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LETTER OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON ANTARCTIC RESEARCH (SCAR) AND THE INTERNATIONAL ARCTIC SCIENCE COMMITTEE (IASC)

Preamble

In July 2011, following agreement by IASC Council and SCAR Delegates, the Presidents of SCAR and IASC renewed their Letter of Agreement from 2006. The letter recognized that there are many common interests between SCAR and IASC in scientific research in the polar-regions, and that there is much to be gained from developing a synergy between SCAR and IASC in polar and bipolar research. The development of this link at the time was designed to enable the two organizations to make a more effective contribution than they might otherwise make to the success of the International Polar Year (IPY). SCAR and IASC agreed to combine their efforts in selected fields and activities so as to raise the level of impact of both organizations in terms of making scientific advances and of advising policy makers (for example of the likelihood and likely effects of climate change), as well as to avoid duplication.

With the present letter SCAR and IASC agree to continue this partnership, taking into account the development of both organizations during the last five years and the lessons learned from the IPY 2007/2008 and the upcoming POLAR 2018 joint science conference.

1. SCAR

SCAR is an Interdisciplinary Body of the International Council for Science (ICSU). It was founded during the International Geophysical Year (1957-1958) and as of 2016 comprises 39 Member Countries and 9 ICSU Unions.

SCAR's geographical remit covers Antarctica and the surrounding Southern Ocean including the Antarctic Circumpolar Current. SCAR's mission is to be the leading non-governmental, international facilitator and advocate of research in and from the Antarctic region, to provide objective and authoritative scientific advice to the Antarctic Treaty and other bodies, and to bring emerging issues to the attention of policy makers.

SCAR's coordination of scientific research takes place through its three Standing Scientific Groups on Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Geosciences. They currently focus their efforts on several major international Scientific Research Programmes (SRPs) addressing major, priority scientific issues of global or fundamental importance requiring fieldwork and/or observations in the Antarctic. Most of these programmes are interdisciplinary in nature and will last 6-8 years.

Currently they cover topics such as future and past climate change, evolution and biodiversity in the Antarctic region and astronomy and astrophysics from Antarctica. Several new SRPs are in the planning stages. In addition, a number of Expert Groups (EG) and Action Groups (AG) plan and effect cooperative research in areas of special interest requiring attention in the short term (AG; 2-4 years) to medium term (EG 2-8 years). Every two years, SCAR brings the scientific community together in a major international Antarctic Open Science Conference. For further details on SCAR see <http://www.scar.org>.

2. IASC

IASC is a non-governmental, international scientific organization and affiliated to the International Council for Science (ICSU) as an International Scientific Associate. It also provides objective and independent scientific advice to the Arctic Council and other organizations on issues of science affecting the management of the Arctic region.

The IASC mission is to encourage and facilitate cooperation in all aspects of Arctic research, in all countries engaged in Arctic research and in all areas of the Arctic region. To fulfill its mission, IASC promotes and supports leading-edge multi-disciplinary research in order to foster a greater scientific understanding of the Arctic region and its role in the Earth system.

IASC was established in 1990, began operations in 1991 and today comprises 23 member countries. It is governed by a Council consisting of one delegate appointed by each of the national member organizations. The Council sets priorities and guides the work of the organization.

The core elements of IASC are its five Working Groups: Terrestrial, Atmosphere, Cryosphere, Social & Human and Marine. These international groups assist IASC in the implementation of its science mission by:

- Identifying and formulating science plans;
- Acting as scientific advisory boards to the Council;
- Encouraging and supporting science-led programs;
- Initiating conferences, workshops and events;
- Promoting future generations of arctic scientists.

IASC draws on this structure to identify scientific priorities, open up opportunities for international science planning, promote free access to Arctic areas and provide for the freedom and ethical conduct of science. For further details on IASC see <http://www.iasc.info>.

3. Common Interests and Practices

SCAR and IASC share a number of common interests and practices, which makes it relatively easy for them to work together, by arranging workshops, conferences, and reports on topics of mutual scientific interest, in developing integrated plans for scientific research, in promoting communications to the public, and in providing advice to policy makers.

Both SCAR and IASC were active members of the ICSU/WMO Joint Committee that steered the IPY process and have a joint interest in helping ensure the IPY legacy, focusing on four key aspects: (1) scientific cooperation, (2) development of observing systems, (3) data and information management and (4) development of early career scientists.

4. Declaration of Intent

SCAR and IASC intend to continue and extend their joint efforts in selected fields and activities, to be decided by mutual agreement. Combining efforts in selected fields and activities requires no change to the terms of reference of either organization, and carries no financial implication. To facilitate the process, SCAR and IASC agree (this list is not exhaustive):

- (i) to encourage appropriate linkages between the relevant existing SCAR Standing Committees and Standing Scientific Groups, and IASC Working Groups, and with other scientific organizations;
- (ii) to encourage their scientific communities to develop joint polar projects and approaches in appropriate fields, considering recommendations from the past IASC/SCAR Bipolar Action Groups (BipAG I and II);
- (iii) to work together in arranging workshops, conferences, and reports on topics of mutual scientific interest;
- (iv) to exchange ideas on best practices in data and information management and the development of polar observing systems;
- (v) to develop combined approaches to communicating to ISCU and to the wider community on the significance of polar research in providing solutions for societal issues, including their respective experience in giving advice to the Arctic Council and Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting and to IPCC;
- (vi) to continue supporting the next generation of polar researchers, in line with their joint agreement with the Association of Early Career Polar Scientists (APECS);
- (vii) to invite each other to attend the meetings of their major bodies (SCAR Delegates' Meeting and IASC Council);
- (viii) to exchange newsletters and advertise each other's newsletters and web sites on their own web sites.

The agreement will remain in force for 5 years, thereafter be reviewed and continued as appropriate.

Signed

Jerónimo López- Martínez
President, SCAR

Susan Barr
President, IASC

Date 26-August-2016
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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