



REPORT of the Inaugural FUTURE OF ANTARCTICA Forum
February 28-March 9, 2016
Onboard the MV AKADEMIK IOFFE

With a strong desire to ensure that Antarctica and the Southern Ocean region remain singular places where peace, science, and conservation are paramount in our otherwise turbulent world, the first Future of Antarctica Forum took place during an Antarctic Peninsula expedition onboard the MV AKADEMIK IOFFE, February 28-March 9, 2016.

Convened by Oceanites, Inc. and hosted by One Ocean Expeditions Inc., the Forum provided a unique opportunity for Antarctic stakeholder interests — governments, fishing, tourism, environmental, and scientific — to gather together and discuss moving forward, collaboratively, to secure Antarctica's future as envisioned by the Antarctic Treaty, the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).



PARTICIPANTS

Jane Rumble
UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Polar Regions Section

Máximo Gowland
Dirección General de Asuntos Antárticos Cancillería, Argentina

Ray Arnaudo
Formerly, head of the US Antarctic Treaty and Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) Delegations

Denzil Miller
Formerly, Executive Secretary, Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)

Kim Crosbie
Executive Director, International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO)

Andrew Prossin
Managing Director, One Ocean Expeditions Inc.

Ron Naveen
President/Founder, Oceanites, Inc.; principal investigator, Antarctic Site Inventory

Cilia Indah
Director of Sustainability, Aker BioMarine, Norway

Steven Chown
Monash University, Australia; representative of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) at meetings of the Antarctic Treaty's Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP)

Claire Christian
Acting Executive Director, Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC)

Harriet Getzels
Getzels Gordon Productions; director/executive producer, 'The Penguin Counters' documentary

Peter Getzels
Getzels Gordon Productions; director/executive producer, 'The Penguin Counters' documentary

Mark Epstein, formerly the Executive Director of Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition, could not attend, but greatly assisted Ron Naveen and Oceanites in planning for and organizing the Forum.



(Left to right: M. Gowland, C. Christian, K. Crosbie, C. Indah, A. Borut (Oceanites board member), H. Getzels, R. Arnaudo, P. Getzels, R. Naveen, D. Miller, L. Ingram (Oceanites board member), S. Chown, J. Rumble)

PROGRAM OF WORK, PRESENTATIONS

The Forum sessions were held privately onboard MV AKADEMIK IOFFE and were run according to a variation of the Chatham House Rule, allowing participants to express views, freely use the information received and provided, and discuss all pertinent topics, but with no specific comments, statements, or opinions to be publicly revealed or ascribed to any participant.

The seven Future of Antarctica Forum sessions were facilitated by Lois Ingram and Allan Borut, who serve on the board of directors of Oceanites, Inc..

The Forum was organized around three topics:

- Antarctic Governance
- Science in Antarctica
- Education and Communications about and for Antarctica

These topics were advanced by a series of questions designed to stimulate exchanges and discussion among Forum participants:

Antarctic Governance

- What are the goals for Antarctica governance and the Antarctic Treaty system's most important achievements to date?
- Have there been missed opportunities and, if so, what can be learned from them?
- Has the recent focus on implementing agreements (rather than negotiating new ones) made a difference in the effectiveness of the Treaty system?
- What is the best way for stakeholders, working together, to assist Antarctic Treaty governance and what principles should drive such collaboration?

Science in Antarctica

- What should the goals be for the scientific community in Antarctica, what has been achieved to date, and which scientific issues are of particular concern right now?
- How can science support better political solutions, has such support been evidenced to date, and how might that improve in the future?
- Can Antarctica, symbolically and substantively, help governments and citizens think differently about climate change — and if so, how?
- Is climate change masking other potential impacts, for example, potentially, from human activities (tourism, fishing, research station operations)?

Education and Communications about and for Antarctica

- How can what we learn from shipboard passengers affect how the Antarctic community thinks about communication and education?
- What role can and should the Antarctic scientific community play in educating the general public as well as other Antarctic constituencies about the key issues?
- What can Antarctic community members do to engage media partners to help 'spread the word' about critical Antarctic topics?

These private sessions ran in parallel with public presentations, discussion sessions, and after-dinner chats by Forum participants and facilitators with the ship's guests and passengers.

During the time onboard, the following public presentations were made:

- Screening of 'The Penguin Counters' (Harriet & Peter Getzels)
- The Antarctic Treaty System (Ray Arnaudo)

- Science In Antarctica (Steven Chown)
- The Antarctic Site Inventory (Ron Naveen)
- The Role of Argentina and The Role of the United Kingdom in the Antarctic Treaty System (Máximo Gowland, Jane Rumble)
- Fishing For Sustainability (Cilia Indahl)
- Shackleton (Denzil Miller)
- Protecting Antarctica: Past, Present, Future (Claire Christian)
- Why Visit Antarctica? (Lois Ingram, Forum participants, and IOFFE passengers)
- The Antarctic Wildlife Research Fund (Cilia Indahl, Claire Christian)

OUTCOMES

The participants reaffirmed the basic principles expressed in the landmark international agreements governing Antarctica — the Antarctic Treaty, the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) — specifically underscoring, that for all humankind, Antarctica is to be used for peaceful and scientific purposes, maintaining the ecological relationships of its living marine resources.

Participants further recognized that the Antarctic Treaty system needed to continue evolving in the 21st century, that it would be important to expand the use of the best available scientific data and information to assist decision-making by Treaty Parties, and that ongoing, improved cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders should be encouraged to ensure that Antarctica remains a continent of peace, science, and conservation.

In these regards, participants noted, reiterated, and emphasized the global importance of climate change and Antarctica’s central role in better understanding climate change impacts. In essence, climate change is the ‘Big Tent’ issue that affects and binds everyone together. The participants noted that changes in Antarctica influence the rest of the world and changes in the rest of the world influence Antarctica.

Indeed, while the group did not dwell on public relations, media, communications, and educational aspects of climate change, participants noted that it was everyone’s responsibility to discuss and raise the issue of climate change whenever and however possible.

In discussing how to move forward, together, to secure Antarctica’s future as envisioned by the Antarctic Treaty and its associated agreements, the participants gave considered attention to the notable warming trend in the western Antarctic Peninsula, which was identified as an immediate, complicated, and serious concern. In particular, from both a scientific and a management perspective, it was deemed of critical importance to advance the project of:

“Distinguishing the direct and interactive effects of climate change, fishing, tourism, and national operations on ecosystems in the Antarctic Peninsula region for improved environmental management”

The participants recognized that any effort to sort these direct and interactive effects involves identifying which data are needed (or need to be made available) as well as addressing the reality, in these times, that funding and support — foundational, government, or otherwise — is, and will be, difficult.

Focusing on this need, the overarching issue of climate change, and ecosystem management as envisioned by CCAMLR, the participants tasked Oceanites — which, through its Antarctic Site

Inventory project, has been monitoring the vastly warming Antarctic Peninsula for 22 years — to pursue this project in the collaborative spirit of the Antarctic Treaty system.

Participants expressed optimism that, by working closely and together, this effort would advance and provide Antarctic Treaty Parties the best possible scientific data and information to inform accurate, fact-based decision-making.

Ron Naveen
April 2, 2016