

Antarctica Declaration

A declaration of the rights of Antarctica
and Antarctic beings

CORMAC CULLINAN



ANTARCTIC
RIGHTS

Purpose

REDEFINE

Redefine people / Antarctica relationships, moving from governance towards harmonious coexistence.

ARTICULATE

Articulate rights and the corresponding human duties.

EXPAND

Expand responsibility for protecting Antarctica.

GROUND

A manifesto for the Alliance and a foundation for action.

PREAMBLE

The big picture



01

**Our relationship with
Antarctica**

02

**Seriousness of the current
situation**

03

Way forward

04

Our responsibilities

05

Common aspiration

06

**Commitment and call to
action**

PREAMBLE - 1

We, the peoples of Earth who proclaim and support this Declaration:

understanding that we are all part of the Earth Community, an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings;

celebrating the beautiful, wild continent of Antarctica, the Southern Ocean and the community of life that inhabit those awe-inspiring lands, ice, waters and skies;

grateful for the magnificent Antarctic community constituted by the inter-relationships between multitudes of Antarctic beings and for the vital role Antarctica plays in maintaining the health of the whole Earth Community;



CONSCIOUS

of the grave threats that climate disruption, ocean acidification, commercial fishing and other human impacts pose to Antarctica;

RECOGNISING

that existing legal and political systems do not afford Antarctica adequate protection or a voice in decision-making that affects them;

BELIEVING

that ensuring that humans do not disrupt or harm Antarctica is in the best interests of both Antarctica and humankind;

ACCEPTING

our collective responsibility to collaborate in taking urgent and decisive action to prevent irreversible harm;

UNITED

by our common aspiration to ensure that Antarctica is able to flourish as an autonomous, self-regulating community, free from human control and harmful influences;

PROCLAIM

this Antarctic Declaration, and call upon all international bodies, peoples and organizations to adopt, promote and give effect to it.

Two terms the Declaration rests on

EARTH COMMUNITY

means the unique, indivisible, self-regulating community of interrelated beings that sustains, contains and reproduces all beings that are part of Earth.

HARMONIOUS COEXISTENCE

means humans interacting with other beings in ways that both strengthen the Earth Community, and respect and protect the rights of all beings to fulfil their roles within the Earth Community.

WHO IS ANTARCTICA?

beautiful, wild,
awe-inspiring, magnificent

A unique being comprised of beings

a holarchy

An intangible dimension

“unique presence and spirit”

A role within the community of life

“plays a vital and indispensable role in maintaining conditions conducive to the flourishing of life”

Autonomous?



Antarctica is a
magnificent, ancient,
indivisible,
autonomous and self-
regulating community.

WHAT and WHO 'ANTARCTICA' INCLUDES

- The continent, ice, sea, seabed and atmosphere
- Native species and ecological communities
- The relationships between all these beings
- Antarctic animals even when they travel north of the Antarctic Convergence

Excludes: human beings, non-native species, and any human-made structures.

Relating to Antarctica

Harmonious coexistence with Antarctic beings, and Antarctica, within the Earth Community.

RELATEDNESS · CELEBRATION · GRATITUDE · RESPECT · RESPONSIBILITY



Kin, celebration, gratitude

KIN

As inter-related, mutually dependent members of the Earth Community, Antarctic beings and human beings are kin.

Art. V(2)(a)

CELEBRATION

celebrating the beautiful, wild continent of Antarctica, the Southern Ocean, and the community of life that inhabit those awe-inspiring lands, ice, waters and skies.

Preamble

GRATITUDE

grateful for the magnificent Antarctic community constituted by the inter-relationships between multitudes of Antarctic beings and for the vital role Antarctica plays in maintaining the health of the whole Earth Community.

Preamble

Respect

ART. III(1)(E)

The inherent right to be respected.

ART. III(3)(A)

The right to have their dignity, rights and freedoms respected, protected and upheld by people and institutions.

ART. V(1)(A)

Every person and institution must respect and protect the presence, dignity, beauty and intrinsic value of Antarctica and Antarctic beings.

ART. V(2)(B)

Antarctica and Antarctic beings must be respected and their rights and freedoms protected, instead of being controlled, managed, exploited or owned.

RELATING TO ANTARCTICA

Responsibility and reciprocity



PREAMBLE

accepting our collective responsibility to collaborate in taking urgent and decisive actions to prevent irreversible harm.

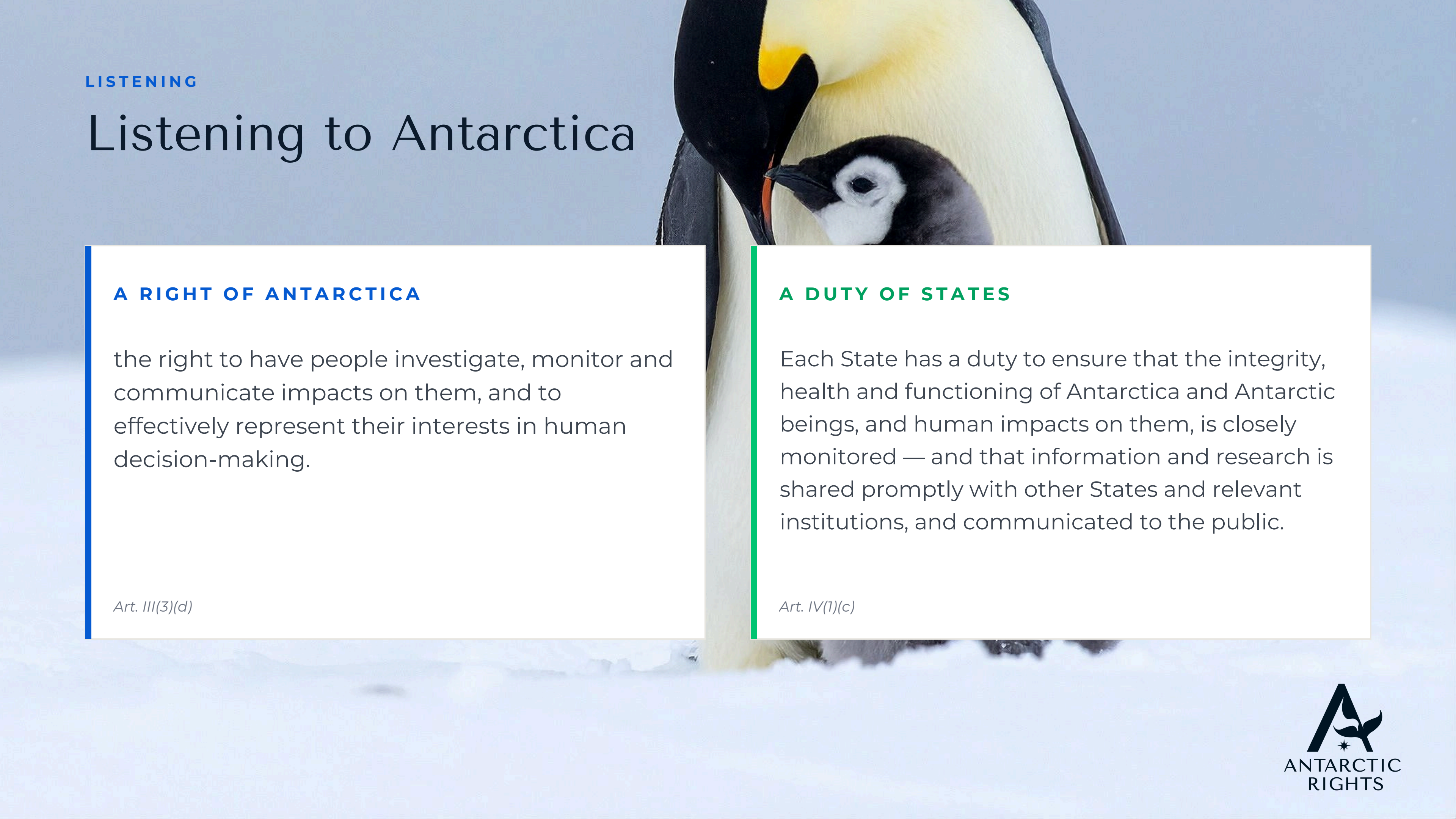
PREAMBLE

united by our aspiration to ensure that Antarctica is able to flourish as an autonomous, self-regulating community, free from human control and harmful influences.

ART. V(2)(C)

People are individually and collectively responsible for contributing to the health, integrity and functioning of the Earth Community which sustains them, including Antarctica.

**What if we were guided
by Antarctica?**



LISTENING

Listening to Antarctica

A RIGHT OF ANTARCTICA

the right to have people investigate, monitor and communicate impacts on them, and to effectively represent their interests in human decision-making.

Art. III(3)(d)

A DUTY OF STATES

Each State has a duty to ensure that the integrity, health and functioning of Antarctica and Antarctic beings, and human impacts on them, is closely monitored — and that information and research is shared promptly with other States and relevant institutions, and communicated to the public.

Art. IV(1)(c)

PERSPECTIVES

Indigenous perspectives



INTER-RELATED BEINGS

Tangible and intangible dimensions.

KIN & COMMUNITY

We are all part of the Earth Community, an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings — Antarctic beings and human beings are kin.

HARMONIOUS COEXISTENCE

Celebration, gratitude, respect, responsibility and reciprocity.

WISDOM & INTEGRITY

Decisions about Antarctica must be wise (Art. VII(3)), and those who represent Antarctica must do so with integrity and wisdom (Art. IX(b)).

QUESTIONS?



Overview



Preamble

Article I Antarctica

Article II Legal status of Antarctica

Article III Rights and freedoms of Antarctica & Antarctic beings

Article IV Limitation of rights and freedoms

Article V General duties of people and institutions



Overview (continued)

Article VI Specific duties of States

Article VII Decision-making in relation to Antarctica

Article VIII Activities within Antarctica

Article IX Implementation

Article X Interpretation

ARTICLE II

Legal status of Antarctica



- 01 Unique status**
Independent and autonomous, with a unique status under international law.
- 02 Jurisdiction**
Wide jurisdiction over its territory and beings.
- 03 Independence**
Not under the power of States.
- 04 Equality**
Rights to equality in law with States.
- 05 Powers**
May exercise any powers that States have under international law.

ARTICLE III

Rights and freedoms of Antarctica and Antarctic beings



INHERENT AND INALIENABLE

The right to exist; to self-determination; the freedom to be wild.

Art. III(1)

RETAINED BEYOND ANTARCTICA

Rights and freedoms are retained when Antarctic beings are outside Antarctica.

Art. III(2)

FURTHER RIGHTS RECOGNISED

The right to restoration of harm, and to be represented in legal and administrative proceedings.

Art. III(3)

ARTICLE IV

Limitations on rights and freedoms



RELEVANCE

Not all rights and freedoms are relevant to every being — but there is no discrimination.

RIGHTS ARE LIMITED

Rights under the Declaration are not absolute.

RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Conflicts between rights are resolved on the basis of what is best for Antarctica and the Earth Community.

JUSTIFIABILITY

A limitation must be justified by its purpose — such as promoting harmonious coexistence and the good of Antarctica — and by proportionality.



ARTICLE V(1)

General duties of people and institutions



- 01 Respect and protect Antarctica.
- 02 Take all reasonable measures to coexist harmoniously, and to enhance and conserve.
- 03 Give effect to Antarctica's legal status.
- 04 Avoid unjustifiable violations of, or limitations on, rights.
- 05 Pursue livelihoods, well-being and economic interests — and take precautionary measures — so as to avoid harming or threatening Antarctica.
- 06 Restore harm.

ARTICLE V(2)

Principles to promote harmonious coexistence



KIN

Kin are to be respected, not managed.

RESPONSIBILITY

Individual and collective responsibility.

CONSERVATION

Conservation matters more than financial gain.

PRECAUTION

A precautionary approach.

Specific duties of States

IN ADDITION

These duties are additional to the general duties under Article V.

STATES MUST

take legislative and other measures to transform international, transnational and domestic law and practice to align with the Declaration.

STATES MAY

appoint ambassadors or representatives to promote harmonious coexistence and the effective implementation of the Declaration.

ARTICLE VII

Decision-making in relation to Antarctica



01 Representation

People and institutions, including States, must take all reasonable measures to ensure the effective representation of Antarctica.

02 Wise decisions

People must strive to ensure that decision-making is wise, and that it promotes harmonious coexistence and the best interests of Antarctica.

03 Humility

How do we determine best interests? By acknowledging that we are not indigenous to Antarctica, and the limits of our knowledge and our ability to know it.

ARTICLE VIII

Activities within Antarctica



THRESHOLD FOR ACTIVITY

There must be a compelling reason. The activity must be for peaceful purposes, must not violate rights or freedoms, must be consistent with harmonious coexistence, and must not be contrary to Antarctica's best interests.

PRIORITY FOR RESEARCH

Priority goes to research that promotes harmonious coexistence and our understanding of Antarctica's best interests.

FISHING AND HARVESTING

Must not have a significant adverse impact on populations of prey species or on ecosystems.

PRECAUTION

Authorisations may be modified or suspended if risks become apparent.

ARTICLE IX

Implementation



01 **Collaboration**

Supporters of the Declaration must collaborate to ensure its effective implementation.

02 **Institutions**

Establish institutions and processes consistent with Antarctica's inherent nature and legal status.

03 **Best interests**

Planning and acting must identify, communicate and take account of Antarctica's best interests.

04 **Representation**

Those who represent Antarctica must do so with wisdom and integrity — with the necessary personal qualities, understanding, expertise and commitment.

ARTICLE X

Interpretation



SPIRIT AND PURPOSE

Interpret in accordance with the spirit and purpose of the Declaration and the principles of harmonious coexistence.

DEFINED TERMS

Antarctica · Antarctic being · Earth Community · harmonious coexistence · institution

NOT A CLOSED LIST

Nothing limits the future recognition of further rights of Antarctica or Antarctic beings.

CONFLICTS

Other rights consistent with the Declaration are not denied — but inherent rights under Art. III(1) prevail where there is a conflict.

QUESTIONS?





ANTARCTIC
RIGHTS

THANK YOU!

 antarctic_rights

 antarcticrights.org

 Antarctic Rights

 antarcticrights@garn.org

HAVE YOUR SAY BY THE 30TH OF SEPTEMBER

Fill in the form

The Declaration must be written with the community,
not handed to it.

Tell us what you think, your input shapes the text.



Scan to open the form

01 Respond to the consultation

*The input window is open until 30th September
2026.*

02 Join the Antarctic Rights Alliance

antarcticrights.org

03 Bring a question

antarcticrights@garn.org