THE FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF POLLOCK RESOURCES IN THE CENTRAL BERING SEA

NOVEMBER 8 ~ NOVEMBER 12, 1999

PUSAN, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Opening Statement of the People's Republic of China

Thank you, Mr.Chairman,

Mr.Chairman, distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great honor for us to participate in the 4th Annual Meeting. On behalf of the Chinese delegation, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Korea for organizing and hosting this meeting.

At this occasion, I would also like to pay our respect to exterts who have made a great deal scientific research work to collect Pollock stock data in the Convention Area.

It is fourth annual conference that can provide a good opportunity for all member states to discuss the issues in relation to assessment of status of Pollock resources and management in the Central Bering Sea.

According to the results of trial fishing, we shall discuss whether the fishing operation could be resumed in the Convention area next year. In fact, what we have done in these years is making preparations when the fishing is re-stared.

As we are aware, the Central Bering Sea plays the significant role in various state's fishing operations, therefore, I believe

that the fishermen of all member states are expecting not only the operation to resume but also consensus agreement to be made on law enforcement and scientific data collection of Pollock resources.

In these recent years, the regulations of management have been improved under the close cooperation between all member states for the purpose of conservation and management of Pollock stocks. China will continue make positive contributions in this aspect. We are very pleased to see that progress have been made on some issues under the joint effort of all parties although some such as INQ and AHL are still remained. To resolve these differences should depend on the principles of effective cooperation and scientific evidence rather than other ones. It is our hope that more cooperation and progress be made during the next few days to establish a sound management system for the rational utilization of Pollack resources.

Finally, Mr.Chairman, I extend my appreciation again to you for your excellent coordination and arrangement for the meeting, and highly expect fruitful outcomes during the meeting.

Thank you.

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Opening Statement of Representative Of Japanese Delegation

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

distinguished representatives, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Japanese delegation, I would like to express our pleasure to be here in Pusan to participate in the 4-th Annual Central Bering Sea Convention. I bring the sincere regrets from our representative of Mr. Komatsu, who was unable to attend this meeting until Wednesday, because of other responsibilities, however, we are much expecting that this meeting will be activated by his join.

I would also like to express our appreciation to the Korean Government for hosting this meeting and Korean staffs for their hard work in ensuring the various arrangement of this meeting.

This Convention will be soon reached to 4 years old after into effect and our fishing moratorium in the Donuts Haul also will be soon reached to 7 years. To our regrets, in spite of the long term and most strict fishing management in this area, we cannot still achieve the recovery of pollock resources and we have not even got any its sign. Japan much worries about no fish situation from the view of scientific and political aspects and in order to break through these situation, Japan suggested and hosted "Pollock Stock Structure and

Identification Workshop" and circulated the report of "Prey/Predator Relationship between Alaska Pollock and Marine Mammals".

We are much expecting that these themes will be discussed and further developed in this meeting. The new Century of 21st is gradually closing to the human beings and Japan understands that our all Parties are obliged to discuss more efficiently about the establishment of reasonable resources management system, which is the best fit to the coming new Century and enables our relationship more tight. Mr. Chairman and all participants here, we are much expecting that we can make constructive and fruitful discussions in this meeting and through these discussions, we can develop our relationships more closely.

Now, I would like to introduce our delegation;

Thank you!

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Opening Statement of the Republic of Korea

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!
On behalf of the Korean Delegation, I would like to extend my wholehearted welcome to the delegations to the Forth Annual Conference. I am especially pleased that this Conference is being held in Pusan, the second largest city in Korea.

Seven years have lapsed since fishing operations have been suspended in the Central Bering Sea in 1993. During those years and since the enforcement of the Convention in 1996, Korea has exerted all effort to play its part in conserving and managing pollock resources in the Central Bering Sea.

Meanwhile, Korean fishermen have provided their cooperation in the endeavor to conserve and manage pollock resources, patiently awaiting their restoration so as to resume fishing operations. However, recovery rate during the last seven years has proven quite disappointing. There is no clear evidence that pollock resources in the Central Bering Sea will reach 1.67 million metric ton level as determined in the Conference and the Annual Conference thus held have not provided a clear vision for resuming fishing operations.

Accordingly, the Korean government is faced with inquiries from Korea fishermen as to whether "if it will be possible to resume operation within 10 years of the moratorium, if the moratorium is in fact contributing to pollock resource recovery, if the 1.67 million metric tons determined in the Convention is too ideal, etc." They are especially concerned whether the results of the 1999 survey conducted by member countries will indicate the recovery of pollock resources to resume fishing operations.

Under such circumstances, if the Annual Conference cannot provide or suggest any prospects or vision for resuming operations, it will be difficult to request the Korean fishermen to continue to be patient.

Therefore, at the Third Annual Conference, the Korean delegation proposed a token AHL based on consensus in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention, even if the biomass does not reach the 1.67 million metric ton level. It was agreed that the Parties may consider such approach in determining AHL for the coming year.

Korea feels that it is time to resume fishing in the Convention Area -- to the extent that it does not affect pollock resources. It is my earnest hope that all participants may reach a satisfactory agreement on issues such as AHL determination, resumption of fishing, priority placing of observers, etc.

In closing, I wish all members of the delegations a successful Conference and would like to reiterate Korea's commitment to work closely with all Parties to the Convention.

Thank you.

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OPENING STATEMENT
THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

BY A. Radomska
Head of Polish Delegation
November 8,1999 Pusan, Korea

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great honour for me to participate in the Fourth Annual Conference of the Parties to the Convention of the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea.

On behalf of the Polish Delegation I would like to extend our gratitude to the government of the Korea for organizing and hosting the Conference. Mr. Chairman, I believe that under your leadership, the meeting will be able to fulfill its objectives. Let me briefly outline the importance of the Central Bering Sea as a fishing area for Poland. The economical conditions of that part of Polish fishing industry which depends on the North Pacific area fish stock is not improving. To certain extent, it is a consequence of the closure of the Central Bering Sea fishery. This makes that the issue of proper conservation and

management of Pollock stock in the Central Bering Sea is the matter of importance in the dialogue between Polish Government and Polish fishermen.

It is the fourth time we gather together to discuss the measures related to the conservation and management of Pollock resources in the Central Bering Sea after the Convention came into force and we have made a lot of achievements although no fishing operation conducted in the Central Bering Sea. We find that all decisions have been made consist with the relevant provisions of the Convention. That is to say, we have common basis for discussing the relevant issues regarding the Pollock resources conservation and management in the Convention. I hope that all member states will co-operate very closely so that the promotion of conservation and effective management of fisheries resources can be fully ensured and fishing can be reopened in the Central Bering Sea in the near future.

Now at the opening phase of Fourth Annual Conference, Poland hopes for further progress in course of its meeting. For the fishermen the progress means that their expectations will be satisfied after 7 years of suspended fishery. I look forward to fully participating in the discussion in the spirit of cooperation, and to obtaining meaningful results over the next few days.
Thank you.

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Opening Statement of the Russian Federation

Distinguished Chairman, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is an honor for the Russian delegation to participate in the Fourth Annual Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the conservation and management of Pollock resources in the Central Bering Sea.

We are grateful to the Korean government for their hospitality and for the excellent arrangements, for the conference.

Pollock resources of the Bering Sea are amongst the most important fisheries resources for Russian fishermen. We are interested in conservation and rational utilization of pollock stocks both in the Russian EEZ and the Central Bering Sea on the basis of the best scientific data available. After the sharp decrease in the Western Bering Sea pollock stock abundance in 1993-1995 the stock remains deeply depressed. The Navarin area pollock stock is on the decline since 1996.

Combined efforts of the member counties in the study of the Bering Sea pollock stocks provide good basis for their sustainable utilization. This'll be of particular importance when the stocks recover in the Central Bering Sea.

We highly appreciate the results of the workshop on the structure and identification of pollock resources, convened due to great contributions from U.S.A. and Japan.

The Russian Delegation'll make their best to achieve the objectives of the Convention at the Fourth Annual Conference.

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Opening Statement of the United States of America

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, It is a great honor for the United States delegation to be here in Pusan for the Fourth Annual Conference on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea.

For many members of our delegation, this represents the first visit to the great country of Korea and for most our first visit to Pusan. I wish to extend our appreciation to the government of Korea for hosting this conference in such a splendid facility.

As we look out our hotel windows, we see the thing that binds us all together - the sea and the resources upon which we depend. several years ago when we all agreed that pollock stocks in the Central Bering Sea had declined to extremely low levels, we took decisive action- we all agreed to suspend fishing until the pollock stocks have recovered sufficiently to resume fishing. The voluntary suspension of fishing in the Central Bering Sea has been difficult for all of us.

Fishermen in the United States have continued to voice their concern for not being allowed to fish for pollock in the Bogoslof Island area, Which lies in the U.S exclusive economic zone.

The Bogoslof fishery was once one of the most lucrative components of the Alaska groundfish fishery. However, in the spirit of the convention, the United States has closed fishing in an area believed to be important to spawning Central Bering Sea pollock.

Additionally, U.S fishermen are confronted with reduced quotas of pollock in the U.S. zone as a result of ecosystem changes and their impacts on pollock. We must maintain the balance of human needs with the needs of other marine resources which are also dependent on pollock.

All of our countries have been confronted with the impacts of declines of various stocks and the time required for the stock to recover to allow fishing to resume. In such cases, the methods of rebuilding stocks and resumption of fishing must be scientifically based. To allow fishing on a depressed stock is unwise and may significantly retard rebuilding. We hope that discussions at this conference will clarify if there is any new information on the status of this stock.

As scientists and managers, we must mot react to undue pressures which would place a recovering stock at further risk. We must continue our rational and science based process of conserving and utilizing pollock stock. This convention has served as an effective framework to promote scientific cooperation and coordination among the contracting parties.

This convention will one day lead to the recovery of pollock resources in the Central Bering Sea and the resumption of commercial fishing. We must work toward that goal and finalize management plans which will govern the conduct of the recovered fishery. Let us continue we have started.

Mr. Chairman, we are here to continue our important work to further the objectives of the convention. Once again, we are pleased to be here in Pusan and may I introduce the U.S. delegation.

Thank you.