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National Report to SCAR for year 2008 (1st July 2007-30th June 2008)						
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**A BRIEF SUMMARY OF
SCIENTIFIC HIGHLIGHTS:**

ANDRILL - Scientific agreement among USA, NZ, Germany and Italy for coring marine sediments in McMurdo Sound. The Project, just concluded, aimed at the understanding of the climate evolution from Cenozoic to Recent. It evolved from the successful Cape Roberts Project and other drillings carried out over the last 30 years. This year ANDRILL cored down to 1,138.54 m below the sea floor, obtaining sediments which correspond to 14 to 17 Myr B.P. This time span is of outstanding interest because it corresponds to the transition from mild to cold climate and to the making of ice cover on Eastern Antarctica. Camp and drilling gears have been removed.

TALos Dome ICE Project (TALDICE) - International agreement among France, Switzerland, Germany, UK and Italy aimed at the knowledge of climate and environment evolution in Northern Victoria Land during the last 120,000 years. It consisted of a deep ice coring at Talos Dome (73° S, 158° E). The Project came to an end during the past season 2007-08. The depth of 1,620 m (which does not correspond to the bedrock) was reached. Camp and drilling gear have been removed.

Glaciology and Climate Studies - The climate on the Antarctic Plateau is of outstanding importance both locally and at planetary level. The solar radiation balance and the atmospheric composition at ground level are the necessary ingredients for any climate mathematical model. They are monitored at Dome-C. Here a station of the Baseline Surface Radiation Network (BSRN) has been recently implemented. A permafrost monitoring network was recently established along Victoria Land Transect. The activities are led by the University of Insubria (Italy) which operates jointly with NZ, a similar network being planned for the Antarctic Peninsula (with BAS).

Observatory activities - Italy maintains since the '80s a set of observatories for long-term recording of physical variables. In time the initial set has been enlarged. Among the monitored quantities: geomagnetic field, remote and local seismic activity, meteorological data, lower atmosphere composition with special attention paid to aerosols and ozone, ionosphere characteristics, stratosphere range by LIDAR, sea mean level (tide). Data are used for specific researches and for collection into international databases. Measurements are carried out at Terra Nova Bay, Dome-C and other locations such as McMurdo, Jubany, Esperanza and San Martin Stations, South Orkney Islands.

Environmental contamination in Antarctica - Coordinates programmes and promotes actions to understand the link between mechanisms and processes controlling distribution and transport of microcomponents in polar environment. The programme, which has become the SCAR Action Group ECA, aims at monitoring the environment and setting up a database of parameters to track the environment evolution of polar regions.

Geomagnetic and Ionospheric Phenomena - A number of scientific instruments are installed in the Antarctic auroral region for the study of ionosphere and magnetosphere. Those include: the Kerguelen SuperDARN (French-Italian collaboration), an all-sky camera at Mario Zucchelli Station (MZS), magnetometers at MZS and Concordia Station, an ionosonde and RIOMeter at MZS. The ionospheric scintillation monitored by GPS receiver at Concordia Station is correlated with similar measurements carried out at MZS and at northern latitudes (Svalbard I.)

Geodesy - An extensive geodetic network based on GPS stations covers a large area of Victoria Land (about 700 km long, 300 km wide) for repetitive crustal deformation control. The network called VLNDEF comprises about 30 stations and is integrated with other international collaborations such as TAMDEF and IPY's POLENET.

Astronomical observations - A precision interferometer for accurate measurement of the microwave component of CBR has been installed at Concordia Station. It continues the measurements carried out by the balloon-borne instrumentation of the Boomerang experiments (1998 & 2003) and benefits of the darkness and low atmospheric temperature at Dome-C in winter. Astronomical activities at Concordia Station include: the implementation of an infrared telescope (IRAIT); the continuation of the project OASI-COCHISE for the detection of non-uniformities in the cosmic background radiation; several projects carried out by non-Italian teams at Concordia to be accounted for by other National Reports to SCAR.