

The following section briefly outlines recent Canadian developments with regard to Antarctica and reviews the Canadian Polar Commission's activities with respect to Antarctic issues. Factors pertinent to Canada's interests in Antarctic science are then reviewed, and a set of revised objectives for the Executive Committee of the Canadian Antarctic Research Program (CARPEX) are suggested. This is followed by a proposed work program designed to achieve these objectives and a discussion of the human and financial resources required. The next section deals with financial and other support for the research activities themselves; a separate section deals with some policy issues relevant to the establishment of the CARP. The final section is "Summary and Recommendations".

2. BACKGROUND

The International Geophysical Year (1957–59) was a milestone in the recent development of Antarctica (Fig. 1). It led to the formation of the non-governmental Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)² in 1958 and, in 1959, to the signing of the intergovernmental Antarctic Treaty (AT) which entered into force in 1961. Twelve countries were involved in developing both these initiatives, but other nations have joined since; by 1995, 42 countries had ratified the Antarctic Treaty and 32 were members of SCAR.

Canada was rather late in joining the Antarctic groups and did not accede to the Antarctic Treaty until May 1988 when it became the 38th country to ratify the Treaty. Canada is a non-Consultative Party to the Antarctic Treaty, which means it does not have the right to vote on important decisions.³ Since then, however, the federal government has taken a number of steps toward closer links with Antarctica (e.g., ratified two conventions under the Treaty; signed the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty; established the Canadian Polar Commission; and appointed an Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs.) (See Table II.) The mandates of both the CPC and the Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs make specific reference to Antarctica. Although the pace of development over the six years between 1988 and 1994 has been relatively rapid, limited resources still restrict Canada from playing a major role in Antarctica.

² Originally called the Special Committee on Antarctic Research.

³ There are presently 26 Consultative and 16 non-Consultative Parties.