP expert status for the coming years.

6 Tourism Issues

ICG on the development of a strategic vision for tourism
India and New Zealand co-convened an ICG on developing a strategic approach to environmentally managed tourism and non-governmental activities and reported back to the ATCM on the outcomes of that discussion. The main recommendations that emerged from the ICG are for Parties to develop a common vision for tourism at ATCM XL (2017), for the ATCM to review progress on implementation of the recommendations of the 2012 CEP Tourism Study and for the ATCM to develop a Multi-Year Work Plan to organize work on outstanding tourism issues. Parties supported the need to be proactive on tourism and noted that Resolution 7 (2009) could be used as guidance on developing a strategic approach. The discussion on the ICG was fairly long and many countries made interesting points. Some Parties mentioned that they were uncomfortable with tourist numbers increasing significantly over current levels. Several countries and ASOC mentioned the importance of addressing cumulative impacts from tourism - an issue that has been a matter of concern for years.

Unauthorized expeditions

The main item for discussion was a paper from the United Kingdom, WP 11 Antarctic Treaty Party nationals engaging with unauthorised non-Governmental expeditions to Antarctica. This subject has been of considerable debate over the past few years due to a few high profile events. It has emerged that there really isn’t much that ATCPs can do to prevent or punish those who engage in these kinds of expeditions, which is what is motivating the UK to provide the paper. The UK stated that they want to have a discussion to ensure that individuals are responsible for their behaviour in Antarctica. Several ATCPs responded by detailing their legal systems. The usefulness of sharing information between ATCPs and competent authorities was also noted.

Growth in air-cruise tourism

The US introduced WP 41 rev. 1 Consideration for Non-governmental and Tourism Activities Involving Combined Air and Cruise Transportation to Antarctica. The main point of the paper was to highlight for the ATCM that air-cruise tourism was growing rapidly (although is still a small portion of the overall market) and that this may present additional environmental and safety issues. The US suggested that it would be beneficial for ATCPs involved in this form of tourism to communicate more amongst themselves. There was a reasonably vigorous discussion about the implications of the increase in air-cruise activities, but it appears that the main outcome will be that it will be a part of future discussions on a workplan or a strategic vision for tourism. One important element of the discussion was the recognition that permitting of activities by different Parties could lead to gaps in the EIA process.

Legal framework for tourism

Germany presented the IP Antarctic Tourism Study: Analysis and Enhancement of the Legal Framework, which evaluated the legal regulatory framework for Antarctic tourism and proposed amendments in the light of future developments. The study found a number of gaps in the current regulations for tourism and proposed ways to fill those gaps. The paper also mentioned the need to consider cumulative impacts in EIAs. The paper was interesting but did not provoke much discussion.

Communication among competent authorities

Both the US and Norway (with co-sponsors France, Netherlands, New Zealand and United Kingdom) presented papers about how to improve communication among the competent authorities involved in permitting tourist activities. The US noted that there was a risk of mistakes in the permitting process particularly when multiple Parties were involved in
permitting different parts of an activity. Norway’s paper was process-oriented and recommended the creation of a list of competent authorities to be posted on the ATS website along with the establishment of a discussion forum for competent authorities. Both of these proposals were accepted.

20-Year Analysis of Tourism trends

Projections by IAATO is that tourism numbers in Antarctica in the coming season will be the highest on record, exceeding those in 2007 prior to the global financial crash. IAATO also noted that new vessels are likely to operate in the coming seasons in the Peninsula. IAATO (with the US) presented an IP analysing 20 years of tourism on the Antarctic Peninsula. The paper identified three that tourism activities had focused on a very small number of mostly ice-free sites covering a total area of 200 hectares; that tourism numbers would likely grow in new non-English speaking markets; and that Antarctic tourism was strongly influenced by global socio-economic forces and as such future projects should take into account such impacts. New Zealand noted that the growth of tourism could lead to demands for more and more sites. The concept of trigger levels, that is, levels of visitation that would trigger a need for a management response from the ATCM, was discussed. The meeting agreed to include the need to improve visitor site monitoring in its Multi-Year Strategic Workplan and to ask the CEP to develop trigger levels to assist in guiding monitoring efforts.

7 Other Issues

10.1 SCAR Lecture

This year’s SCAR lecture was delivered by outgoing SCAR President Jerónimo López-Martínez and was titled “Exploring the future of scientific research in Antarctica”. The lecture was an overview of the SCAR Horizon Scan process and some of its recommendations and follow up activities. The need for greater international cooperation and collaboration on Antarctic science was highlighted.

10.2 AOA/ASOC event

AOA, ASOC and Pew co-hosted a lunch event with the government of Chile and IAATO on May 24th. The theme of the event was to celebrate the Antarctic Peninsula and was well-attended by meeting participants.

10.3 Structure of Future meetings

Next year’s ATCM will be eleven days long, with only the CEP meeting on the first day of the meeting. This is to eliminate some of the problems that have occurred by the concurrent operation of ATCM working groups and the CEP.

10.4 Liability

Annex VI has still not been ratified (by about 50% of the Parties that signed it in 2005) and there was the usual round of exhortations and promises of progress.

10.5 Inspection Reports

Formation of an ICG to discuss a more cooperative model for Treaty inspections

During Working Group 2 of the ATCM, the Republic of Korea presented IP 102 proposing a more cooperative model for conducting inspections. The paper received broad support during
discussion most notably from the Netherlands who proposed an ICG be formed to discuss this topic further. Amidst the support for the IP and ICG was a reassertion of sovereign rights to inspect and that the ICG should not undermine or reinterpret the Treaty. The United States was the strongest proponent of this point. The ATCM agreed to form an ICG, led by the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, and the United States, to discuss inspections further. The terms of reference for the ICG include describing the process for inspections; and enhancing effectiveness of inspections through promoting cooperation where appropriate. Observers and Experts were welcome to join the ICG.

8 Conclusions
There are numerous opportunities for the ATCM to advance environmental protection, but it is currently not taking advantage of them. In the intersessional period, ASOC will work to make progress in this area and ensure a successful 2017 ATCM.
Appendix 1 – Acronyms

ASMA  Antarctic Specially Managed Area
ASOC  Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition http://www.asoc.org/
ASMA  Antarctic Specially Managed Area
ASPA  Antarctic Specially Protected Area
ATCM  Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting
ATCP  Antarctic Treaty Consultative Party
ATS  Antarctic Treaty System
COMMISSION  Commission for CCAMLR
CEE  Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation
CEP  Committee for Environmental Protection (of the ATCM) http://www.cep.aq/
COMNAP  Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs http://www.comnap.aq/
EIA  Environmental Impact Assessment
IAATO  International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators http://www.iaato.org
ICG  Intersessional Contact Group
IEE  Initial Environmental Evaluation
IMO  International Maritime Organization
IP  Information Paper presented to either the ATCM or CCAMLR
IPY  International Polar Year
IUCN  World Conservation Union (formerly International Union for Conservation of Nature) http://www.iucn.org
IWC  International Whaling Commission
MARPOL  International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
MEPC  Marine Environment Protection Committee (of IMO)
MSC  Maritime Safety Committee (of IMO)
NAP  (National Antarctic Programs)
SCAR  Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research http://www.scar.org/
SGMP  Subsidiary Group on Management Plans (of CEP)
UAV  Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
WG  Working Group (currently Legal and Institutional, Operations, and Tourism)
WP  Working Paper
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<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
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<td>IP 41</td>
<td>The Future of Antarctica Forum</td>
<td>The first Future of Antarctica Forum, which involved the participation of individuals from a range of Antarctic stakeholder groups, noted that the Antarctic Treaty System needs to continue evolving in the 21st century; and that increasing and enhancing the use of the scientific data and information available to assist decision-making and ongoing, improved cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders will be essential to ensuring that Antarctica remains a continent of peace, science, and conservation. The key roles of Antarctic science, management and diplomacy in addressing climate change emerged as a central theme and the notable warming trend in the western Antarctic Peninsula was identified as a significant concern. In this regard, it was agreed that future policy decisions would be significantly aided by an interdisciplinary, international effort that seeks to &quot;distinguish the direct and interactive effects of climate change, fishing, tourism, and national operations on ecosystems in the Antarctic Peninsula region for improved environmental management,&quot; with participants suggesting that Oceania pursues development of a project along these lines, working with relevant stakeholders in the collaborative spirit of the Antarctic Treaty System.</td>
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<td>IP 78</td>
<td>Antarctic Climate Change, Ice Sheet Dynamics and Irreversible Thresholds: ATCM Contributions to the IPCC and Policy Understanding</td>
<td>Communicating the threat of irreversible, long-term changes to the global climate system, including but not limited to sea level change, represents a significant science-policy challenge to the Antarctic research community. In particular, the CEP, together with SCAR, may wish to examine the optimal strategy for contributing to the planned Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Oceans and Cryosphere, perhaps through a summary study of Antarctic ice sheet dynamics and projections in response to climate change. Parties may also wish to consider cooperative efforts with Arctic research bodies, and encourage national research teams to make emerging findings available in time for inclusion in the Special Report.</td>
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<td>IP 79</td>
<td>An Unprecedented Achievement: 25 Years of the Madrid Protocol</td>
<td>On the 25th anniversary of the Madrid Protocol on Environmental Protection, ASOC encourages ATCPs to reflect on the value of the Protocol as a whole, and the enormous benefits, including the mining ban, that the Protocol has had for the continent and for peaceful Antarctic governance. The decision of Antarctic Treaty Parties to reject the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities (CRAMRA) in favor of a comprehensive, precautionary regime of environmental protection represented a significant milestone. Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties (ATCPs) demonstrated global leadership in prioritizing Antarctica’s continued protection over its possible exploitation. However, in recent years, the lure of a supposed El Dorado has sparked media speculation that it is only a matter of time before this tremendous achievement will fall victim to human greed. This perception is based on a misunderstanding of the Environmental Protocol, and fails to appreciate the strength of the shared commitment of ATCPs to the principles of the Treaty and the Protocol.</td>
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<td>IP 80</td>
<td>A Systematic Approach to Designating ASPAs and ASMAs</td>
<td>In this paper, ASOC provides preliminary suggestions on how to expand the protected areas system under the Protocol in order to comply with the requirements of Annex V, Arts. 3 and 4. It also discusses how this system might have benefits for the management of tourism, a topic that has been under discussion by the ATCM for a number of years without significant changes.</td>
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<td>IP 81</td>
<td>Antarctic Climate Change Report Card</td>
<td>For the fourth year, ASOC presents its Climate Change Report Card, a summary of notable scientific breakthroughs and climate events related to anthropogenic climate change in the Antarctic. We track scientific publications and science reporting to bring up-to-date findings to the ATCM and provide policy advice connecting Antarctic climate science to Antarctic environmental management decisions.</td>
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<td>IP 82</td>
<td>Progress on the Polar Code</td>
<td>ASOC provides a brief update on progress to protect the Southern Ocean from the risks associated with vessels operating in the region. It also identifies a number of remaining gaps in protection, in particular in relation to non-SOLAS vessels such as fishing vessels, private yachts and small cargo vessels, which are not currently covered by the safety provisions of the Polar Code, and a number of threats associated with vessel operations and environmental protection. These include spill response and the introduction of non-native species. ASOC recommends that ATCPs should:</td>
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- as a matter of urgency, and ahead of the forthcoming ATCM, collaborate with colleagues attending the IMO’s Maritime Safety Committee’s 96th Session between May 11th–20th to ensure that there is widespread support at MSC 96 for Phase 2 (Step 2) of work on the Polar Code addressing the non-SOLAS vessels to commence as soon as possible; |

11 ASOC also submitted IP 123, The Report of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition, but this IP is largely a summary of the other papers.
### ASOC Report on XXXIX ATCM

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<th>IP 83</th>
<th>ASOC’s update on Marine Protected Areas in the Southern Ocean</th>
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<td>The various components of the Antarctic Treaty System, including the Antarctic Treaty, the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, and the Protocol of Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, have overlapping but not identical membership, stakeholder groups, and even individual actors. One of the most significant discussions of the past decade affecting the Antarctic Treaty Area has been the ongoing discussion on the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). This process is significant in terms of scope, spatial extent, and generally the precedent of conducting systematic conservation planning in a regional scale in Antarctica. In this document ASOC provides its perspectives on recent CCAMLR MPA discussions primarily for the benefit of ATCM/CEP Members, stakeholders and individuals not participating in those discussions.</td>
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- consider the environmental threats from shipping activities which remain outside of the Polar Code, and prioritise those in most urgent need of action, and agree an appropriate course of action for the priorities; and
- undertake a review of the potential opportunities for reducing the risks of collisions and groundings and protecting the most vulnerable areas through the use of IMO measures.