

## REPORT OF THE SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

(Hobart, Australia, 27 October to 7 November 1997)

### OPENING OF THE MEETING

1.1 The Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources was held in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, from 27 October to 7 November 1997 under the Chairmanship of Mr D. Bock (Germany).

1.2 In opening the meeting, the Chairman said it was an honour for Germany to hold the chairmanship of such an important and prestigious organisation as CCAMLR. Its conservation measures were exemplary and its pioneering precautionary approach had become a model for other organisations.

1.3 Unfortunately, the Chairman continued, these progressive measures had little effect if they were not effectively implemented. The extent of illegal fishing had led to great concern and had visibly undermined the conservation policy of CCAMLR. The stocks of *Dissostichus eleginoides*, in particular, were under pressure because of illegal fishing. The issue of illegal fishing – and measures to contain it – was a serious issue facing the Commission at this meeting, and central to this containment were measures of control and enforcement. The Chairman said he was, however, not intending to anticipate the discussions of the ensuing days.

1.4 All 23 Members of the Commission were represented: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, European Community, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, 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.

1.5 Bulgaria, Canada, Finland, Greece, Netherlands and Peru were invited to attend the meeting as observers. Finland attended.

1.6 The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC), the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (I-ATTC), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (IOFC), 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) and the South Pacific Commission (SPC) were invited to attend the meeting as observers. ASOC, CCSBT, FAO, IUCN and IWC attended.

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

1.8 The meeting was addressed by His Excellency the Honourable Sir Guy Green, AC, KBE, Governor of Tasmania.

1.9 Attending his second meeting of the Commission, His Excellency advised the meeting of a growth of Tasmania's involvement in the Antarctic since last year's meeting.

1.10 His Excellency referred to the difficult issue of illegal fishing which CCAMLR faced this year. He believed that it was necessary for the Commission to resolve this problem in order not only to ensure the effectiveness of the Convention but also to maintain the organisation's prestige and credibility in the wider communities of the world.

1.11 In reference to some of the serious problems the Commission faced, His Excellency recalled two of the fundamentals upon which the Convention was based. The first was that the objective of the Convention was the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources, with conservation defined to include rational use. The second was that the Commission was a body having a distinct legal personality to which had been committed the mission of fulfilling the objectives of the Convention in accordance with the special ethos of the Antarctic Treaty System, thus discharging its functions with a degree of detachment from the particular interests of its Members.

1.12 In concluding his address, His Excellency said the Commission commanded respect and admiration throughout the world for the work it had done over the last 16 years and he was confident that the high regard in which the Commission and its admirable Scientific Committee was held would be fully vindicated by its approach to the important issues which confront it.