

**OFFICIAL OPENING SPEECH TO THE SEVENTH MEETING
OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ANTARCTIC MARINE LIVING RESOURCES**

**E. Samoteikin
(USSR Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary to Australia)**

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Mr Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year I have the great honour, on behalf of the Soviet Union, to open the Seventh Meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources.

Not only do the spirit and letter of the Convention, in accordance with which this organisation was established, serve the interests of the conservation and rational use of Antarctica and its very rich biological resources, but they are also logically linked to the desire of all humankind to prevent the destruction of the earth's biosphere.

Modern science and technology have given people the means to alter nature, giving rise to encroachments upon it, and often, without foreseeing the consequences, to the rending and destruction of the mechanisms balancing natural processes. It is precisely because of this that the acute problem of acid rain has arisen in areas of Europe, Asia and North America, and, on a global scale, the problem of changes in the world's climate.

Today ecological problems have assumed a broad social and economic nature, are reflected in the programs of all political parties and governments and are given special attention by the international community and the mass media.

There is ever-increasing awareness and support in the world for the idea of a close inter-relationship among all aspects of international security and its provision within the framework of a global, comprehensive mechanism that combines the efforts of all countries in the interest of military, political, economic and ecological security.

In his address to the 43rd Session of the UN General Assembly, Soviet Foreign Minister E.A. Shevardnadze put the threat of ecological disaster on a par with the nuclear threat in space.

What efforts has humankind made to counter the growing danger of destruction?

- An increasing awareness that we live in a complex, contradictory, but closely inter-connected world with its common human priorities, concerns and needs;

- The first real steps towards averting the thermonuclear threat, success – albeit fragile – in resolving conflict situations, growing trust and mutual understanding, the establishment of favourable conditions, and an increased maturity in addressing and solving problems on a global scale;
- A profound concern for the serious ecological problems that have accumulated throughout the world and whose consequences are unforeseeable.

The international community – and I am pleased to note this – is now actively attempting to overcome these problems. Multilateral mechanisms in various spheres of ecological co-operation have been created and implemented. Among them is the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), established under the auspices of the Antarctic Treaty and actively serving these aims.

In seven years CCAMLR has developed into a vigorous working body consisting of 20 members and 4 acceding states, into an organisation which has made great headway from solving its own practical problems to mapping out a strategy for the conservation of marine living resources and in international ecosystem monitoring program:

- A fisheries and biological data bank has been established, making it possible to undertake realistic assessments of the status of resources and to take measures for their conservation and rational use;
- Measures have been taken to prevent pollution of Convention waters;
- This meeting makes the beginning of the work of the Committee on Observation and Inspection aimed at developing a system of fisheries inspection – an additional mechanism guaranteeing the effectiveness of measures adopted by CCAMLR.

The Scientific Committee of CCAMLR has gathered together leading scientists and experts in marine biology, and has become a competent body which accomplishes the tasks set by the Convention. The USSR believes that it is necessary to strengthen the role of this body in formulating measures within the framework of the developing Conservation Strategy for Antarctic marine living resources

The Soviet Union was instrumental in drawing up the Convention and establishing CCAMLR, and it continues to take an active part in the work of the Commission and its Scientific Committee.

The Soviet Union has been actively fishing in the Convention Area since 1970, although it is well-known that this region's share in the total Soviet catch of marine resources is only 4–5%. In comparative terms, a far greater proportion of the USSR's activities in Convention waters is taken up by scientific research. The first studies of the Antarctic during the International Geophysical Year were followed by the first research into its surrounding waters. The first integrated scientific expeditions at sea were undertaken as early as the beginning of the 1960s. Ten years of strenuous work has produced data on the stocks and distribution of key species in Antarctic waters, which has laid the basis for their rational use.

It should be noted that the first CCAMLR Conservation Measures adopted in 1984 fully took account of the USSR's national fisheries regulations existing at the time. The fishery is inextricably linked to the collection of extensive data necessary for the assessment of stocks of commercial species.

The CCAMLR Convention is unique in the sense that the rational use of the resources in its waters includes taking into account the interaction of key elements of the ecosystem. Such an approach has never before been taken in drawing up the numerous conventions that regulate harvesting activities in other parts of the World Ocean.

Under these conditions, the task of conservation and rational use of marine resources is extremely complicated. Science is only beginning the search for ways to accomplish it.

This is why the long-term ecosystem monitoring program adopted by CCAMLR requires the efforts of many scientists and large financial expenditure. Only an international organisation is capable of implementing such a program, individual countries are not. The Soviet Union favours constructive co-operation in addressing these issues on a strictly scientific, rational and non-discriminatory basis and strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and calls upon all Members of the Commission, including those not engaged in fishing activities, to take part in this co-operation.

CCAMLR already has examples of such co-operation. Joint scientific cruises by the USA and Poland, the USSR and Australia and the USSR and France are only some of the examples in recent years. We hope that they increase and produce tangible results.

CCAMLR's area of responsibility is Antarctic marine living resources. Through joint efforts with other international organisations – the International Whaling Commission, the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research and Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings – the waters surrounding this icy continent must become an example of humankind's rational approach to nature.

Allow me to express my confidence that the Commission will continue to play the role of an effective international forum, taking decisions on the basis of consensus and serving the interests of all parties concerned. This will undoubtedly help to strengthen the entire Antarctic Treaty System.

The Seventh Meeting of CCAMLR is destined to take another step in this direction. I hope that this meeting is a success and that the decisions taken here are in keeping with the spirit of consensus and international co-operation.

The beautiful land of Tasmania and the hospitality and goodwill of its people will promote this.

I wish all participants in the Meeting success in their work and hope that they find effective forms of co-operation and mutual understanding, and that an atmosphere will be created within CCAMLR that is worthy of a civilised community of nations which will help to solve the urgent and acute problems facing humankind.