

ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING

2.1 In opening this agenda item, the Chairman noted that this would be a particularly important meeting, with some complex issues to be resolved. In this respect, there was a broad range of expectations, not only from within the organisation but also from outside: from the media, from non-governmental organisations and from individuals concerned with the living resources of Antarctica.

2.2 The Chairman explained that the Commission endeavours to exert effective control over the fishing activities taking place in contravention of the Convention or of the spirit in which it was negotiated. The proposed Catch Documentation Scheme is an important and qualitative advance in the process of applying firmly Article II of the Convention. The Chairman noted that the success of the scheme depends not only on cooperation between Members to reach agreement on the scheme, but also on the subsequent commitment of Members, including ensuring that sufficient resources would be available for its implementation. The Chairman encouraged the Commission to continue to be a leader in the field of management of marine living resources, to promote the objectives of the Commission and to set examples to other international organisations with similar goals.

Adoption of the Agenda

2.3 The Provisional Agenda (CCAMLR-XVIII/1) had been distributed prior to the meeting and was adopted without amendment (Annex 3).

Report of the Chairman

2.4 The Chairman reported on intersessional activities. He informed the meeting that there had been no changes to the CCAMLR membership during the past year. However, he was pleased to be able to report that Namibia and Vanuatu had notified the Commission that they are acceding to the Convention and that Namibia also intends to apply for membership of the Commission. Fourteen reports had been received from Members detailing their activities in the Convention Area in 1998/99. Further reports were expected to be presented during the meeting.

2.5 There had been a number of CCAMLR intersessional meetings. An ad hoc meeting of CCAMLR Members, held in Brussels, Belgium, in April, prepared a draft of a CCAMLR Catch Documentation Scheme. The Scientific Committee's Working Group on Ecosystem Monitoring and Management (WG-EMM) met in Tenerife, Spain, and the Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment (WG-FSA) met in Hobart, Australia.

2.6 For the 1998/99 season, 55 inspectors from eight Member countries had been designated under the CCAMLR System of Inspection. Under the CCAMLR Scheme of International Scientific Observation, 41 programs had been completed by observers from four Member countries. A number of fisheries had been open in the 1998/99 season with reported catches from fisheries for krill (*Euphausia superba*) 103 318 tonnes, toothfish (*Dissostichus* spp.) 13 119 tonnes, mackerel icefish (*Champscephalus gunnari*) 267 tonnes, and crabs (*Paralomis* spp.) 4 tonnes (see also paragraphs 4.3 to 4.6). Thirteen Members participated in fisheries in the 1998/99 season.

2.7 During the year, the Commission and the Scientific Committee had been represented by observers at a number of international meetings as listed in section 11 of this report and also in section 11 of SC-CAMLR-XVIII.

2.8 The observer from Namibia conveyed to the Commission personal greetings from the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources of Namibia, Dr A. Iyambo. The observer reiterated the position of Namibia as stated at last year's meeting (CCAMLR-XVII, paragraph 2.20). He also drew to the attention of the Commission that Namibia has revised its Sea Fisheries Act to

empower the Government to enforce conservation, management and regulatory measures that include taking responsibility for vessels of Namibia fishing outside the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This will enable Namibia to ensure that its vessels adhere to the conservation measures adopted by the Commission. This legislation would come into force early next year. The Parliament of Namibia has already approved Namibia's accession to the CCAMLR Convention. Namibia is depositing an instrument of accession and documentation supporting its request to become a Member of the Commission and asked Members to support its application.

2.9 The Chairman of the Commission, on behalf of all Members, welcomed the decision of Namibia and expressed his confidence that Namibia would participate at the next meeting of CCAMLR as a Member of the Commission.

2.10 In respect of the Faroe Islands, the observer from Denmark thanked the Commission for the invitation to participate at this meeting. He advised the Commission that the Faroe Islands is a self-governing community within the Kingdom of Denmark and that its fishery policy is solely decided and managed by the Faroese Home Government. At present, the Faroe Islands is an active partner in a number of bilateral and multilateral fisheries agreements, including Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO) and Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). The main area for the Faroese fisheries is and will be the North Atlantic. The Faroe Islands has only very limited experience of fishing in Antarctic waters. However, the Faroe Islands is ready to fully respect the principles laid down in the CCAMLR Convention taking into account the importance of safeguarding the environment and protecting the integrity of the ecosystem of Antarctic waters. The Faroe Islands is not now in a position to consider membership of CCAMLR. In concluding, the observer stated that discussions at the meeting would provide an important input in further deliberations by the Faroe Islands on relations with CCAMLR.