

JANUARY 1999 MINISTERIAL MEETING IN ANTARCTICA

NEW ZEALAND WORKING PAPER

New Zealand recommends that the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) and the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) consider the attached communique issued by representatives at the January 1999 Ministerial meeting in Antarctica.

COMMUNIQUE

At the invitation of New Zealand, representatives from twenty-three Parties to the Antarctic Treaty met informally in the fortieth anniversary year of the Treaty at Ross Island, Antarctica, from 25-28 January 1999. Representatives were hosted by New Zealand, with assistance from the Italian and United States Antarctic programmes.

Representatives recorded the achievements of the Treaty in keeping the continent free from discord and dedicated to peace and science. They stressed the importance of the entry into force of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Treaty (the Madrid Protocol) that will promote the protection of the Antarctic environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

Representatives noted the importance of the scientific research being conducted in Antarctica, in fields such as global climate change, much of which is through successful international cooperation. They stressed the value of this cooperation in fostering the aims of the Antarctic Treaty System.

The Antarctic Treaty System is facing new challenges, including pressures from non-sustainable use of resources. Representatives expressed in particular their grave concern at the threat posed by continuing illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing for toothfish. Representatives pledged themselves to work to meet these new challenges and to maintain the integrity of the Antarctic Treaty System.

Representatives drew attention to the integrated nature of the marine and terrestrial ecosystems of the Antarctic. Recalling the origins of the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) as an integral part of the Antarctic Treaty System, representatives acknowledged the significance of the work of the CCAMLR Commission in the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources. They welcomed the prospect of close cooperation between the Committee for Environmental Protection established under the Madrid Protocol and the CCAMLR Scientific Committee in addressing the threats to the Antarctic ecosystems.

Representatives looked forward to the Twenty-third Consultative Meeting of Parties to be held in Lima, Peru, from 24 May to 4 June 1999, and to the commemoration at that

occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty. They looked forward to making progress at the Meeting on key policy matters, including the further development of a Liability Annex, or Annexes, to the Madrid Protocol.

Representatives reaffirmed their commitment to the Antarctic Treaty and to the System as the best means of protecting and preserving the Antarctic in the twenty-first century.

Representatives thanked the Government of New Zealand for its kind invitation to familiarise themselves with the reality and challenges of Antarctica, and for the hospitality and support of the Italian and United States Antarctic programmes.

Scott Base
Antarctica

27 January 1999