

CCAMLR experience with affording protection to Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems

In relation to the letter from Mr Goettsche-Wanli, Director, dated 8 January 2020, on the subject of paragraph 210 of General Assembly resolution 74/18, we offer the following information.

The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources is an international agreement established to conserve Antarctic marine living resources and is an integral part of the Antarctic Treaty system. The Convention applies to all marine living resources within the Antarctic marine ecosystem. The objective of the Convention, set out in Article II, is the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources, where the term ‘conservation’ includes rational use.

The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) gives effect to the Convention’s objective and its principles of conservation. CCAMLR adopts conservation measures which regulate fishing and related activities in the Southern Ocean. Conservation Measures (CM) adopted by CCAMLR with relevance to General Assembly resolution include the following:

Conservation Measure 22-04	Interim prohibition of deep-sea gillnetting
Conservation Measure 22-05	Restrictions on the use of bottom trawling gear in high-seas areas of the Convention Area
Conservation Measure 22-06	Bottom fishing in the Convention Area
Conservation Measure 22-07	Interim measure for bottom fishing activities subject to Conservation Measure 22-06 encountering potential vulnerable marine ecosystems in the Convention Area
Conservation Measure 22-08	Prohibition on fishing for <i>Dissostichus</i> spp. in depths shallower than 550 m in exploratory fisheries
Conservation Measure 22-09	Protection of registered vulnerable marine ecosystems in subareas, divisions, small-scale research units, or management areas open to bottom fishing

The abovementioned Conservation Measures prohibit bottom fishing in high seas waters by gillnets and trawls and restrict exploratory longline fishing for toothfish in high seas areas to waters deeper than 550m in depth. Conservation Measures 22-06 and 22-07, first adopted in 2007 and 2008 respectively, require preliminary assessment of the impact of planned activities on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), provide mechanisms to catalogue VMEs identified through scientific research or VME risk areas identified through encounters with fishing gear, and prohibit fishing on VMEs or VME risk areas. VME data are catalogued in the [CCAMLR VME Registry](#).