

OTHER BUSINESS

Participation of ASOC in Meetings of Subsidiary Bodies of the Commission

18.1 The Commission received a request from ASOC to participate in the meetings of subsidiary bodies, as presented in CCAMLR-XX/18, and noted that all aspects of the request had already been addressed. With respect to the Scientific Committee's work, this was considered by the Scientific Committee itself (paragraphs 18.7 to 18.10), while the involvement of all observers in the Commission's meeting is referred to in paragraph 17.4.

International Conference/Workshop on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Living Marine Resources in the Antarctic

18.2 Japan presented an information paper (CCAMLR-XX/BG/39) outlining a conference/ workshop which Japan, as host country to the 1995 Kyoto Declaration and Plan of Action on the Sustainable Contribution of Fisheries to Food Security, intends to host in 2002 or 2003. Japan mentioned that the conference/workshop was announced at the meeting of COFI/FAO in February/March this year and the material presented here is identical to that presented to COFI/FAO.

18.3 The objectives of the conference/workshop presented here are to review developments related to the sustainable use of marine living resources and the conservation of the Antarctic ecosystem, to identify and analyse issues and options for utilising these resources in the near future and to maximise the benefits for mankind with particular emphasis on developing countries.

18.4 The UK, supported by the USA, while grateful for the information, regretted that it had not been made available to this year's meetings of WG-EMM and the Scientific Committee. Instead, it had been made available first to COFI/FAO, and the results of the conference/workshop were also intended for COFI/FAO. It was disappointing that CCAMLR had not been fully consulted, or in a timely manner.

18.5 The USA also pointed out that the report of the COFI meeting had stated that the Scientific Committee would be pleased to be consulted on this matter.

18.6 New Zealand agreed with the UK and the USA, and noted that raising this matter under the 'Other Business' agenda item did not permit sufficient time for answers to be provided to delegates, particularly as to why the matter had not been raised through the Commission, which would be the natural place for discussion of these issues, but rather through FAO, and for the report of the workshop/conference to be through FAO also. It was hoped that Japan would reflect further on the concerns being raised by other Members.

18.7 Australia further pointed out that CCAMLR is the recognised expert in matters concerning the Southern Ocean, and that the objective of the Convention includes rational use. Furthermore, the report of the Scientific Committee outlined the Committee's expected work over the next five years (SC-CAMLR-XX, paragraph 6.2) and this clearly covered elements that were included in the paper presented by Japan.

18.8 Chile shared the concerns of other Members but mentioned that it was apparently not yet decided whether the intended forum was to be a workshop, to address specific issues, or a conference, which could raise wider debate. Chile noted that the resource to be focused on would be krill, as other resources had no scope for expansion. Although there could be some aspects of the workshop/conference results that could usefully be taken to FAO, the paper presented had omitted the fundamental requirement for the results to be presented to the Scientific Committee.

18.9 While expressing general support for Japan's initiative, Russia stressed that more details of the proposed conference/workshop were required particularly on its location and under what auspices it will be convened. In addition, participation of CCAMLR and, in particular, of its Scientific Committee, in the proposed workshop/conference would be highly desirable.

18.10 Responding to the concerns, Japan advised the Commission that no further details are available as they have not yet been concretely configured, and therefore it could not explain whether the forum will be a workshop or a conference. Japan also explained that the material now presented had been developed just before the last COFI/FAO meeting, which was why it had first been presented there. In addition, Japan mentioned that it had been announced at the meeting of COFI/FAO because the forum seeks broader participation from developing countries, which is not the case for CCAMLR at present.

18.11 Japan was prepared to report the results back to the CCAMLR meeting immediately following the conference/workshop and noted that it welcomes constructive comments from anyone, including the Scientific Committee and CCAMLR Members.

18.12 In response to the enquiry of South Africa as to whether CCAMLR, as the organisation with competence in the CCAMLR Convention Area was invited or simply informed, Japan noted that FAO had been considered to be the more appropriate body, due particularly to the reference to developing countries. Japan further advised that arrangements are continuing and further details will be provided to the Secretariat when they are available.

18.13 In thanking Japan for its response, South Africa noted that Japan had highlighted the need for developing States to participate in the conference, and FAO was a body with wider developing State participation than CCAMLR. In South Africa's view, such participation would not detract from CCAMLR's competence.

18.14 Australia and the European Community were concerned that doubt was being cast on the competence of CCAMLR with respect to the sustainable use of Antarctic marine resources. CCAMLR was open to all countries for membership.

18.15 The USA agreed that it was surprising that a signatory to the Convention should consider that FAO, rather than CCAMLR, has primary competence in this area.

18.16 Japan reiterated that it was willing to receive any constructive input and would welcome participation by scientists from the Scientific Committee and CCAMLR Members. It did not doubt CCAMLR's competence. Japan stressed that the objective of this conference/workshop is not to create a new body which would compete with CCAMLR for competence, but address the issues mentioned above.

18.17 New Zealand noted that the use of one body as a forum for addressing the issues in the competence of another should be as much a concern to FAO as it should be to the Commission.