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STATEMENT BY THE ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA,  
Mr. H.W. BULLOCK, AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR IN ARGENTINA

It is with great pleasure that I take the floor to congratulate you on your assumption of the office of Chairman of the resumed session of this Special Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting. It is particularly appropriate that, as the representative of the country which was host to the first session of this Special Consultative Meeting. I should be among the first to welcome your election to preside over this resumed session. Mr. Chairman I am confident that under your guidance we will be able to proceed to a resolution of the issues that confront us in establishing a regime acceptable to all our Governments for the conservation of the marine living resources of Antarctica.

Mr. Chairman, it is especially appropriate that Argentina, as a country of the Southern Hemisphere with long traditions and deep ties with Antarctica, should be the host to this meeting of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties. Australia and Argentina share that sense of commitment to the Antarctic which is felt in a particular degree by countries located close to the antarctic continent. In a sense the involvement of the countries of the Southern Hemisphere in Antarctica transcends the particular resource issues which are the subject of our present meeting and embraces a special concern for developments in an area which forms an important part of our regional environment. We think that there could have been no better choice than this splendid city for this resumed session of the Special Consultative Meeting.

At the outset of this meeting it is timely to recall the reasons which led us at the Ninth Consultative Meeting to embark upon the formidable task we now have before us. These reasons were expressed in Recommendation Nine-Two IX (2) from that Meeting. In the preamble to that recommendation we jointly recognized the urgency of ensuring that the marine living resources in the Antarctic Treaty Area and adjacent waters are protected by the establishment of sound conservation measures which will prevent overfishing and protect the integrity of the Antarctic ecosystem. Our concern about the proper conservation of these resources and the need to provide a sound scientific base for their conservation, led to recommendations on such things as basic principles for the collection and exchange of scientific information, some interim guidelines, and elements which we would need to take into account in the elaboration of a draft definitive regime. As in the preamble, we also included amongst these elements the fact that the regime should provide for the effective conservation of the marine living resources of the Antarctic ecosystem as a whole. In order to do that we recognized that the regime would need to cover whatever areas might prove necessary for the effective conservation of species of the Antarctic ecosystem.

Mr. Chairman, I have no doubt that all of us present today are aware of the urgency of the tasks which confront us. We are all familiar with the devastating results which have followed uncontrolled harvesting, not least of the whale populations. This Meeting provides us with an opportunity to build on the significant progress that was made at the

Canberra Meeting and to develop a viable regime for the conservation of the living resources of Antarctica. The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties have a commendable record of past achievement in relation to the living resources of the region. But we must all recognize that the present situation presents us with a strong challenge. It is our responsibility, as the Parties who have demonstrated our particular interest in Antarctica, to prove to the world that we are capable of meeting that challenge.

Mr. Chairman, we all recognize that there are formidable difficulties which we must resolve if agreement is to be reached on the draft of a Convention on the Conservation of the marine living resources of Antarctica. Similar difficulties have been encountered before and have been overcome. The Antarctic Treaty itself represented a unique solution to the unique problems which confronted the Parties in finding ways to the further international co-operation consistent with the preservation of important national interests. The task which confronts this meeting will be to find equally ingenious solutions under which the principles of the Antarctic Treaty can be applied to the marine living resources of the Antarctica without discrimination against the position of any Party. This will require creative initiatives and flexible responses from us all. But it is essential that the Antarctic Treaty Parties should rise to the challenge. If we fail in this task the international community may feel impelled to seek answers in other forums.

If we fail to rise to the challenge which we set ourselves in London, and to which we applied ourselves in Canberra, we will have failed in our responsibilities as custodians of the Antarctic continent, its marine living species and its environment. We are confident, Mr. Chairman, that in placing ourselves in your hands we have the best insurance that we will not fail.