

John Turner's response to the award of the SCAR Medal for Excellence in Antarctic Research 2010

Thank you for the great honour of being awarded the 2010 SCAR Medal for Excellence in Antarctic Research. As we all know, Antarctic research cannot be conducted in isolation. The remoteness of the continent, the difficulty of working in such a harsh environment and the complexity of environmental change all promote collaboration. For me SCAR provides the ideal forum in which to carry out exciting, cutting-edge research and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the researchers I've had the privilege of working with over the years within the framework of SCAR.

I attended my first SCAR meeting in São Paulo, Brazil in July 1990. Looking back it's apparent that SCAR was already changing. The ozone hole had been discovered, which focussed the international scientific community on the continent. SCAR was becoming more outward looking and developing science programmes that considered the interactions between the Antarctic and the rest of the Earth system. However, I think that the major reorganisation of SCAR in 2002, with the introduction of the series of Open Science Conferences and the Scientific Research Programmes that lifted the organisation to a new level.

Today SCAR is a highly regarded international organisation, providing authoritative advice on the full range of Antarctic science to the Antarctic Treaty System and the broader scientific community. I was privileged to chair the editorial committee that led the preparation of the Antarctic Climate Change and the Environment report. This highlighted the breadth and depth of knowledge across the organisation and the commitment of the SCAR scientists to environmental research.

Although great advances have been made in recent years in understanding the evolution of the physical environment of the Antarctic and the Southern Ocean and the complexity of the food webs, there are still many outstanding questions, such as the stability of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, the recovery of the ozone hole and how the Antarctic environment will evolve in a world of increasing greenhouse gas concentrations. But I'm sure that SCAR will be at the forefront in addressing these issues and providing strong leadership to the Antarctic community. Thank you again for this great honour.