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## QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA

Report of the Secretary-GeneralAddendum

At the request of the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations, its note verbale, dated 30 April 1986, to the Secretary-General is being issued in its entirety as an addendum to A/41/688.

The Secretary-General's notes [of 10 February 1986] were issued pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 40/156 A and B. In this regard, the Permanent Representative of Australia has the honour to recall that, before the voting on these resolutions in the First Committee at the fortieth session, he made a statement on behalf of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties. 1/ The statement noted that the insistence of some delegations in putting divisive resolutions to a vote had occasioned decisions by most of the Treaty Parties to take the unusual step of not participating in the voting. The statement (see A/C.1/40/PV.55) also included the following observations:

"It is a matter of great regret to members of the Antarctic Treaty that the tradition of consensus decision-making, which has been followed since the question of Antarctica was first inscribed on the agenda of the United Nations, at the thirty-eighth session, has this year for the first time been broken. The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties have been firm in their determination to proceed by consensus and have negotiated earnestly towards that end with Malaysia and some other delegations.

"...

"... the Consultative Parties regret that the proponents of the draft resolutions were not prepared in the end to abide by the consensus traditions that, have been established in the handling of this item in previous years. The Consultative Parties are firmly of the view that consensus offers the only realistic basis for consideration of Antarctica by the General Assembly. Accordingly, they will be compelled to reconsider their further participation in the consideration of this item unless consensus can be restored."

Consistent with this statement, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties remain of the view that consideration of Antarctica in the United Nations should and can realistically proceed only on the basis of consensus. They are therefore not responding to resolutions 40/156 A and B, in the adoption of which they did not participate. They remain willing to provide information about Antarctica to the international community, as they have emphasized in their responses to previous General Assembly resolutions on this item, which were adopted by consensus.

In response to the Secretary-General's note issued pursuant to resolution 38/77, the Antarctic Treaty parties provided a very considerable volume of information about the Antarctic Treaty system and their activities in Antarctica. Some of this information was included in part two of the subsequent report of the Secretary-General (A/39/583), which announced also that the voluminous annexes, containing additional material provided by the parties, were available for consultation upon request to the Secretary-General,

In making that information available, the Antarctic Treaty parties proceeded from the conviction that the Antarctic Treaty system has furthered the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. It has preserved peace and harmony in the Antarctic region; has established Antarctica as an effective, functioning nuclear-weapons-free zone; has excluded Antarctica from the arms race by prohibiting any measures of a military nature) and has enabled important scientific research and co-operation to take place in a manner which has benefited all mankind. In addition, it protects the natural environment of Antarctica) provides for a comprehensive system of on-site inspection by observers to promote the objectives and to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Treaty) has averted international strife and conflict over Antarctica, and has promoted active scientific co-operation with international organizations, particularly with WMO, ITU, IOC and the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR). The Antarctic Treaty is open to accession by any Member State of the United Nations, as are the other instruments already included within the Antarctic Treaty system. All Treaty Parties are able to participate in Antarctic Treaty meetings. Moreover, the Consultative Parties have reaffirmed that the Antarctic minerals régime would be open to all States, with all entitled to undertake minerals resource activities pursuant to it.

Based on these considerations, the responses of the Antarctic Treaty parties concluded that the operation of the Antarctic Treaty system since 1959 had demonstrated that the Treaty was a successful, practical and flexible

instrument which has served important international objectives. These conclusions were acknowledged in the report of the Secretary-General (A/39/583).

Since Publication of the Secretary-General's report, the Antarctic Treaty parties have shown a continuing willingness to provide information about Antarctica and the operation of the Antarctic Treaty system. In 1985, during debate at the fortieth session of the General Assembly, the Treaty Parties provided further information on their activities, including the ongoing negotiations on an Antarctic minerals régime.

In recognition of increased international interest in Antarctica, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties decided at the Twelfth Consultative Meeting to forward to the Secretary-General copies of the final reports of their regular Consultative Meetings. The most recent report, at the Thirteenth Consultative Meeting in Brussels in October 1985, was forwarded to the Secretary-General in November 1985 (A/C.1/40/12). At the Twelfth and Thirteenth Consultative Meetings the Consultative Parties also took further decisions relating to: the establishment of National Contact Points to disseminate Consultative Meeting Reports, the Antarctic Treaty Handbook and annual exchanges of information, as well as to provide up-to-date information on the location of depositories of data and information sources relating to Antarctica; the public release of documents from earlier Consultative Meetings; and procedures to enable relevant matters of scientific or technical interest to be drawn to the attention of United Nations specialized agencies or other international organisations.

In summary, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties are firmly of the view that the Antarctic Treaty system works in the interests of all mankind and furthers the principles of the United Nations Charter. They have shown their readiness to respond positively to indications of international interest in Antarctica and remain of the view that consensus offers the only realistic basis for consideration of Antarctica in the United Nations.

#### Notes

1/ Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, India, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Uruguay, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

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