

Original: English

OPENING SPEECH BY ICCAT CHAIR
ICCAT 21st Special Meeting of the Commission
12 November 2018, Dubrovnik, Croatia

Good Morning,

Mr. Tomislav Tolušić, Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture to Croatia, **Mr. Nikola Dragoslavić**, Prefect of Dubrovnik-Neretva-County, **Mr. Mato Franković**, Mayor of the city of Dubrovnik, ICCAT Executive Secretary, **Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel** and his staff, distinguished colleagues First and Second-Vice Chairs of the Commission, Chairs of Committee of STACFAD, COC, PWG and Chairs of Panels, distinguish NGOs, Participants, Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen of the Press, Dear Friends.

It is my great honour to welcome you all, to the 21st Special meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of the Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) and to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Croatia and to the European Union for offering to host us in this beautiful city of Dubrovnik.

I would like to welcome Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel, the new Executive Secretary who succeeded Mr. Driss Meski since July. I wish you good luck and success Mr. Manel.

Once again this meeting brings us many challenges. In the letter the Secretariat has circulated to you, I tried to highlight some of the key issues which I consider critical to be discussed and addressed during this meeting. Our meeting will need to take decisions and I encourage all CPCs to collaborate in order to reach a consensus.

The first priority issue is related to the amendment of the ICCAT Convention. Significant progress has been made by the Working Group and we need to complete the process in order to comply with our commitment. I would like to thank the Chair of the Working Group on Convention Amendment, Ms. Deirdre Warner-Kramer for her hard work which has allowed us to come through complex issues.

As you all know, the second ICCAT performance review was conducted in 2016 which came up with important recommendations. We are requested to follow up on these recommendations that have been assigned to each body.

The outcomes of the SCRS meeting raised several issues regarding MSE, FADs and some situations regarding species stocks mainly tropical tunas and bluefin tuna. These issues will be discussed in the appropriate Panels to come up with proposals of measures to be taken to address them. I would like to urge all Panels to review the proposals and reach agreement on the best suited ones for the interest of our Commission.

We also need to touch base on the outcome of the work done by the Committee on enhancing the dialogue between scientists and managers. The Commission should evaluate the progress made by this Committee so far.

Bad news about the financial situation of the Commission has been received, especially because some CPCs have not paid their contributions. The Working Capital Fund has decreased dramatically in the last years. The Commission should seriously look at this issue.

Finally, an important consideration should be given to the compliance issues.

The international community is closely following the ICCAT meeting, and the decisions that are taken regarding the threatened populations will preserve the good image of the Commission.

I would like to thank all of you for your participation and reiterate my gratitude to the European Union and to the Government of Croatia for hosting this meeting and also to the Secretariat of the Commission for its organization.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of ICCAT, I hereby declare the 21st Special Meeting of the Commission duly open.

Thank you