

Antarctic Treaty-Arctic

Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs

Council Joint Meeting

Washington Ministerial Declaration On The International Polar Year And Polar Science

Washington, DC

April 6, 2009

STATEMENT

On the occasion of the conclusion of the fourth International Polar Year (IPY), the Member States of the Arctic Council and the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty,

Observing that the IPY occurred against a backdrop of rapid and significant climate and environmental change in the polar regions,

Acknowledging the unique scientific importance of the polar regions, both as actors and barometers of these changes, which are vital to the functioning of the earth's terrestrial, biological, climate, ocean and atmospheric systems,

Recognizing the need to improve the modeling and prediction of change on a regional basis,

Recognizing the significant work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in assessing documented and predicted changes in polar regions and in relating them to larger global systems,

Affirming the importance of the IPY's findings to the scientific community, Arctic residents, including indigenous peoples, and to humanity as a whole,

Observing the success of participants in forming IPY collaborations that integrate the human, physical, and biological aspects of their research to achieve system-scale knowledge,

Recognizing the vital contributions toward understanding the characteristics and dynamics of polar regions and their roles for the world's ecosystems made by scientists and other participants from over sixty countries,

Noting the extensive efforts of the International Council for Science (ICSU), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the many IPY National Committees, and the scientists and other participants around the globe whose research made IPY a great success,

Recalling the goals for the IPY set forth in the 2006 Edinburgh Antarctic Declaration on the International Polar Year 2007-2008, and the strong support for IPY expressed by the Arctic Council in the 2006 Salekhard Declaration,

Expecting that the legacy of the IPY will continue well beyond its formal conclusion,

Hereby:

1. Urge states, national and international scientific bodies, and other interested parties to cooperate to deliver a lasting legacy from the IPY, and to support appropriate infrastructures to achieve this;

2. Commit themselves to reviewing key issues related to scientific cooperation and recent scientific findings at the biennial Ministerial Meetings of the Arctic Council and annual Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings, and further commit to using science to help inform the cooperative development of measures to address the threats to the polar regions;

3. Call upon IPY participants to continue to make data collected under IPY 2007-2008 and its legacy programs available in an open and timely manner, recall the obligations related to exchange of scientific information to this effect in the Antarctic Treaty, and encourage the same spirit of scientific openness among Arctic researchers;

4. Endorse the goal of strengthening international cooperation at all levels in polar regions among States, scientists, Arctic residents, including indigenous peoples, and their institutions in areas such as educational outreach, human and ecosystem health, environmental protection, and scholarships for young scientists;

5. Encourage the development of coordinated research and scientific observations at both poles to compare the current dynamics of polar areas and their contributions to the Earth's processes and changes;

6. Recommend that governments continue their support for efforts initiated during IPY to create and link observational systems in order to improve the modeling and prediction of climate change on both regional and temporal scales;

7. Encourage states and international bodies to use the scientific understandings derived from IPY research to support the development of concrete steps to protect the environment in the polar regions;

8. Support the analysis and use of scientific data and information collected from the polar regions as a result of IPY to contribute to future assessments by the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, as well as other efforts to address climate change, and future Arctic Council assessments;

9. Call upon states, organizations, scientists, and other stakeholders to continue to engage with young people to cultivate the next generation of polar scientists, and to communicate with the general public to develop an awareness of the importance of polar research for life in all regions of the world; and

10. Affirm the value of collaboration and coordination between states and Arctic residents, including indigenous peoples, for the benefit of polar research.

Adopted at Washington, April 6, 2009