

# INTERNATIONAL POLAR YEAR 2007-08

## Proposed Activity to the International Council of Science (ICSU)

**TITLE:** *International Workshop at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station on International Scientific Cooperation and the Antarctic Treaty System*

**PURPOSE:** Assessment of international scientific cooperation since the International Geophysical Year (1957-58) and its role in the Antarctic Treaty System.

*Acknowledging* the substantial contributions to scientific knowledge resulting from international cooperation in scientific investigation in Antarctica;

*Convinced* that the establishment of a firm foundation for the continuation and development of such cooperation on the basis of freedom of scientific investigation in Antarctica as applied during the International Geophysical Year accords with the interests of science and the progress of all mankind;

*Preamble, 1959 Antarctic Treaty*

**BACKGROUND:** Advancement in Earth system science and international cooperation have been intertwined with the three International Polar Years since 1882 (Table 1). The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Polar Year (which was convened as the International Geophysical Year from 1 June 1957 through 31 December 1958) directly influenced the establishment of the 1959 *Antarctic Treaty* as noted in the Preamble above.

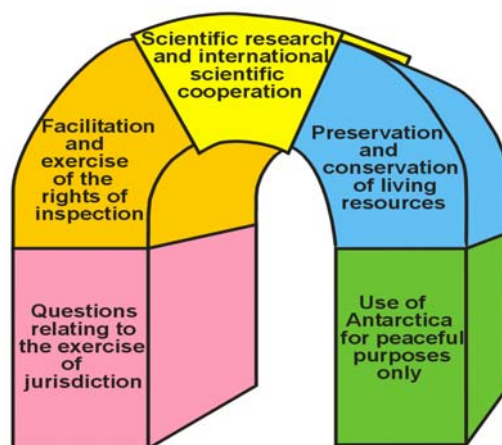
	IPY-1	IPY-2	IPY-3*	IPY-4**
<b>DATES</b>	1882-83	1932-33	1957-58	2007-08
<b>NATIONS</b>	11	40	67	All (>191)
<b>DISCIPLINES</b>	3	4	14	≈25
<b>SOLAR ACTIVITY</b>	Maximum	minimum	Maximum	Maximum
<b>DISTANCE FROM EARTH SURFACE</b>	ground-based (≈0.1 km)	≈10 km	≈100,000 km	≈72,000,000 km
<b>REGION</b>	Arctic and Antarctic	Arctic	Global	Global and Interplanetary

\*Renamed the International Geophysical Year. \*\*Extrapolated from previous IPY. From Ref. 1.

The International Geophysical Year was coordinated by the International Council of Science through committees that included the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, Scientific Committee on Ocean Research and the Committee on Space Research. It is noteworthy that Antarctica, the oceans and outer space – as global regions beyond the jurisdiction of any one nation – subsequently became managed through multilateral institutions for “peaceful purposes”: 1958 *Convention on the High Seas*; 1959 *Antarctic Treaty*; and 1967 *Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and other Celestial Bodies*.

The International Polar Year 2007-08 (Refs. 2-4) provides a rare opportunity to reflect on the progress of humankind through the multilateral institutions that have emerged in concert with international scientific cooperation, particularly the 1959 *Antarctic Treaty*. Consequently, discussions at the South Pole workshop will focus on the “*matters of common interest*” – particularly the ‘scientific keystone’ that has fostered international cooperation and continuous consultation in the Antarctic Treaty System since its inception in 1959 (Fig. 1).

The geographic South Pole is a unique location on Earth that inspired centuries of explorers toward *Terra Australis Incognita*. Beyond exploration, the South Pole also is the geopolitical center of Antarctica with the sectors that have been claimed by nations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Convening the International Polar Year workshop at the South Pole in 2007-08 will bring the international community together in an unparalleled historic context to reflect on the “*progress of all mankind*” and the substantial contributions from scientific investigation.



**FIGURE 1:** "Matters of common interest," as identified originally in Article IX of the Antarctic Treaty, with the 'scientific keystone' for cooperative international management of the region south of 60° South latitude. Modified from Ref. 4.

### LOGISTICS:

The workshop will be convened during the January-February period in 2007 or 2008 at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station that is operated by the United States Antarctic Program (Ref. 5). Logistical organization for the South Pole workshop will build on the template of the international workshop at the Beardmore South Field Camp in Antarctica that involved 100 invited and 60 actual participants as well as support staff from January 7-13, 1985 (Ref. 6). A similar number of participants is envisioned for the South Pole workshop.

Coordinating and successfully implementing the South Pole workshop in a cost-effective and practical manner will be a huge undertaking with complex logistics: scoping and organizational discussions; design and preparation of specific facilities as well as all of the transport and staging that will need to dovetail with the normal operations of the United States Antarctic Program; health and environmental safety preparations; real-time global communications and global broadcasting as well as diverse support and funding platforms. There will be significant costs and efforts associated with each of these stages. There will be issues of who to invite and why; what to discuss and how to arrange the venue. The planning also will involve foreign offices, multiple agencies and diverse organizations in the international community.

Time is short to lay the groundwork for a meaningful workshop at the South Pole in 2007-08. The immediate next step is to coordinate the necessary scoping discussions in a manner that builds consensus and enables the vision of an International Polar Year workshop at the South Pole to become a reality. Discussions have begun with representatives from the National Science Foundation / Office of Polar Programs and Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research to frame the logistic issues of the South Pole workshop. To move forward, the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management at the University of California Santa Barbara will submit the initial planning proposal to the National Science Foundation / Office of Polar Programs in June 2004 that will involve individuals from academic institutions, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, media and the private sector in the international community.

**The International Polar Year workshop at the South Pole in 2007-08 will be a unique global event that will be remembered for generations as a symbol of international science and cooperation on Earth.**

### REFERENCES:

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5. Augustine, N. (ed.). *The United States in Antarctica. Report of the U.S. Antarctic Program External Panel*. National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C. 94 p.
6. Polar Research Board. 1986. *Antarctic Treaty System: An Assessment. Proceedings of a Workshop Held at Beardmore South Field Camp, Antarctica*. National Academy Press. Washington. D.C. 435 p.

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