

XXVIII ANTARCTIC TREATY CONSULTATIVE MEETING

Concluding Remarks

by

Ambassador Hans Corell

Chairman of the Meeting

**Stockholm
17 June 2005**

Distinguished delegates,

The 28th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting is now coming to an end. It has been an honour and a great pleasure to chair the Meeting. I believe that we all agree that we have accomplished what we set out to do, and matters have been advanced in the special way that is a feature of the Antarctic cooperation. In short, the Meeting has been very fruitful.

After an intense first week, the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) presented a comprehensive report, bringing the environmental issues forward. Since these issues are central in the Antarctic Treaty System they have been given great attention in various ways during the Meeting. I would, in particular, like to stress the importance of the decision to commence elaborating a strategy for the future work of the CEP.

This achievement is of course an effort in which all delegations can and should take pride. But, needless to say, the Chairman of CEP, Dr Anthony Press, deserves special recognition for the way in which he guided the Committee through a busy agenda. We also thank Professor Dr. Jörn Thiede, the President of SCAR, and Professor Steven Chown for their very interesting presentations in the presence of His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf.

An event that we all looked forward to with great expectations was the adoption of Annex VI on Liability Arising from Environmental Emergencies to the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty. The finalization of this Annex is a major achievement of this Meeting. We are grateful to all who have contributed to this work over the years. Our special thanks go to Ambassador Don MacKay, who skilfully guided the Working Group on Liability to this successful result.

We are particularly grateful that Ambassador MacKay organized and generously hosted an intersessional meeting in April in spite of the fact that he is presently the very busy Chairman of the Fifth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. I believe that the April meeting in New York greatly contributed to ATCM being able to adopt Annex VI here in Stockholm.

Special thanks also to Mr. Rene Léfeber, the Chairman of the Drafting Group, and to Mr. Mark Simonoff, who chaired the sub-group on Article 9 of Annex VI.

We are also grateful to Mr. Michel Trinquier for chairing the Working Group on Tourism, to Professor Olav Orheim for chairing the Working Group on Legal and Institutional Matters, this time with an extended mandate to review all draft instruments before they go before the Plenary, and to Dr José Retamales for chairing the Working Group on Operational Matters. They all contributed in different respects to the successful outcome of the 28th ATCM.

My personal and sincere thanks go to the Heads of Delegation who faithfully participated in meetings both before and during the formal Meeting. I think that these gatherings were most helpful for the process as a whole.

The same applies to the Bureau which met whenever there was a need. I also think that it was a good idea to invite representatives from the Host Government of the 29th ATCM to the meetings of the Bureau. The idea was of course to make sure that Dr Mike Richardson and the future head of the new Host Country Secretariat, Mr. Paul Davies, and their colleagues should gain information that may be useful when they organize next year's Meeting.

We now welcome the presence at this Plenary Meeting of Mr. Robert Culshaw, Director of the Americas & Overseas Territories in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

We are grateful to the Observers and the Experts for participating in the Meeting and for sharing their views and experiences with us.

We are also very grateful for the assistance given to the Meeting by Mr. Jan Huber, the Executive Secretary, and his team. This was the first time they participated in a Meeting in their new capacity, and I think the experience bodes well for the future.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Greger Widgren and my other colleagues in the Swedish delegation for their support. Needless to say, I am also most grateful to the Secretary General of the Host Country Secretariat, Ambassador Folke Löfgren, and his team. They have worked hard for a long time to make this Meeting an accomplishment, and I think that it is fair to say that they have succeeded.

We were happy to note that many delegates have taken the time to participate in the social program too, including the visits to the Museum of Natural History and the Icebreaker Oden. These events are important also in the sense that the participants have extra opportunities to discuss matters relating to the Meeting and to get to know each other better.

As in the past, we are indebted to Mr. Bernard Ponette and his very competent team of translators and interpreters. Without them, we simply could not have achieved what we did. Their performance also testifies to the value of high quality speediness and continuity.

We also thank our technicians and all the many who have assisted us, be it in our midst or behind the scenes: security, catering, personnel from the museum, attachés, conference pilots and the officers at the friendly helpdesk and the internet café.

The exhibition by Dr Fred Goldberg and his Post Office were delightful components of the Meeting and gave it a historic touch. The same holds true for Pablo Weinschenker's film. We are grateful to both of them.

We should also not forget the media. Hopefully, the successful cooperation within the framework of the Antarctic Treaty is better known now to the general public, since both national and international media followed the Meeting. Our special thanks to Mr. Stig Berglind, who served as Liaison Officer.

Allow me to make a few personal remarks relating to one particular issue, namely the Consultative Parties' Contributions. The reason that I raise the topic is that I have

practical experience, in particular from the mid-1990s, of managing a department within the United Nations Secretariat at a time when assessed contributions were not forthcoming as they should have. This caused much extra work and frustration within the Organization and, in particular, the Secretariat.

The effective operation of the Secretariat is of course a matter of utmost importance to us all. I now sincerely hope that all Contracting Parties will in the well-known “Antarctic Spirit” support the Secretariat by fully paying their contributions and – even better – by approving Measure 1 (2003), thereby putting its legal and budgetary framework in place.

Distinguished delegates,

Before I declare this Meeting closed, let me add the following.

We should take pride in our achievements. But more important is to look forward and to focus on our future work. This work should be seen in a larger perspective – as an important contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, the mandate of the United Nations.

At the opening and closing of the United Nations General Assembly, there is a recurrent item on the agenda: Minute of silent prayer or meditation. The same procedure is observed at the meetings of the Assembly of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

I am not suggesting that you should adopt the same procedure in the ATCM. But on this occasion, because of a very special coincidence, I propose that the Meeting should observe a moment of stillness before the gavel falls.

Upon leaving the United Nations in March 2004, after ten years as the Legal Counsel of the Organization, I presented the Secretary-General with a gift – a piece of music that I had composed for him: “*Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s Prayer for Peace*”.

There is an explanation to the title, but it is not necessary to relate it here. Suffice it to say that the prayer has no words. Hopefully, the music can be understood by all, and those who listen are free to add in their minds in any language words of their own.

But why, do you ask, play this music on this occasion? The reason is very simple. I wrote the music for the Great Highland Bagpipe. So, not only will the music give room for silent prayer or meditation – it will also point forward to the challenges at the Meeting next year in Edinburgh.

We thank the Government of the United Kingdom for offering to host the next ATCM in Scotland. From personal experience over many years I know that you will be met by something that is a hallmark of that country: hospitality and friendship. - - - -

The 28th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting is closed!