

**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA,
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‘Mr Chairman, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen. This is the fourth occasion that I have had the pleasure of welcoming representatives from CCAMLR Members and other CCAMLR meeting participants to an annual meeting for the Commission here in Hobart. I am particularly honoured to be able to provide the welcome address to this, the 30th Annual Meeting of the Commission.

The Governor of Tasmania has actually had the privilege of addressing the opening of 20 of these meetings. The first such occasion was in 1984 – which coincided with the Commission adopting its first conservation measure.

Reflecting on CCAMLR’s work over the last 30 years, one is struck by the success that CCAMLR has achieved in operationalising the aspirations of the original Contracting Parties that are so eloquently elaborated in the preambular paragraphs of the Convention. Of particular note was the desire by the Contracting Parties to, “establish suitable machinery for recommending, promoting, deciding upon and coordinating the measures and scientific studies needed to ensure the conservation of Antarctic marine living organisms”.

During its 30 years, CCAMLR has firmly established itself as the part of the “machinery” of the Antarctic Treaty System responsible for ensuring the conservation of Antarctic marine living organisms. It has only been able to do this by successfully meeting some quite significant challenges – challenges that have contributed to building the international character and global respect for this organisation.

I know from my own readings that CCAMLR was among the first multilateral resource management and conservation arrangements to develop what is widely known as a precautionary approach that takes into account the ecosystem in which the fisheries being managed operate. In fact, CCAMLR’s work in this respect in the late 1980s and early 1990s laid the basis for the key elements of modern global legal instruments for fisheries conservation and management. Many other achievements during the last 30 years can justifiably be reflected on with satisfaction and pride by CCAMLR Members.

In its initial decade of operations, during the 1980s, the Commission prohibited gillnet fishing, introduced fisheries closures and restrictions on gears, particularly for fish stocks depleted prior to the establishment of CCAMLR, and developed and implemented procedures for at-sea inspections. It is also worth noting that marine debris and incidental mortality associated with CCAMLR fisheries have been standing items on the Commission’s agenda since 1984.

During the early 1990s the krill catch declined – from around 370 000 tonnes to just under 100 000 tonnes annually, following the break-up of the Soviet Union and its fishing fleet, and the toothfish fishery began to expand. The latter part of the 1990s was dominated by CCAMLR’s efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. At one stage, the annual catch from the IUU fleet was estimated to be in excess of 100 000 tonnes or 5 to 6 times the regulated catch. CCAMLR’s efforts to combat this scourge, described by one CCAMLR Member at the time as representing “the most serious challenge in CCAMLR’s existence”, were certainly precedent setting. It was in the mid to late 1990s also that

CCAMLR began to make progress with its efforts to reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds taken in fishing operations.

The last decade has seen progress on a range of important issues, including efforts to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems from bottom fishing operations, scientific work to support the development of a feedback management system for krill, and efforts to develop a process for the establishment of a representative system of marine protected areas. Efforts to promote compliance have included the establishment of IUU Vessel Lists, the successful introduction of a Catch Documentation Scheme for toothfish and the application of a satellite-based vessel monitoring system for all vessels operating in CCAMLR fisheries.

While these achievements stand CCAMLR in good stead, there undoubtedly remain many challenges ahead. Foremost among these will be integrating consideration of the implications of climate change in decision-making for CCAMLR managed fisheries.

I congratulate CCAMLR on its achievements during the last 30 years and I am fully confident that CCAMLR has the experience and character to successfully address whatever challenges present themselves in the years ahead.

Before closing I would like to touch on a couple of matters that I know impacted the Antarctic community very significantly in the last 12 months.

I would like to extend my personal condolences to the colleagues, family and friends of both Ambassador Jorge Berguño from Chile and Alexandre de Lichtervelde from Belgium. I was fortunate to meet both men during their regular visits to Hobart to participate in the CCAMLR meetings. As with the Antarctic community in general, I had enormous respect for the enthusiasm and commitment they had for the Antarctic.

Their broad knowledge and depth of understanding of the history, politics and the institutional processes supporting governance in the Antarctic will be sadly missed. I would appreciate it if the delegations from Belgium and Chile would please relay my condolences to the colleagues and families of both men in your respective countries on your return home from Hobart. Both men will be very fondly remembered.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I congratulate CCAMLR on its past 30 years and I wish you success in your work ahead. I hope that your meetings over the next two weeks are productive and of course I hope that you have a little time to enjoy the hospitality that Tasmania has to offer.

Thank you'