

**STATEMENT FOR THE COMMEMORATION
OF 20 YEARS OF CCAMLR**

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The seventh of April 2002 will be the 20th Anniversary of the entering into force of the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, which was adopted in Canberra (Australia) in 1980. This anniversary is a landmark in the process, initiated by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, of comprehensive and systematic protection of the Antarctic environment and dependent and associated ecosystems from harmful human interference. With the entry into force of the Madrid Protocol and its Committee for Environmental Protection, and the decision to establish the Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty in Buenos Aires, cooperation among all the components of the Antarctic Treaty System will be strengthened. With Namibia recently becoming a Member of the Commission and Vanuatu acceding, the Convention unites 31 Parties with interests in its area of application, all of whom celebrate with well-founded pride and optimism these first two decades of the organisation's existence.

Indeed, through its conscientious and persistent efforts, CCAMLR has developed a practical and efficient regime for the protection and preservation of Antarctica's marine living resources. The aim of this international instrument is the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources, a concept which includes their rational use. The rigorous application of the CCAMLR Conservation Principles enshrined in Article II set the Convention apart from other marine resources regimes. In its broader context, this approach requires that the management of fisheries should take into account the effects of human activity on the living organisms of the Antarctic ecosystems and sub-ecosystems. It also requires that such management be consistent with the precautionary approach, which takes account of circumstances of biological uncertainty.

In accordance with this conservation-oriented and precautionary approach, the Convention provides for the mechanisms necessary to enforce its underlying principles, such as a Commission which adopts each year a series of measures and governs their enforcement; a Scientific Committee as a consultative body responsible for providing essential information, conducting scientific assessments and recommending appropriate measures; and a system of observation and inspection aimed at promoting the objective of the Convention and ensuring compliance with its provisions. CCAMLR, with its high standards of internal organisation and its significant achievements, is an exemplary instrument of ecosystem protection. Over the past 20 years, it has established a comprehensive code of responsibility for its Member countries through the adoption and implementation of over 200 conservation measures.

The illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing of *Dissostichus* spp., or toothfish, is one of the greatest challenges the Commission has had to face. In recent years, the catch rate of IUU fishing has been more than double that of the regulated fisheries, causing a significant decline of the toothfish populations in certain areas and depleting populations of seabirds, especially albatrosses and petrels which are caught incidentally in the longline fisheries. The firm commitment of the Members of the Commission to combat this problem has resulted in the adoption of a series of measures to enforce a stricter control. Of these, the most important has been the introduction of the Catch Documentation System for *Dissostichus* spp., which aims to ensure that the international trade of these species is consistent with CCAMLR's aims and conservation measures. This system represents a major step forward in the

implementation of the objective of CCAMLR and shows the commitment of Contracting Parties towards the conservation and protection of the environment, consolidating the effectiveness of CCAMLR, its credibility as an organisation within the international community and its leadership in the management of marine living resources.

Having noted the important achievements of this Convention, it is now appropriate to focus on its future work and other challenges arising worldwide. Among these, and giving due consideration to UNCLOS, is the need to develop a more extensive network of international contacts among fisheries organisations and, if appropriate, particularly those with competence over marine living resources in areas bordering that of the CCAMLR Convention. It is also necessary to continue to develop cooperation with other relevant organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation etc., and to take duly into consideration the effects of the implementation of the other instruments of the Antarctic Treaty System, as well as other agreements applicable to the Convention Area. There is a need to ensure the effectiveness of the multilateral system of the CCAMLR and expand, if appropriate, the cooperation on conservation on areas adjacent to the Convention Area.

Finally, conscious of what needs to be done in the future and in appreciation of what has already been achieved, we, the Member countries gathered in Hobart in October 2001 to celebrate the Twentieth Meetings of the Commission and Scientific Committee of CCAMLR, commit ourselves to redouble our efforts to make certain that the marine ecosystems surrounding the Antarctic continent are preserved so as to contribute to the overall ecological equilibrium, to the sustainable use of marine living resources and, in particular, for the benefit of future generations.

Therefore, we commit ourselves to continue developing and perfecting the achievement of CCAMLR's objectives.