

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN AT THE IV MEETING OF THE COMMISSION
FOR THE CONVENTION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ANTARCTIC MARINE
LIVING RESOURCES, DR. ORLANDO REBAGLIATI**

2 September 1985

(ITEM 4 OF THE AGENDA)

With great satisfaction I submit this report to the IV regular meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, my first meeting as Chairman of this body.

After the conclusion of the III meeting of the Commission, the Republics of India, Korea and Uruguay became signatories to the Convention. This is an event worthy of celebration, and I welcome the observers from these countries who are attending this meeting for the first time. As befits the occasion I welcome also the representatives of Member States of the Commission and observers from other States Parties and from international organisations. It is particularly gratifying to meet once again those very distinguished colleagues with whom I have shared tasks in this Commission and in other international fora.

As will be recalled, certain significant achievements were verified during the III Meeting of the Commission. Of these, particularly worthy of notice is the adoption during that session of the first two conservation measures. These came into force last April. It is important for us to maintain the spirit of co-operation underlying the adoption of these two measures, and the agenda for this meeting has been prepared with this purpose particularly in mind.

As will be remembered, the Convention was adopted on the initiative of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, and close links exist between these two international instruments. It should also be kept in mind that the Convention was adopted to supplement the Antarctic Treaty in an area not covered by the latter, after being confronted with evidence of a significant increase in fishing activity in Antarctic waters.

It is also important to recall that the Convention embodies the sole existing international mechanism for the conservation and rational utilisation of resources within the Antarctic Treaty System. We know that negotiations are under way within the framework of this system which seek to elaborate an international regime and machinery for Antarctic mineral resources, but the fact remains that currently the Convention is the only international instrument in force as regards certain Antarctic resources.

I also believe that it is important to recall the above issues if we bear in mind the singular attention currently being paid to the functioning of the Antarctic Treaty System by other countries,

international organisations (especially the United Nations), and the worldwide communications media.

It is therefore clear that in any evaluation of the effectiveness of the Antarctic Treaty System, the functioning of the Convention's machinery will be carefully analysed. It is my understanding that the Commission has achieved certain advances in its first three years. Specially last year it has demonstrated a collective will to apply concretely the conservation principles contained in the Convention, and has established, with this and other recommendations, the direction which this meeting should follow.

With the most earnest attention the Commission last year received the Scientific Committee's advice which indicated that the stocks of certain species had been reduced to unacceptably low levels and that urgent protection was consequently required. Regulations which sought to provide this protection were adopted. Member states carrying out fishing activities were further required to provide more complete and detailed data for the competent bodies of the Convention to make the necessary analysis. The Secretariat was also charged with visiting those same fishing nations in order to facilitate the provision of such data. I am able to report with satisfaction that these nations' response to the Commission's request was affirmative. Additional data have become available, which, while not representing the total hoped for, are sufficient for a more detailed analysis than the one made in 1984.

This analysis will be presented to us by the Scientific Committee during this meeting, and we look forward with interest to knowing its results. Similarly we await with interest the information which the Scientific Committee will also present to us on the work carried out in 1985, a report on the tasks of the working groups concerned with ecosystem management and with fish stocks assessment, and on the workshop which examined certain aspects of krill harvesting.

There is no doubt that the Commission has overcome the initial organisational phases and taken up substantial matters which fall within its area of competence. We are faced with the necessity, unable to be postponed, of adopting decisions leading to the full implementation of the Convention's principles and the achievement of its objectives. These decisions will require study and deliberation, which in turn make it essential for the Member States to provide sufficient data and information. A system of observation and inspection must also be promptly established in order to verify and facilitate the satisfactory compliance of the Convention's provisions and of the decisions which the Commission consequently adopts.

It seems clear that we must be prepared to fulfil to the utmost this arduous task, and to show ourselves consistent with the principles and objectives of the Convention, which all States Parties

have freely accepted. Even more, we must be aware that such decisions may, in the future, require certain alterations or modifications in the fishing policies of some of our nations, and in the development of certain related activities which are carried out in the Convention area.

There is a legal responsibility among States Parties to the Convention to resolutely face these problems. But there also exists a moral and political responsibility towards the rest of the international community, which the Member States are equally required to consider.

I have no doubt that the Fourth Meeting of the Commission will be equal to these undertakings. To this end I place complete trust in your cooperation and commit my unrelenting efforts to the realisation of the common task which lies before us.