

TRATADO ANTARTICO
REUNION CONSULTIVA ESPECIAL

ДОГОВОР ОБ АНТАРКТИКЕ
СПЕЦИАЛЬНОЕ КОНСУЛЬТАТИВНОЕ СОВЕЩАНИЕ



BUENOS AIRES

ANTARCTIC TREATY
SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING

TRAITÉ SUR L'ANTARCTIQUE
REUNION CONSULTATIVE SPECIALE

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LIVING RESOURCES OF THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

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43. This item and the relevant document, COFI/78/7, were introduced by the Assistant Director General (Fisheries), who also supplemented the information in the document and indicated the activities it now seems appropriate to take within the general framework outlined. He referred to the interest in this region not only of FAO but also of a number of other international organizations. He referred to moves which had been initiated by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to draw up a Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources and expressed the view that moves towards the effective conservation of the marine living resources in the Southern Ocean were timely and should be welcomed.

44. The Assistant Director-General (Fisheries) referred also to the results of the FAO/UNDP Southern Ocean Fisheries Survey Programme recently completed and to the fact that the pace of events had already outdated the reports from that Project in some respects. The catches of krill were not yet large but they have been increasing fast and the technology of catching and processing was evolving rapidly.

45. The Secretariat also provided supplementary information regarding progress in the planning of cooperative scientific research on the living resources of the Southern Ocean. The sponsoring organizations of the Biological Investigation of Marine Antarctic Systems and Stocks (BIOMASS) programme, the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) and the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR) had invited the Advisory Committee on Marine Resources Research (ACMRR) to become a full co-sponsor of the programme. In consequence, plans for full cooperation were being considered. The programme would give high priority to research activities of interest to FAO.

46. The Committee took note of a statement by the delegate of Australia, speaking on behalf of the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty, who reviewed the recent history of steps taken towards the establishment of an effective management regime for the living resources of the Southern Ocean. He emphasized that the instrument now being drafted by the Consultative Parties was not a fishery agreement in the usual sense but rather a broad convention for conservation, in accordance with undertakings by states, under the Treaty, for the conservation of the Antarctic environment and ecosystems. In addition, certain interim measures had been adopted by parties. The delegate of Australia informed the Committee that he had conveyed to the Director-General an invitation for FAO staff to be available for consultation on the occasion of the meeting of Treaty Parties to be held in Buenos Aires in July 1978. At this meeting it was expected that the Draft of a Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources would be completed, with the intent that the Convention would be formally adopted and opened for signature at a conference to be convened at the end of 1978.

47. In the following intervention, delegates expressed their appreciation of the documentation made available, of the further information provided by the Assistant Director-General and his staff, and of the account given of actions taken by Parties to the Antarctic Treaty. Several of them referred to the caution required in intensifying harvesting of a resource which was large but about which little was yet known. There was general agreement that FAO has an important role to play in facilitating the exchange and evaluation of statistics and data emerging from activities in the Southern Ocean. In this connection reference was made to the inclusion in certain regional fishery agreements, such as for ICCAT, of specific provisions for cooperation and special

51. While fully supporting efforts for the conservation of the Antarctic marine living resources, one delegation wished to record its view that any initiative of a multilateral character in this field must be non-discriminatory. Other delegations emphasized that the living resources of the Southern Ocean constituted an important potential source of human food, although exploitation of krill had not yet proved to be economic because of the distances involved, operational difficulties and a not yet developed market for products.

52. Finally, the observer from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), referring to the relevant studies recently undertaken by the organization, which derived directly from an FAO activity (the FAO/UNEP project and the ACMRR work on marine mammals), offered collaboration with FAO and undertook to make available the results of these activities as soon as they were completed. Meanwhile the IUCN would be offering a brief for consideration by participants at the Buenos Aires meeting.