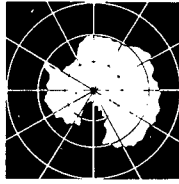


TRATADO ANTARTICO
XIV REUNION CONSULTIVA

TRAITE SUR L'ANTARCTIQUE
XIV REUNION CONSULTATIVE



RIO DE JANEIRO
1987

ANTARCTIC TREATY
XIV CONSULTATIVE MEETING

ДОГОВОР ОБ АНТАРКТИКЕ
XIV КОНСУЛЬТАТИВНОЕ СОВЕЩАНИЕ

05-16 OCTOBER

ATCM/XIV/W.P/12

Item 6: Operation of the Antarctic Treaty
System : an Antarctic Treaty Infrastructure

DISCUSSION PAPER SUBMITTED BY
THE DELEGATION OF AUSTRALIA

No public release envisaged before ATCM XV

The purpose of this paper is to offer an Australian view on the question of creating some sort of permanent infrastructure for the Antarctic Treaty, and to suggest a follow-up process to carry matters forward.

At the Preparatory Meeting for the XIV th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, the Delegation of Norway circulated a valuable Discussion paper (XIV ATCM/PREP/004) which, following up discussion at ATCM XIII concluded that some sort of permanent infrastructure was important to the future of the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS).

Australia considers that there is an urgent need to consider the establishment of a small and cost-effective secretariat to act as a servant to the Treaty Parties. This would significantly assist in improving the effectiveness of the Consultative Meeting process and in strengthening the Treaty system against outside challenge.

Amongst the factors which have led Australia to support a small secretariat is our overall experience since the inception of the Treaty. We were among those who participated in the negotiation of the Treaty and the original signatories.

Australia has hosted two Consultative Meetings, the first one in 1961 and again in 1983. In fact the experience in 1983 led us to conclude that the current arrangement of responsibility for secretariat work, rotating with the host country, could no longer be sustained. It had become too much of a burden to handle on a part-time basis by officials who were already fully occupied with normal national duties.

In this respect it is important that our arrangements for continuity between Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings take due account of the pressures on the ATS which have been brought about by the expanding level of activity in the Antarctic, and the increasing variety and complexity of issues which Treaty Parties have to deal with.

Such arrangements should enable the host country of the day to exercise proper control and supervision on behalf of Treaty Parties, without having to commit scarce national resources on what are matters of important but routine Treaty business. These matters are most appropriately delegated to a small body which can build up expertise in the continuous discharge of these functions.

Further, Australia's involvement at the UN in New York, working with other Antarctic Treaty parties in the common task of defending the Treaty against outside challenge, has led us to believe that a small but visible permanent infrastructure would add to the transparency of the ATS by serving as a central point of contact, and a clearing house for exchanges of information with outside bodies such as the U N.

The experience of CCAMLR has shown that with foresight and planning a small Secretariat can carry out its functions in a cost-effective manner while at all times under the control of (in this case) the Commission Members. The staffing level of the small CCAMLR Secretariat has remained unchanged for the past five years since its establishment. Structural possibilities for any infrastructure need further consideration, but as has been suggested to us one possibility might be some sort of common servicing arrangement with CCAMLR, although this would need to emphasise the specific identity, functions and status of any Treaty infrastructure.

To ensure that any Treaty Secretariat serves the interests of the Treaty Parties exactly as we would want in to, it will be necessary first to define its organisation and functions. In order to facilitate proper consideration of these important matters, we support the need for the XIVth Consultative Meeting to:

- a) agree in principle to establish an appropriate Treaty infrastructure as soon as possible; and
- b) convene a Special Consultative Meeting in 1988 to consider in detail the establishment of a permanent Antarctic Treaty Secretariat.

To this end, the Government of Australia is prepared to offer to host a Special Consultative Meeting in 1988. This offer would include provision of secretariat and other support.