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Thirty-eighth session

REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF A SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM  
IN THE AGENDA OF THE THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION

ANTARCTICA

Letter dated 11 August 1983 from the representatives of  
Antigua and Barbuda and Malaysia to the United Nations  
addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from the Government of Malaysia and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, we have the honour to request, in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Antarctica".

You will find enclosed an explanatory memorandum in accordance with rule 20 of the above-mentioned rules of procedure.

In view of the importance of the subject, my Government requests that the item be discussed by the General Assembly in plenary meeting.

(Signed) Lloydaton JACOBS  
Ambassador Extraordinary and  
Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Representative of  
Antigua and Barbuda

(Signed) A. W. OMARDIN  
Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.  
Permanent Mission of Malaysia

ANNEX

Explanatory memorandum

1. Antarctica constitutes approximately 8.9 per cent of the earth's land surface, covering six million square miles of land mass, ice and waters. It is the last undeveloped continent, unsettled with no original inhabitants. It lies in unique isolation in a triangle formed by the geographical extension of the southernmost part of South America, Africa, Asia and Australia. Surrounded by the three largest oceans - the Pacific, the Indian and the Atlantic, the continent was, "according to Rarotogan legends", first discovered by a Polynesian, Ui-te-Rangoria, around A.D. 650.

2. Early interest on Antarctica was mainly for frontier claims and colonization through discovery, occupation and propinquity. Later, scientific and environmental co-operation was initiated, leading to the signing in 1959 of the Antarctic Treaty, a/ which attempts to manage the conflicting territorial claims on the continent and to promote other objectives such as seeking to guarantee that Antarctica, in the interest of science and progress of all mankind, be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and not become the scene or object of international discord.

3. Antarctica is of considerable environmental, climatic and scientific significance to the world. This has prompted scientists of various disciplines and from many nations within the framework of the Antarctic Treaty to collaborate and carry out important studies and research, inter alia, in magnetic fields, weather systems, distribution of earthquakes, effects of solar flares and the preservation of whales, seals and marine living resources, with the view to promoting international co-operation in environmental conservation and preservation of the world's ecosystem. Antarctica could also have considerable economic potential in terms of living and non-living resources.

4. Despite the progress made in these collaborative scientific efforts, there is need to examine the possibility for a more positive and wider international concert through a truly universal framework of international co-operation through the United Nations, to ensure that activities carried out in Antarctica are for the benefit and in the interest of mankind as a whole.

5. It is for this purpose that the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries at the Seventh Summit Conference, held at New Delhi, agreed as follows:

"The Heads of State or Government noted that the continent of Antarctica has considerable environmental, climatic, scientific and potential economic significance to the world. They expressed their conviction that, in the interest of all mankind, Antarctica should continue forever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, should not become the scene or object of international discord and should be accessible to all nations. They agreed that the exploration of the area and the exploitation of its resources shall

be carried out for the benefit of all mankind, and in a manner consistent with the protection of the environment of Antarctica.

"The Heads of State or Government, while noting that relevant provisions of the Antarctic Treaty of 1959 related to international co-operation in the area, considered that in view of increasing international interest in the Antarctic, the United Nations, at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, should undertake a comprehensive study on Antarctica, taking into account all relevant factors, including the Antarctic Treaty, with a view to widening international co-operation in the area." b/

Notes

a/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 402, No. 5778, p. 71.

b/ A/38/132, sect. III, paras. 122 and 123.

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