

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE COMMISSION
(Hobart, Australia, 25 October to 5 November 2004)

OPENING OF THE MEETING

1.1 The Twenty-third Annual Meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources was held in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, from 25 October to 5 November 2004, chaired by Mr K. Yonezawa (Japan).

1.2 All 24 Members of the Commission were represented: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, European Community, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Namibia, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay.

1.3 Other Contracting Parties, Bulgaria, Canada, Finland, Greece, Mauritius, Netherlands, Peru and Vanuatu, were invited to attend the meeting as observers. Mauritius, Netherlands and Peru were represented.

1.4 The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC), the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the Permanent Commission on the South Pacific (CPPS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) were also invited to attend the meeting as observers. The Commission also extended a late invitation to the Coalition of Legal Toothfish Operators (COLTO). ASOC, CCSBT, COLTO, FAO, IUCN, IWC and SCAR attended.

1.5 It was agreed at last year's meeting to invite to CCAMLR-XXIII as observers the following non-Contracting Parties: Angola, Belize, People's Republic of China, Columbia, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Mozambique, Panama, Philippines, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Singapore, St Vincent and Grenadines, Thailand and Togo (CCAMLR-XXII, paragraph 17.1). These countries were known to have an interest in fishing for, or trade in, *Dissostichus* spp. Indonesia and Mozambique were represented at the meeting.

1.6 The List of Participants is given in Annex 1. The List of Documents presented to the meeting is given in Annex 2.

1.7 The Chair welcomed all Members and observers to the meeting, particularly Mauritius which was attending as a new Acceding State.

1.8 The Chair noted that CCAMLR had a long association with the Government of Australia, the Depositary of the Convention, the State of Tasmania and the city of Hobart. The Commission looked forward to its annual meeting with eager anticipation, heightened by the warm reception and hospitality which all enjoyed.

1.9 It was with regret that the Chair informed Members that Mrs Barbara Kyle from Heritage Tours had passed away suddenly in November last year, and the Premier of Tasmania, Mr Jim Bacon, had died this year in June. Mrs Kyle who had provided tourism assistance to CCAMLR delegates for over 20 years, and Mr Bacon who had been a strong supporter of the organisation during his term of office, had become good friends to many involved with CCAMLR and will be sadly missed. The sympathy of all Commission Members was extended to both their families.

1.10 The Chair then introduced the Honourable Justice William Cox, Lieutenant-Governor of Tasmania.

1.11 Justice Cox welcomed delegates to Hobart and Tasmania. In his address he said that he felt CCAMLR stood at the forefront of international best practice in terms of its responsibility for the governance of a large ocean area and for the use of the wild resources found therein. Renowned for its innovative thinking and progressive conservation measures, CCAMLR had probably done more than many other, and similar, organisations to advance the science of sustainable management and to balance conservation with rational resource utilisation.

1.12 Justice Cox said that CCAMLR's more than 20-year history offered a more than clear demonstration of how well it had tackled the legal and scientific complexities inherent in its responsibility for ensuring that the Convention's objectives are met. Being the first ecosystem-based and precautionary Commission, it had taught the world much about how to implement these principles in both a practical and legislative sense. Clear examples of the Commission's achievements are manifest in its far-sighted scientific programs, its agreements on precautionary catch limits, its general approach to new and exploratory fisheries, and its various measures to deal with the global problem of Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing. Notable examples also include positive efforts to combat IUU fishing and incidental mortality of seabirds in the Convention Area, and the setting up of the Catch Documentation Scheme to monitor toothfish trade.

1.13 Justice Cox went on to say how CCAMLR's flexibility in tackling the issues he had outlined, provided a solid foundation for the future. Notable work-in-progress included the development of an electronically based toothfish trade documentation scheme, a pilot study to assess a centralised vessel monitoring system and consideration of an institutional plan of action on IUU fishing. Another important initiative is the institution of a web-based education package.

1.14 CCAMLR Contracting Parties had much to offer the world in terms of their institutional and scientific expertise, as well as their institutional responsibility for a vast amount of vital data on the resources of the Southern Ocean. It is perhaps fitting that, like many of the other Antarctic organisations based in Tasmania, CCAMLR contributes greatly to the scientific synergy that characterises the Antarctic Treaty System. Along with

COMNAP, possibly the ACAP Secretariat, and the University's Antarctic CRC, CCAMLR is much valued in Tasmania as an institution with considerable educational potential on Antarctic matters.

1.15 Justice Cox wished the Commission a productive and satisfactory series of meetings.