

Welcoming speech by the Undersecretary of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Mr. Raúl Súnico

Good morning. On behalf of the Chilean Government, we give you a warm welcome to the fourth meeting of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation, held in one of the most beautiful cities of our country.

It is not a coincidence that we find ourselves in this city, located in the southern region of Chile. Small scale fishing activity is one of our main economic activities, which gives employment to several coastal communities.

I take this opportunity to salute all of the delegations, countries and cooperating Members. Director of the General Directorate of the Maritime Territory and the Merchant Marine, Vice Admiral Osvaldo Schwarzenberg. Director of the Environmental and Maritime Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Waldemar Coutts. Director of the Institute of Fisheries Development, Mr. Leonardo Nuñez. Local authorities, artisanal and industrial fishing representatives, non-governmental organizations. And especially to the Chairperson of this Commission, Mr. Gordon Neil, and to the vice president, Mr. Osvaldo Urrutia, to whom we wish the best leading this organization.

For Chile, it is of great pride and satisfaction to host the fourth meeting of the Commission, where we expect to be a contribution to its consolidation. Besides, it is of our biggest interest to seize this week in order to keep moving forward in the implementation of conservation and management measures that will strengthen us as a fishing organization.

In this regard, our country has a strong conviction that altogether we can fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Convention area. This type of fishing is one of the main threats to the sustainable development of worldwide fisheries activities. We expect everyone's support so that the sanctions can actually be enforced and fully applied by every participating state, so that this illegitimate activity can be discouraged and, if possible, erased.

In 2015, our country adhered to the New York agreement, which will allow us to count with inspection and control tools in international waters, thus contributing effectively to fight against this practice that endangers our resources.

But this is not everything. Chile has generated a new policy intended to prevent and discourage illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The objective of this new policy is to establish the main guidelines of the foreign policy and confront this international scourge. Among the action areas of this policy, there is the access and use of designated national harbors by foreign ships and the monitoring, control and surveillance of this activity on the high seas.

At the same time, a few weeks ago we started to process in our national congress a legal initiative that aims to strengthen the National Service of Fisheries and Aquaculture, agency in charge of

monitoring, controlling, and surveilling the Chilean fishing activity. This legal initiative also criminalizes illegal fishing, which will allow us to confront those who transgress the national extractive fishing regulation and attempt against the sustainability of our resources, putting at risk thousands of people who live around fishing in our country.

Likewise, as contributing measures to the habitat conservation where fishing resources are developed in the South Pacific, we have recently declared the biggest protected no-take marine area of South America, which takes up to 300 000 km². We have also banned bottom fishing in 100% of the seamounts that are part of our exclusive economic area. These measures put Chile in a leading position when it comes to ocean conservation and we hope they can inspire other states to follow a similar path.

As you can see, we have a genuine motivation and we have implemented concrete actions to use the living marine resources of the Eastern South Pacific in a sustainable manner. Also, we hope we can multiply and intensify our efforts along with you in this organization.

I hope you have a great week, hopefully not spending it only working, but also enjoying and getting to know Valdivia, taking to your country the best memories of Chile.

Thank you.