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Opening of Chile-Korea Antarctic Cooperation Center

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Information Paper submitted by Chile and the Republic of Korea

Summary

This Information Paper introduces part of the activities developed in first month of operations of the “Chile-Korea Antarctic Cooperation Center” in Punta Arenas.

Background

INACH and KOPRI signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2012 and a Letter of Intent on 23 April 2015 to develop collaborative mechanisms to pool their efforts, capacities and resources for scientific and technological progress in order to boost research and conservation of the Antarctic continent.

Several meetings have been held between the two countries since 2010, when a reception and welcome to Chile was offered to the first Korean icebreaker, Araon, on its way to Antarctica. Since then, new meetings and workshops have been held in both Chile and Korea.

In February 2016, the “Chile-Korea Antarctic Cooperation Center” in Punta Arenas was inaugurated, in facilities of the "Jorge Berguño" Building of the Chilean Antarctic Institute (INACH).

Chile-Korea Antarctic Cooperation Center

This Center has allowed the Korea Polar Research Institute (KOPRI) to have permanent spaces in the city that for 30 years has been one of its gateways to Antarctica. It offers office facilities and access to laboratories, meeting rooms and work spaces suitable for scientific work. In this way, KOPRI can better coordinate its operations in the sector of the South Shetland Islands and the Antarctic Peninsula, from this southern Chilean city, located 17,240 km away from the Republic of Korea but less than two hours away of the first Antarctic research station of the Republic of Korea in Antarctica, the King Sejong station.

This initiative constitutes the first experience of this type in Chile. Both countries have cooperated in the Antarctic logistically for many years. The Center will contribute to develop cooperative projects and enhance experts’ mobility between the two countries. KOPRI dispatched its staff to the Center in October 2016 for one year term. At its first year of operation of the Center, it will be focused on better understanding each program by providing opportunities to visit each Antarctic infrastructures and organizing workshops.

Next activities

A special bilateral workshop will be held on May 18, 2017 at the KOPRI headquarters in Korea. The purpose of this workshop is to enhance scientific cooperative relations through information sharing and to develop cooperative projects in the future.

Conclusion

Antarctic cooperation not only within the Antarctic boundaries is a good way to improve the links between National Programs. The “Chile-Korea Antarctic Cooperation Center” is a good example of that.

With this Information Paper, Chile and Korea invites the Parties to consider other collaborative activities to enhance the link between Programs and improve their Antarctic work.



Inauguration of "Chile-Korea Antarctic Cooperation Center" in February 2016.



Workshop on Chile-Korea Antarctic Research Cooperation, held in Punta Arenas, February 2016.



Dr. Dongmin Jin, first director of the Chile-Korea Antarctic Cooperation Center, in Punta Arenas, Chile.