

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE ANTARCTIC TREATY SYSTEM

42. The Commission noted that the next meeting of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties will be held in Paris from 9 to 19 October 1989 and the preparatory meeting will be held some time before. It was agreed that CCAMLR would wish to be represented if an invitation is received.

43. It was pointed out that it had been the practice for the Scientific Committee to nominate a representative to attend, as an observer, the meetings of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR). Consequently the report of the observer was submitted as a Scientific Committee document and not addressed by the Commission. As much of the work of SCAR is of direct interest to the Commission it was agreed that the CCAMLR observer to the SCAR Meeting would present a report to the Commission under this agenda item.

Report of the CCAMLR Observer to SCAR

44. Dr John Croxall (UK) presented the report of the CCAMLR Observer to SCAR (SC-CAMLR-VII/12). The report summarised information relevant to CCAMLR that arose in connection with XX SCAR and the Fifth SCAR Symposium on Antarctic Biology (on Ecological Change and Conservation of Antarctic Ecosystems – a topic of central importance to CCAMLR).

45. Of particular interest to the Commission and its subsidiary groups were:

- (i) suggestions for modifications to sites and species for monitoring in the CCAMLR Ecosystem Monitoring Program;
- (ii) requests that CCAMLR consider initiating programs to monitor the levels and effects of plastic pollution and to seek more detailed information regarding entanglement of seals in marine debris;
- (iii) considerable developments in SCAR activity in the field of conservation, including:
 - (a) the establishment of a multidisciplinary Group of Specialists on Antarctic Environmental Affairs and Conservation;

- (b) the establishment under the Antarctic Treaty of SSSI's in the marine zone (to protect benthic communities);
 - (c) consideration under the Antarctic Treaty of a new category of protected areas which could include CEMP monitoring sites;
 - (d) initiatives at sub-Antarctic islands which might involve establishment of marine buffer zones for protection from fisheries;
- (iv) the establishment of specialist subgroups in krill and fish ecology and physiology designed to be complementary to the CCAMLR Working Groups.

Report of the CCAMLR Observer to the 1988 Meeting
to Review the Operation of the Convention for the
Conservation of Antarctic Seals (CCAS)

46. Following receipt of an invitation extended by the Contracting Parties of CCAS the Chairman reported that, at his suggestion, the Commission had been represented by Belgium at a meeting in London to review the operation of the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals held from 12 to 16 September 1988. The report of the observer (CCAMLR-VII/BG/17) was presented by the Representative of Belgium.

47. From the information provided at the CCAS meeting, it was clear that the total number of seals killed or captured since CCAS had entered into effect in 1978 had been small and that there had been no significant adverse effects on seal populations. From statements made it was also clear that the initiation of commercial sealing was unlikely; at least during the next five to ten years.

48. The Commission's attention was drawn to an agreement reached in London that the Governments of the Contracting Parties to CCAS be recommended to add the following new paragraph to the ANNEX to CCAS:

‘8. Co-operation

The Contracting Parties to this Convention shall, as appropriate, co-operate and exchange information with the Contracting Parties to the other international instruments within the Antarctic Treaty System and their respective institutions.’

In this regard CCAMLR had been especially singled out as one such body with which CCAS ought to establish closer relations.

49. CCAS had also focused its attention on the risk of accidental introduction into Antarctica of viruses potentially lethal to native mammals or birds. The meeting had agreed to draw the attention of the Antarctic Treaty Parties and CCAMLR to this potential problem, emphasising the need to take all possible steps to minimise such risks.

50. The Commission recognised the potential vulnerability of Antarctic fauna to diseases that might be accidentally introduced and reference was made to the recent large-scale infection of seals in the North Sea. In view of the likely increase in work on seals in the Antarctic in connection with the CCAMLR Ecosystem Monitoring Program special care should be taken with equipment used for research on Antarctic animals which may have been used on infected animals outside the Convention Area.

51. The delegation of Argentina reported that a decision had been taken, based on results of research, to discontinue the use of dogs in its Antarctic activities. All dogs at Argentine stations in Antarctica are to be brought out. This action was taken to minimise this potential source of accidental introduction into the Antarctic of diseases that might be lethal to Antarctic fauna.

52. Australia asked whether CCAMLR had yet received information from CCAS on these matters. The representative of the United Kingdom, speaking as host to the 1988 CCAS meeting, informed the Commission that the Report of the London meeting (circulated as CCAMLR-VII/BG/6) was at present only available in English. Once the French, Russian and Spanish texts had been agreed with the countries concerned the Report would be printed and issued. Copies would be made available for distribution to Members of the Commission. Only once this had been done could the United Kingdom, as depositary, initiate the action necessary to give effect to the amendments to the Annex to CCAS, which it had been agreed should be recommended to Governments, and to meet other obligations on the depositary arising from the Report.

53. The Commission agreed that full discussion of this Report should be deferred until it had been issued in the final form in all four official languages.