

35TH ANNUAL CCAMLR MEETING

**OPENING ADDRESS BY HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE
KATE WARNER AM, GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**

**CCAMLR HEADQUARTERS, HOBART
MONDAY 17 OCTOBER 2016**

Mr Chairman, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome to Hobart and to the 35th annual meetings of the Commission and Scientific Committee.

As your Chairman has noted, thank you Vasily, this is the second year for me to have the honour of welcoming representatives from Members and other participants to the annual meeting of CCAMLR here in Hobart.

Of course, some of you have already been here for two weeks participating in the Scientific Committee's working group meeting and, importantly, late last week I understand, a Scientific Committee Symposium. A belated welcome to those of you who have been working hard in those meetings over the last two weeks

I certainly hope that you had a successful Symposium and that you were able to identify priority issues to guide your work in support of the Commission in the long term.

I did note last year that CCAMLR is a highly valued member of the Hobart community. In addition, I told you that coming back to this building has some nostalgia for me – I sat some of my high school exams in this magnificent building when it was still The Hutchins School! So, there is a lot about CCAMLR that appeals personally to me and I am grateful for this opportunity to open your annual meeting.

In preparing to open your meeting this year, I took time to read through the Opening Addresses that have been delivered by Governors to your meetings over the last decade or so. I found it interesting how many times the same, or similar topics, came up in those addresses over the years.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, the challenges associated with your consideration of the establishment of a system of protected areas in the CAMLR Convention Area, uncertainties associated with the impacts of climate change, the importance of implementing a krill fishery feedback management strategy and the overarching commitment to a precautionary approach have regularly been highlighted as issues of primary concern to your Commission for a decade or more.

The scope of these issues is obviously large and complex and many of them are likely to form the basis of discussions among CCAMLR Members for many years to come. Although I understand that CCAMLR Members have committed to the establishment of a system of protected areas more than a decade ago, it is obvious that this matter presents significant challenges for a range of political and technical reasons and that your collective highly developed diplomatic skills will continue to be tested before a mutually acceptable system is agreed.

I sincerely wish you well in renewing your efforts in this regard during this session. I, like so many among the global community, look forward to positive developments during the next fortnight.

Another challenging issue, not confined to discussion in CCAMLR, is the impacts of climate change and our rapidly changing environment. Although there is still a great amount to learn, there is little doubt that the ocean ecosystem in CAMLR's Convention Area is among the most significant of ecosystems on our planet – marine or terrestrial. It is widely accepted that, as a global conveyor of ocean processes, its services and functions extend well beyond the CAMLR Convention Area into all of the planet's oceans. The challenge for CCAMLR is to accommodate the uncertainties associated with climate change in its decision-making and make adequate provision for that change as a central consideration in CCAMLR's efforts to conserve and manage fisheries resources within that ecosystem.

A critical component of this ecosystem, a keystone species, is of course krill. It was the possible unbridled expansion of commercial krill fishing that was the primary reason for the establishment of CCAMLR more than 35 years ago. I have been told that current levels of commercial fishing are relatively small compared with the estimated size of the resource in the southwest Atlantic where the current fishery is concentrated.

However, I know that there are concerns, both within the CCAMLR community and beyond, about potential impacts if fishing is concentrated in areas that are critical to other components of that same ecosystem – such as penguins, marine mammals and flying seabirds. I know that the concept of a feedback management arrangement where fishing can be regulated on the basis of “signals” that might be picked up among populations of such dependent species has been under discussion for a long time – a work in progress for 20 years or more I am told. Reflecting on this, I simply hope that you are collectively able to make progress in putting an appropriate system in place to regulate fishing effort so that detrimental impacts arising from fishing, to the extent they can be isolated, are avoided. I hope that we do not need a crisis to galvanise the action that is necessary to achieve this.

In times of crisis, when fisheries needed to be closed to allow overexploited resources to rebuild, when incidental mortality of seabirds threatened some species with extinction and when illegal fishers were possibly harvesting more fish from the CAMLR Convention Area than the fleet regulated by CCAMLR, this organisation has demonstrated a great capacity to act – with incredible clarity and decisiveness.

I note that CCAMLR Members working individually, collectively and with other Members of the international community, continue to make significant advancements to address major threats to the sustainability of CCAMLR-managed fisheries. The standout in the last few years has been the apparent successes in reducing IUU fishing in the CAMLR Convention Area. Those CCAMLR Members concerned are to be applauded for their commitment in this regard.

That said, I understand that evidence of IUU fishing in the Southern Ocean has not been eliminated totally. I hope that, working together, you can identify those responsible, prosecute them within the limits of domestic and international law and establish the means to prevent such operations resurfacing.

The demanding agenda that you have set yourselves for the next two weeks is a reflection of the ongoing challenges associated with monitoring, and responsibly responding to, human activities and natural changes that are taking place in the Antarctic marine environment. The fullness of your agenda is also a reflection on the commitment CCAMLR Members have traditionally applied to addressing such challenges as they have presented themselves over the last 34 years.

The international community is waiting on the outcomes of your discussions here over the next two weeks. I wish you the very best in your deliberations and I to look forward to learning the results of your discussions.

Finally, I regularly keep an eye out for media coverage of CCAMLR and fishing in the Southern Ocean. Again, as I was preparing for this visit, I trawled the CCAMLR website and Facebook page for information. Both are extremely valuable resources, rich in useful and very interesting information. I particularly like your Facebook page with the wide diversity of conservation-related information focusing on the Antarctic and the work of CCAMLR.

Mr Chairman, I wish you well in the conduct of this meeting over the next 10 days. I am advised that your extensive multilateral experience and considerable diplomatic skills means that the meeting is in very good hands. I hope that you find this, your first meeting as Chair of the Commission, rewarding and will be able to look back on your time in Hobart with satisfaction.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I look forward to discussing progress on these and other issues of significance to CCAMLR this evening when I have the pleasure of hosting you at Government House.

Thank you.