

Antarctic Treaty to celebrate 40 years

THE TWENTY-THIRD OF JUNE 2001 marks the 40th anniversary of the entry into force of the Antarctic Treaty. The Treaty provides for the cooperative governance of the region south of 60° South, and now is the cornerstone of the Antarctic Treaty system.

When compared to other international agreements the Antarctic Treaty is modest in length, but that does not reflect its enormous significance and enduring effectiveness as a basis for cooperative management of an entire continent. Since the adoption of the Treaty by 12 states, the number of parties has grown to 44, of which 27 are the Consultative Parties who are entitled to participate in the decision making. But the growth of the Treaty system goes well beyond this.

Since the first Consultative Meeting in Canberra in 1961, the parties have developed a series of increasingly sophisticated and specialised measures which combine to form a regime of great effectiveness for managing activities on the Antarctic continent



and in vast regions of the surrounding Southern Ocean.

Apart from the Treaty itself, the system includes the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals and the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty. In addition there is a raft of measures, resolutions and decisions adopted at the annual meetings of the

Consultative parties. Also associated are a number of institutions and organisations which undertake specialised work and provide advice to the ATCM.

The year 2001 also sees the 20th annual meeting of CCAMLR (see story opposite on the Convention's achievements) which has been instrumental in managing and protecting the living resources of the Antarctic marine area. Celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Treaty and its achievements since 1961, and the 20th meeting of CCAMLR, will be milestones of the Treaty system in 2001.

CCAMLR continues efforts to protect toothfish

THE NINETEENTH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION FOR the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR XIX) took place in Hobart from 23 October to 3 November 2000. Twenty-two of the 23 Members of the Commission were represented, including Australia. Also participating were several States in their capacity as Parties to the Convention on CAMLR, States not Party to the Convention but having an interest in fishing for or trading in Patagonian toothfish, intergovernmental organisations, regional fisheries management organisations and conservation organisations.

An important outcome of CCAMLR XIX was the adoption of further measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing for Patagonian toothfish. A key element of this was significant improvement to the CCAMLR Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) for toothfish. This requires all CCAMLR Members, which form about 95% of the global toothfish market, to only accept catches whose origins have been documented under the Scheme.

There have been further improvements in the relationship between CCAMLR and States not party to the Convention but which are involved in harvesting of toothfish in the Convention Area. In this regard the Parties were particularly encouraged by the announcement by the recently elected Mauritian government that it will implement the CDS and is considering denying IUU fishing vessels access to its ports. Mauritius is also considering acceding to CCAMLR. The importance of this is highlighted by CCAMLR estimates that about 50% of IUU caught toothfish taken in 2000 were landed in Mauritius.



Delegates to CCAMLR XIX.

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The Parties also welcomed the announcement by Namibia that, as part of its efforts to combat IUU fishing, it has become a Party to the Convention and has closed its ports to IUU fishing vessels.

Other developments at CCAMLR saw further support for using a scientifically-based approach to achieve a sensible balance between conservation and rational use. This includes the adoption of measures that require fishers undertaking exploratory fishing to also undertake research to gather the data needed for future management of the fishery. There was also agreement, following several years of zero real growth, to increased funding for the extensive work program set by CCAMLR for its permanent Secretariat, headquartered in Hobart.

CCAMLR will continue its work to conserve the living marine resources of the Southern Ocean when it meets again in Hobart later this year. The twentieth meetings are scheduled for 29 October to 9 November 2001.

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