

**8th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT
OF POLLOCK RESOURCES IN THE CENTRAL BERING SEA**

September 15-18, 2003 – Portland, Oregon, USA

Chairman James Balsiger's Opening Statement

Good morning. It's my pleasure to welcome you to Portland, Oregon, and the 8th Annual Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea. If this is your first visit to Portland, it is a beautiful city and I hope you'll be able to spend some time outside these conference room walls getting to know it. Portland is often called the "City of Roses," because of its world famous rose gardens. I would like to acknowledge the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission for arranging for these meeting facilities and I hope your stay here at this historic hotel will be a comfortable one.

It's a little difficult making the transition from roses to pollock, but I would like to briefly iterate the main reasons we are here this week. They are found in Article II of the Central Bering Sea Convention:

- “1. to establish an international regime for conservation, management, and optimum utilization of pollock resources in the Convention area;
2. to restore and maintain the pollock resources in the Bering Sea at levels which will permit their maximum sustainable yield;
3. to cooperate in the gathering and examining of factual information concerning pollock and other living marine resources in the Bering Sea; and
4. to provide, if the Parties agree, a forum in which to consider the establishment of necessary conservation and management measures for living marine resources other than pollock in the Convention Area as may be required in the future.”

Despite 10 years of a moratorium on commercial pollock fishing in the Convention Area, we have not yet been able to restore Central Bering Sea pollock stocks to the level that will permit their maximum sustainable yield. We understand the frustration this causes some of the Parties, but we hope that this will not deter them from continuing to seek the objectives of the Convention. We are here to continue gathering and examining all information which might have a bearing on understanding the circumstances underlying this situation.

We note that scientists from five of the Parties met in Pusan in May of this year for the

Workshop on Central Bering Sea Pollock Resources. We are particularly pleased with the progress that has been made on genetic analyses of pollock population structure in the Bering Sea and North Pacific and studies of the effects of climatic changes on pollock recruitment and migratory patterns. We believe that the information gleaned from such scientific endeavors will eventually reveal an explanation for pollock stock conditions in the Convention Area.

We are confident that our work here this week will be productive and we hope to gain meaningful progress toward the objectives of this Convention.