



GFCM High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture

A declaration to boost regional cooperation
in the sector

24–25 October 2016
Bucharest, Romania



Cover photograph:
Meltem Ok

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**24–25 October 2016
Bucharest, Romania**

Edited by

**Abdellah Srour, Fabio Massa, Miguel Bernal, Nicola Ferri, Dominique Bourdenet,
Margherita Sessa, Anna Carlson, Julia Pierraccini and Ahmed Siliman**

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Preparation of this document

This document has been prepared by the Secretariat of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). It stems from the High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture, held in Bucharest, Romania, from 24 to 25 October 2016, and organized by the GFCM in partnership with the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea Commission), the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the International Organisation for the Development of Fisheries in Central and Eastern Europe (Eurofish), and in collaboration with the Romanian Government.

This publication gathers some information about the event, the outcomes of the different panels which took place during the expert meeting, and the Declaration adopted at the conclusion of the High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture, also known as the “Bucharest Declaration”, together with its Annex. The official speeches in Appendix 2 are reproduced in their original language.

Abstract

The High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture was organized in Bucharest, Romania, from 24 to 25 October 2016 by the GFCM in partnership with the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea Commission), the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the International Organisation for the Development of Fisheries in Central and Eastern Europe (Eurofish), and in collaboration with the Romanian Government.

More than 100 participants attended the conference and discussed about the main challenges and future prospects for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea. Participants included representatives from GFCM contracting parties (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Turkey and the European Union), cooperating non-contracting parties (Georgia and Ukraine), non-contracting parties (Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and the Russian Federation), international organizations, non-governmental organizations, universities and academia. The conference was structured around an expert meeting, divided into three round-table panel discussions, followed by a high-level session where strategic aspects related to cooperation in fisheries and aquaculture at the regional level were tackled.

The event was marked by the unanimous adoption of a declaration to enhance cooperation in tackling the most urgent challenges to achieving sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. This declaration marked a strong political commitment to increase collaboration with a view to promoting the rational exploitation of marine living resources, the sustainable development of aquaculture and the mitigation of threats facing the marine environment and vulnerable species so as to ensure healthy and productive ecosystems in the region.

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Contents

Preparation of this document	iii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	vi
Abbreviations and acronyms	vii
Foreword	viii
CONFERENCE OVERVIEW	1
Background	3
Objectives and outcomes	4
The way forward	6
BUCHAREST DECLARATION	7
Annex	11
APPENDIXES	15
Appendix 1 – Programme	17
Appendix 2 – Speeches by high level representatives	21
Appendix 3 – List of participants	61

Acknowledgements

The organizers would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Government of Romania, in particular the Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development, for the kind invitation and for hosting the conference and providing valuable logistical support during the event.

Special thanks are extended to all the ministers and high-level representatives for their participation and precious collaboration. All the experts who contributed to the success of the conference by bringing their knowledge and experience during the panel discussions are also gratefully acknowledged. In addition, the contribution of Katrina Sichel, who moderated the whole event with enthusiasm and professionalism, was greatly appreciated.

Finally, heartfelt thanks are due to the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea Commission), the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the International Organisation for the Development of Fisheries in Central and Eastern Europe (Eurofish) for supporting, as partners, the organization of the conference.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ACCOBAMS	Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area / Accord sur la Conservation des Cétacés de la Mer Noire, de la Méditerranée et de la zone Atlantique adjacente
AZA	allocated zone for aquaculture
BSEC	Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation / Organisation de coopération économique de la mer Noire
CGPM	Commission générale des pêches pour la Méditerranée
EEZ	exclusive economic zone
EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency
EMODnet	European Marine Observation and Data Network
EU	European Union
Eurofish	International Organisation for the Development of Fisheries in Central and Eastern Europe / Organisation internationale pour le développement des pêches en Europe centrale et orientale
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUU	illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing)
INN	(pêche) illicite, non déclarée et non réglementée
MCS	monitoring, control and surveillance
MedPAN	Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean / Réseau des gestionnaires d'Aires Marines Protégées en Méditerranée
MoU	memorandum of understanding
PSMA	FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
RAC/SPA	Regional Activity Center for Special Protected Areas
RFMO	regional fisheries management organization
SGSABS	GFCM Subregional Group on Stock Assessment in the Black Sea
UE	Union européenne
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP/MAP	United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan
WGBS	Working Group on the Black Sea
VMS	vessel monitoring system

Foreword

The High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture represents a pinnacle moment in the history of fisheries and aquaculture management in the Black Sea. Indeed, for the first time in the region, a strong political commitment was made towards a common and collaborative approach to promoting the rational exploitation of marine living resources, fighting illegal fishing practices, developing sustainable aquaculture and mitigating threats to the marine environment. The adoption of the Bucharest Declaration at the conclusion of this conference emanates from a positive trend towards increased regional cooperation. In recognition of the important role of the Black Sea in sustaining livelihoods and providing a source of food and recreation, relevant stakeholders have come together in recent years to work towards a common vision for the long-term sustainability of this sea.

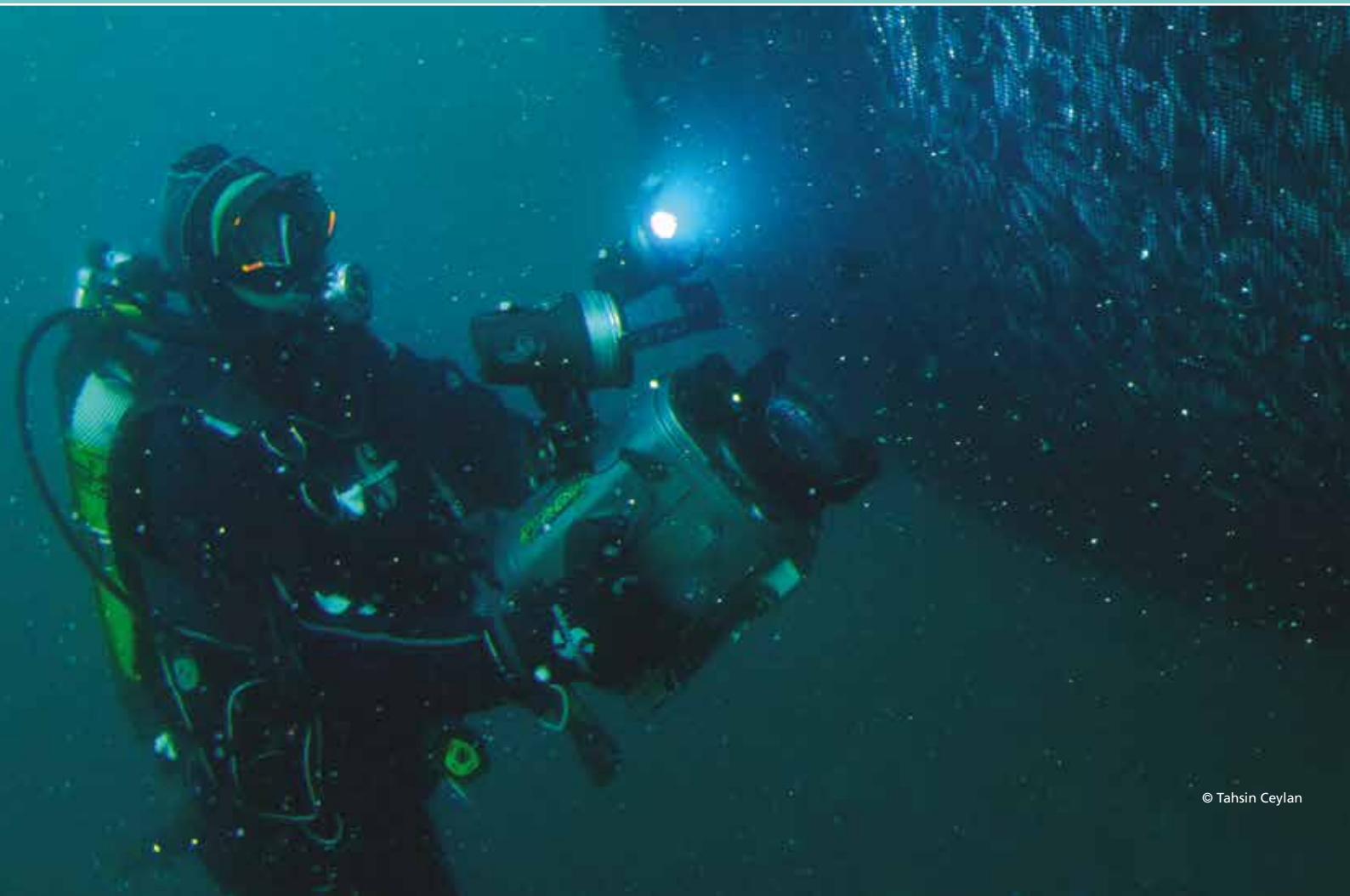
The GFCM has aspired to be a driving force towards increased regional cooperation, and the important achievements reached in the Black Sea over the last years mirror this positive evolution. Although the Black Sea has always been part of the GFCM area of application, the successive amendments made to the basic texts of the GFCM have strengthened the role of our Commission in the region and have endowed it with greater competencies. An independent performance review conducted from 2009 to 2011 has helped identify gaps to be addressed in order to improve the management of fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea. Spurred by this performance review, a Task Force was established which steered an amendment process to modernize the institutional and legal framework for the GFCM. This latest amendment, adopted on 20 May 2014, has changed the nature of the GFCM and, among others, enhanced its role in the Black Sea by introducing a subregional approach, strengthening its ability to promote compliance and improve cooperation with states and organizations. Of note, this amendment recognized the particular status of the Black Sea in the context of the GFCM by establishing a special mechanism for bringing together riparian countries and giving them the opportunity to annually examine salient regional issues. Since this important milestone, enormous strides have been made towards improved cooperation, most notably with the granting of the cooperating non-contracting party status to Georgia and Ukraine in 2015 and with the increasing involvement of the Russian Federation in GFCM activities.

The positive trends in regional cooperation, stemming from these momentous changes over the past two decades, have put Black Sea riparian states in a position to take action. In this respect, the adoption of the Bucharest Declaration on 25 October 2016 represents an important call to action. Although much progress has been made to reach this point, the work ahead is even more crucial. It is now time to roll up our sleeves, putting into practice the cooperative ideals that have been espoused, in order to make headway towards a healthier and more sustainable Black Sea.

Abdellah Srour
Executive Secretary
General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean



CONFERENCE OVERVIEW



Background

Fisheries and aquaculture represent significant economic activities for Black Sea coastal communities, yet despite their importance, their sustainable management faces a number of challenges. The Black Sea is distinguished by a low salinity surface layer and a significant anoxic layer below 200 metres depth, making it the largest anoxic body of water on the planet. Because of this, the majority of commercially exploited fish species live within the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of several Black Sea riparian states, or are migratory, with spawning and wintering areas in different areas of the sea. In addition to these unique features, the Black Sea is also highly vulnerable to increasing anthropogenic stress. Indeed, dramatic environmental changes have occurred in the Black Sea ecosystem since the 1960s. Eutrophication, pollution and irresponsible fishing activity have resulted in an overall decline of biological resources. These changes have been accompanied by variations in the abundance and distribution of key commercial species of marine living resources. For example, apex pelagic predators have shown an important decline, while European anchovy, a key species in the ecosystem and the stock which sustains the largest commercial fishery in the region, collapsed in the late 1980s. Other species, such as sturgeon, are considered to be threatened by different human activities, including illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and pollution. With regard to aquaculture, its development in the Black Sea has been limited to date, not only due to the environmental constraints noted above, but also due to governance factors such as the implementation and coordination of appropriate legislation, as well as economic factors such as high initial costs and limited funding support. Taken together, the main issues facing the sustainable development of Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture include inadequate management efforts and governance capacities, as well as environmental constraints such as pollution and the introduction of alien species. To address these issues, strong regional cooperation is needed within the context of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

To increase regional dialogue on issues related to fisheries and aquaculture management among the Black Sea riparian countries, the GFCM established in 2011 the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS). Consisting of national experts and representatives of fisheries administrations in the riparian states, the WGBS seeks to develop scientific advice on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture management issues. Since the establishment of the WGBS, work has been carried out in particular towards the adoption of specific recommendations to revert the negative situation of fisheries in the region. However, information on the status of Black Sea stocks is sparse, as few stocks are regularly assessed and available time series are rather short. To address these shortcomings, in 2013, the WGBS was further enriched with the establishment of a dedicated Subregional Group on Stock Assessment in the Black Sea (SGSABS). The SGSABS aims to review the status of the main fish stocks in the Black Sea, focusing particularly on turbot and small pelagic stocks such as anchovy and to examine existing data and stock assessment methods for the main stocks in the area. The progress made within the WGBS has been significant, to the extent that in the years following its establishment, three binding recommendations specific to the Black Sea have been adopted by the GFCM.

Important challenges still remain, however, towards the effective management of Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture. Crucial gaps and needs identified by the WGBS include improving the quality of scientific advice, in particular through common scientific programmes and surveys, incorporating the views of different stakeholders

in decision-making, and strengthening cooperation among different riparian state administrations. Of particular focus are pernicious discarding and IUU fishing practices, which have led to uncertainties in stock assessments. Furthermore, the WGBS work programme has grown continuously over the years, justified by the alarming state of Black Sea fisheries and ecosystems and the increasing need for strong scientific advice to support management decisions; capacities, however, have not always kept pace with the rapid development of the work programme. The establishment of a cooperative regional project for the Black Sea has therefore been proposed as a tool for bridging gaps at the regional level and ensuring the efficient completion of the WGBS work programme. Although hurdles remain, these developments point to a decisive shift towards a level playing field in the Black Sea and reflect the solid footing from which riparian countries could take resolute action.

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

It is within this context, and in light of the strong commitment of the GFCM in the Black Sea region, that the High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture was held. The conference was co-organized with ACCOBAMS, the Black Sea Commission, BSEC and Eurofish, and in close cooperation with the Romanian Government. The role of this conference was to provide a forum to discuss existing gaps and opportunities for efficient and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management in the Black Sea, while setting priorities for improving cooperation and providing technical support. The conference gathered more than 100 participants (see plate 1). The conference was organized over the course of two days, consisting of a day-long expert meeting, followed by a day-long high-level session.



The expert meeting was divided into three round-table panel discussions dealing with technical matters related to the most salient issues for Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture management as follows:

Panel 1 – State of Black Sea marine living resources and their ecosystems

This expert session examined interconnected elements for efficiently managing Black Sea fisheries and ensuring healthy ecosystems and discussed in particular the following topics:

- the state of the main commercial fish stocks in the Black Sea, the provision of scientific advice in support of management plans for priority species and the challenges for implementing management measures (including the use of minimum landing size, capacity control measures, area-based management tools, legislative and governance issues, etc.);
- ecological challenges for the efficient management of fisheries, including incidental catches of vulnerable endangered species and the increasing presence and abundance of alien species;
- socio-economic issues in Black Sea fisheries, including discards and their relation to the markets, diversification of small-scale fisheries to improve livelihoods of coastal communities; and
- overcoming existing hurdles in collecting and submitting reliable data at the regional level (e.g. biological data, socio-economic data, bycatch data): existing data collection systems and challenges.

Panel 2 – Existing knowledge and efforts towards the assessment and eradication of IUU fishing in the Black Sea

This expert session took stock of the current scale of IUU fishing, including its foreseeable costs and impacts, in order to frame discussions around the most appropriate international and regional policy instruments to be developed against the background of the 2013 roadmap. In this regard, the session explored, in particular, the role of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), including emerging technologies that could be used in the Black Sea to address IUU fishing. The following topics were discussed:

- taking stock of the extent of IUU fishing in the Black Sea;
- international, regional and national policy instruments, including the role of MCS; and
- improving collaboration among Black Sea riparian states and overcoming obstacles towards eradicating IUU fishing.

Panel 3 – Current state and future perspectives for the responsible development of aquaculture in the Black Sea

This expert session addressed the status of the aquaculture sector in the Black Sea and identified potential future actions to unblock, accelerate and secure the sustainable development and growth of the sector. Such actions include the identification of suitable areas for aquaculture farming, the enhancement of cooperation and knowledge-sharing on topics of markets and trends, species selection, legislative and governance frameworks and technology. The main topics discussed were the following:

- the status of aquaculture in each Black Sea riparian state and the potential future development of the sector;
- markets, trends and demand for aquaculture products in the Black Sea;
- best practice examples of national and regional initiatives and priorities for the integration of aquaculture, including allocated zones for aquaculture (AZAs), within marine spatial planning; and
- the role of aquaculture in food security and nutrition in the Black Sea.

The high-level session gathered officials and representatives who tackled several strategic aspects related to regional cooperation on technical matters. At the conclusion of the session, the Bucharest Declaration was unanimously adopted. For the first time in the region, this declaration marks a strong political commitment to adopt a common and collaborative approach to promote the rational exploitation of marine living resources and sustainable aquaculture development, to fight illegal practices and to mitigate threats to the marine environment. This declaration, as well as the results achieved by the conference, are particularly relevant in the aftermath of the entry into force of the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA). Through these outcomes, an important step was made towards the wider ratification and implementation of the PSMA in the region. The declaration, including its technical annex reproducing the outcomes of the technical panels, is reproduced in the following section.

The conference was also marked by two important milestones. In light of its increasing interest in GFCM activities in the Black Sea region, the Republic of Moldova took this opportunity to officially request the status of cooperating non-contracting party to the GFCM, as a potential preliminary step towards full membership. Furthermore, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the GFCM and Ukraine. This mechanism should enhance the capacity of national experts and institutions dealing with fisheries and aquaculture.

THE WAY FORWARD

All the riparian countries, as well as other important actors in the region, have recognized that regional cooperation and synergies were essential for facing the many challenges in the sector. For this reason, they strongly welcomed initiatives such as the BlackSea4Fish regional project which aims to facilitate coordination between national administrations in charge of fisheries and marine environment among the Black Sea riparian countries. Support for the BlackSea4Fish project was one of the most decisive conclusions to emerge from the Bucharest Declaration and, as such, its launching is imminent.

The future strategy for sustainable aquaculture development as well as the ongoing mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries in the region will also be crucial for achieving the goals highlighted by the conference.

In particular, the mid-term strategy is fully coherent with the targets set by United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 – which is to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources – as well as with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the FAO Strategic Objective 2 – which addresses the important role of fisheries and aquaculture to promote sustainable development and blue growth.

The mid-term strategy includes five general targets (Target 1: Reverse the declining trend of fish stocks through strengthened scientific advice in support of management; Target 2: Support livelihoods for coastal communities through sustainable small-scale fisheries; Target 3: Curb illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing through a regional plan of action; Target 4: Minimize and mitigate unwanted interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems and environment; and Target 5: Enhance capacity-building and cooperation). Although all targets are of crucial importance for the effective management of Black Sea fisheries, Target 5 makes particular reference to the special case of the Black Sea through a dedicated output which addresses the strengthening of fisheries governance in the Black Sea. To this end, this strategy calls for efforts to ensure, in due course, the full membership of all six Black Sea riparian countries, as well as endeavours to establish a regional, scientific and technical cooperation project for the Black Sea.



BUCHAREST DECLARATION



Declaration of the High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture (“Bucharest Declaration”)

BUCHAREST, ROMANIA, 25 OCTOBER 2016

At the invitation of H.E. Achim Irimescu – Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Romania – the ministers and high-level representatives who met in Bucharest, Romania, on 25 October 2016 on the occasion of the “High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture” organized by the Government of Romania together with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in cooperation with the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea Commission), the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the International Organisation for the Development of Fisheries in Central and Eastern Europe (Eurofish):

CONSIDERING

- a. the vital role of healthy marine ecosystems and resilient marine living resources, including shared fish stocks and vulnerable species, in the context of sustainable development and blue economy for the Black Sea region;
- b. the many challenges still to be met towards the sustainable management of Black Sea marine living resources, including threats to these resources from overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, incidental catches, pernicious discarding practices, ghost fishing, marine pollution, uneven development of aquaculture and invasive species, among others; and
- c. the efforts of FAO in promoting responsible fisheries and sustainable aquaculture practices in the context of the Blue Growth Initiative and in encouraging broad participation in the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA), including ratification by Black Sea riparian countries and its subsequent implementation in compliance with their flag state responsibilities;

RECALLING

- d. that currently Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey are contracting parties, Georgia and Ukraine are cooperating non-contracting parties and positive cooperation is ongoing between the Russian Federation and the GFCM;

- e. the role of the GFCM in staunchly pursuing enhanced cooperation, with particular focus on riparian countries in the Black Sea region, building on the foundations laid by the work of the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) which has been promoting since 2011 a concerted approach to addressing the issues and challenges facing Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture; and
- f. the decisive progress made towards improved intra-governmental coordination among relevant regional organizations, including existing memoranda of understanding between the GFCM-FAO and ACCOBAMS, the Black Sea Commission and Eurofish, as well as ongoing cooperation with BSEC;

TAKING NOTE

- g. of the technical outputs of the expert meeting held on 24 October 2016 to inform discussions at this High-level conference, as reproduced in the Annex to this Declaration;

We, the ministers and high-level representatives,

1. encourage a common and collaborative approach to cooperation amongst riparian countries in the Black Sea region with a view to promoting the rational exploitation of marine living resources, the sustainable development of aquaculture and the mitigation of threats facing the marine environment and vulnerable species so as to ensure healthy and productive ecosystems. To this end, we recognize that regional cooperation and synergies in the Black Sea region should be enhanced, taking into account the particular characteristics of each country in order to meet relevant global commitments such as the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
2. acknowledge, to this end, the positive role of the GFCM as a regional organization with competency over fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea and note, in particular, the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries which adapts the targets in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets to the specificities of the Black Sea region;
3. within this context, look forward to increased coordination and synergies among relevant organizations with competence in the Black Sea region, including, but not limited to, ACCOBAMS, the Black Sea Commission, BSEC and Eurofish;
4. call upon Black Sea riparian countries to implement more stringent measures for efficient monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) systems in their exclusive economic zones by having established necessary infrastructure and capacity, including through the GFCM;
5. also call upon Black Sea riparian countries to enhance multilateral cooperation and implement actions to improve the sustainability of resources, particularly with regard to scientific advice, sustainable small-scale fisheries, MCS, capacity-building, as well as actions emanating from a regional plan of action to fight IUU fishing;
6. recognize the need for a regional project as a means to promote technical cooperation in matters relating to the sustainable development of Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture and commend the efforts by the GFCM and relevant partner organizations to launch this project – BlackSea4Fish – and implement it in a concerted manner at the regional level, with a view to facilitating coordination between national administrations in charge of fisheries and marine environment; and
7. invite the GFCM to regularly evaluate progress in the implementation of this declaration through the most appropriate means.

Annex

Technical outputs of the expert meeting of the High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture

Panel 1: State of Black Sea marine living resources and their ecosystems

The participants at the expert meeting of the High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture,

- having considered the importance of accurate and timely data, of reconstructed time series and of jointly analysing existing data and information for the development of scientific advice towards effective management measures for Black Sea fisheries;
- having also considered that the data currently used in formulating scientific advice may be fragmented, limited in time or spatial coverage and/or based on outdated critical assumptions;
- having recognized the particular ecological features of the Black Sea and the need to mitigate negative interactions between fisheries and the Black Sea marine environment by reducing discards and incidental catches of vulnerable species and by better understanding the role of invasive species;
- having acknowledged the relevance of small-scale fisheries and the overall socio-economic importance of fisheries in the Black Sea, with the aim of maximizing the value of fishery products in support of livelihoods while mitigating the harmful impacts of incentivizing fishing for high-value species; and
- being aware of the crucial role of cooperation between national administrations dealing with fisheries and the marine environment as well as of the equally crucial role of cooperation among relevant international organizations in the Black Sea;

Formulated the following recommendations emerging from the panel discussions:

- Relevant organizations operating in the Black Sea region shall cooperate with the GFCM towards the promotion of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, which includes the collection of information on fisheries-related issues, such as relevant socio-economic data, discards, incidental catches of vulnerable species, invasive species and other aspects of marine ecosystems.
- The GFCM, with the collaboration of national administrations and the participation of scientists from research institutes of the different riparian countries, shall coordinate the preparation and implementation of surveys at sea. These surveys shall support the assessment of the main commercial stocks in the area, addressing crucial issues such as stock boundaries and the adoption of efficient management measures.

- The GFCM shall provide technical assistance and organize capacity-building activities towards improving existing expertise on fisheries. In particular, scientific monitoring capabilities at the national level shall be supported with a view to underpinning the collection, sharing and analysis of fisheries-related data at the regional level in support of fisheries management.
- The visibility of the small-scale fisheries sector as well as the participation in the collection of data and in fisheries co-management by small-scale fishers and local fishing communities shall be increased and sustainable value chains for small-scale Black Sea fisheries shall be promoted.
- The BlackSea4Fish project, as previously promoted by the WGBS and endorsed by Black Sea riparian countries, shall provide support to the implementation of technical activities ensuring the provision of scientific advice in support of decision-making processes for Black Sea fisheries.

Panel 2: Existing knowledge and efforts towards the assessment and eradication of IUU fishing in the Black Sea

The participants at the expert meeting of the High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture,

- having considered that the impacts of IUU fishing, in particular unreported fishing, are a source of serious concern for all riparian countries;
- being aware that without effective measures to fight IUU fishing, such as port state measures and MCS, the sustainability of Black Sea marine living resources cannot be attained; and
- being concerned about the lack of awareness by the general public of threats and problems associated with IUU fishing in the Black Sea region;

Formulated the following recommendations emerging from the panel discussions:

- The magnitude of IUU fishing in the Black Sea region shall be regularly assessed by the GFCM. To this end, experts in the region shall contribute to collect data and information to evaluate, in particular, the impacts of unreported fishing, including in the context of an ad hoc working group on the assessment of IUU fishing.
- The GFCM shall assist Black Sea riparian countries in coordinating their MCS measures with a view to facilitating a regionally harmonized control system, including the exchange of port state data and the implementation of vessel monitoring system (VMS) and alternative technologies to VMS.
- National training of inspectors and joint monitoring schemes shall be promoted and technical assistance to build the regional capacity in the fight against IUU fishing shall be provided, including through coordinated efforts by the GFCM and other competent organizations.
- The international day for the fight against IUU fishing shall contribute to launching campaigns across the Black Sea region to raise awareness of the main problems associated with IUU fishing, as well as carrying out vocational activities and the dissemination of information to the general public.

Panel 3: Current state and future perspectives for the responsible development of aquaculture in the Black Sea

The participants at the expert meeting of the High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture,

- having recognized that aquaculture development in the Black Sea, to date, has been limited by a number of constraints, including environmental factors (e.g. climate variability, pollution), governance factors (e.g. burdensome

- administrative procedures), economic factors (e.g. high initial costs, shortage of funding support) and social factors (e.g. lack of aquaculture farmer organizations);
- having considered the large potential of the aquaculture sector in the Black Sea for future development thanks to the availability of various environments, sites, capacities, technologies and species and thanks to the positive role of aquaculture in the context of food security, employment and better economic opportunities for coastal communities; and
 - having taken note of the need to share knowledge on best practices to address common challenges within the aquaculture sector, with particular regard to marine spatial planning, including the development of allocated zones for aquaculture (AZAs);

Formulated the following recommendations emerging from the panel discussions:

- An ad hoc approach to responsible aquaculture development, which takes into consideration the particular features of the Black Sea, shall be promoted in accordance with specific objectives and growing expectations in the countries of the region. This approach shall also address the varying environmental, governance, economic and social needs of the sector and shall include systems to monitor sustainability and progress.
- Measures shall be taken to facilitate the adoption of legislative and regulatory frameworks for aquaculture development in support of the sector with a view to facilitating investments and limiting conflicts among different users, thus promoting coordination among institutions and concerned stakeholders.
- The development of AZAs shall be facilitated when addressing capacity-building needs in coordination with different authorities and users involved in national plans.
- Efforts shall be made to improve market access in the aquaculture sector and to promote market-driven sustainable activities, such as mussel farming.
- Technical assistance shall be provided with a view to building capacity towards sustainable aquaculture development and countries in the Black Sea region shall make efforts to share knowledge and technical expertise to address common challenges hampering this development.



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APPENDIXES



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Appendix 1 – Programme

EXPERT MEETING

24 October 2016

Opening and arrangements of the expert meeting

- General introduction (by Ms Katrina Sichel, Moderator)

Welcome addresses

- Mr Nicolae Dimulescu, President, National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Romania
- Mr Abdellah Srouf, Executive Secretary, GFCM
- Mr Simion Nicolaev, Chairperson, GFCM Working Group on the Black Sea

Panel 1 – State of Black Sea marine living resources and their ecosystems

Keynote address

- State of knowledge on Black Sea marine living resources and their ecosystems (by Mr Miguel Bernal, GFCM Secretariat)

Round-table panel discussion

- Mr Simion Nicolaev, Chairperson, GFCM Working Group on the Black Sea
- Mr Violin Raykov, Deputy Director, Institute of Oceanology, Bulgarian Academy of Science (Bulgaria)
- Mr Ali Cemal Gücü, Associate Professor, Middle East Technical University (Turkey)
- Mr Xavier Vazquez, Senior Scientific Expert, Unit D-2, Fisheries Conservation and Control in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, DG-MARE (European Commission)
- Mr Archil Guchmanidze, Head of the Fisheries and Black Sea Monitoring Service, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (Georgia)
- Mr Oleksander Chashchyn, Senior Research Scientist, PivdenNIRO Odessa Center (Ukraine)
- Ms Florence Descroix-Comanducci, Executive Secretary, ACCOBAMS
- Ms Irina Makarenko, Pollution Monitoring and Assessment Officer, Black Sea Commission
- Mr Alexei Nistrean, Executive Manager, BSEC Secretariat

Open discussion with the audience

Panel 2 – Existing knowledge and efforts towards the assessment and eradication of IUU fishing in the Black Sea

Keynote address

- Existing knowledge and efforts towards the assessment and eradication of IUU fishing in the Black Sea (by Mr Nicola Ferri, GFCM Secretariat)

Round-table panel discussion

- Ms Marilena Barsan, Counsellor, Maritime Inspections and Policies Directorate, National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture (Romania)
- Ms Esra Denizci Çakmak, Senior Fisheries Officer, General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (Turkey)
- Mr Yaşar Kayabaşı, Coordinator, Inspection and Control Group, General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (Turkey)
- Mr Stylianos Mitolidis, Deputy Head of Unit, Unit D-2, Fisheries Conservation and Control in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, DG-MARE (European Commission)
- Mr Alexander Okhanov, Fisheries Advisor, Permanent Representation of the Russian Federation to FAO (Russian Federation)
- Mr Vincent Chapel, Desk for the Mediterranean and Black Sea, European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)
- Mr Pierre Girard, Expert in fisheries control systems (Independent expert)
- Mr Bayram Öztürk, Professor, University of Istanbul (Independent expert)

Open discussion with the audience**Panel 3 – Current state and future perspectives for the responsible development of aquaculture in the Black Sea****Keynote address:**

- Current state and future perspectives for the responsible development of aquaculture in the Black Sea (by Mr Fabio Massa, GFCM Secretariat)

Round-table panel discussion

- Mr Jiansan Jia, Deputy Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO
- Mr İlhan Aydın, 2nd Vice-Chairperson, GFCM Working Group on the Black Sea
- Ms Tania Zaharia, Fishery Engineer, National Institute for Marine Research and Development (Romania)
- Mr Galin Nikolov, Deputy Executive Director, Executive Agency of Fisheries and Aquaculture (Bulgaria)
- Ms Yeşim Aslanoğlu, Aquaculture Engineer, General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (Turkey)
- Mr Xavier Vazquez, Senior Scientific Expert, Unit D-2, Fisheries Conservation and Control in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, DG-MARE (European Commission)
- Ms Irina Lomashvili, Chief Specialist, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (Georgia)
- Ms Irina Yakhontova, Senior Researcher, Russian Federal Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography (Russian Federation)
- Ms Ekaterina Tribilustova, Market Specialist, Eurofish

Open discussion with the audience**Closing session**

- Presentation of results by the panellists
- Closing statement – Ms Ancuta Kazimirovicz, Public Manager, National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture (Romania)
- Closure of the expert meeting – Mr Simion Nicolaev, Chairperson, GFCM Working Group on the Black Sea

HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE TOWARDS ENHANCED COOPERATION ON BLACK SEA FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

25 October 2016

Opening statements

- H.E. Achim Irimescu, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Romania
- Mr Jiansan Jia, Deputy Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO

Presentation of the outcomes of the expert meeting

- State of Black Sea marine living resources and their ecosystems
- Existing knowledge and efforts towards the assessment and eradication of IUU fishing in the Black Sea
- Current state and future perspectives for the responsible development of aquaculture in the Black Sea

Speeches by high-level representatives

- H.E. Achim Irimescu, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Romania
- H.E. Cristiana Pasca-Palmer, Minister for Environment, Waters and Forests, Romania
- H.E. Dessislava Taneva, Minister for Agriculture and Food, Bulgaria
- H.E. Roni Telegrafi, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Management, Albania
- H.E. Rauf Hajiyev, Deputy Minister for Ecology and Natural Resources, Azerbaijan
- H.E. Ekaterine Grigalava, Deputy Minister for Environment and Natural Resources Protection, Georgia
- H.E. Victor Morgoci, Deputy Minister for Environment, Republic of Moldova
- H.E. Iarema Kovaliv, Deputy Minister for Agrarian Policy and Food - Head of the State Agency of Fisheries, Ukraine
- H.E. Valery Ivanovitch Kuzmin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to Romania
- H.E. Mustafa Altug Atalay, Director-General of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, Turkey
- Ms Valérie Lainé, Acting Director, Directorate D (Mediterranean and Black Sea), Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission
- H.E. Michael Christides, Secretary General, BSEC
- Ms Irina Makarenko, Pollution Monitoring and Assessment Officer, Black Sea Commission
- Ms Florence Descroix-Comanducci, Executive Secretary, ACCOBAMS
- Ms Aina Afanasjeva, Director, Eurofish
- Mr Abdellah Srour, Executive Secretary, GFCM

Adoption of the joint declaration

Closure of the High-level conference

Appendix 2 – Speeches by high-level representatives

H.E. ACHIM IRIMESCU

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Romania

Excelențele Voastre Stimați Invitati,
DOAMNELOR ȘI DOMNILOR,

Permiteti-mi, pe această cale, să prezint cele mai călduroase urări de „bun venit” în România, distinșilor oaspeți de peste hotare și să urez succes tuturor participanților la lucrările „Conferinței la Nivel Înalt pentru Întărirea Cooperării la Marea Neagră în Domeniul Pescuitului și Acvaculturii”. Sunt onorat de a fi gazda acestei reuniuni la nivel înalt, prin care România își declară, încă o dată dacă mai era nevoie, rolul de participant activ la politica regională de pescuit din zona Mării Negre.

Vreau să transmit, cu precădere, mulțumirile noastre pentru susținerea acordată domnului Stefano Cataudella, Președintele Comisiei Generale pentru Pescuit la Mediterana, și domnului Abdellah Srour, Secretar Executiv, al căror aport considerabil a avut o deosebită importanță în organizarea reuniunii.

Salutăm scopul declarat al Conferinței, acela de încurajare a unei abordări comune, unitare și adaptate nevoilor fiecărui stat, pentru promovarea unei exploatari raționale a resurselor marine vii și a dezvoltării sustenabile a acvaculturii în condițiile mediului marin specific, astfel încât să se asigure păstrarea ecosistemelor productive și sănătoase.

În îndeplinirea scopurilor globale ale ONU, inițiativele GFCM, “Strategia pe termen mediu 2017 - 2020 pentru pescuit sustenabil în Mediterana și Marea Neagră” și “Proiectul BlackSea4Fish”, sunt deschise participării tuturor statelor riverane, indiferent de opțiunea acestora de a fi sau nu părți contractante ale GFCM, luând în considerație particularitățile caracteristice fiecărei țări.

Prezentările experților au relevat aspecte importante privind cunoașterea stării resurselor marine vii și a ecosistemelor caracteristice din Marea Neagră, punându-se în mod firesc accentul pe aspectele relevante, respectiv:

- Situația stocurilor celor mai importante specii din punct de vedere comercial, bazat pe avizul științific de specialitate. Țin să subliniez că România, ca țară membră a U.E., a transpus în legislația națională măsurile specifice derivate din aplicarea principiilor Politicii Comune a Pescuitului, măsuri care se referă la aspecte tehnice privind dimensiunea minimă de debarcare a exemplarelor capturate, la întărirea capacităților și metodelor de control al pescuitului etc. Trebuie menționat că avem o coordonare foarte bună cu serviciile Comisiei Europene în ceea ce privește implementarea acțiunilor de control atât la nivel național, cât și în apele comunitare la Marea Neagră, alături de Bulgaria.
- Aspectele socio-economice ale pescuitului sunt de o importanță aparte pentru economiile noastre, urmărind în special creșterea valorii adăugate a produselor obținute prin pescuit și prelucrarea acestora, valorificarea superioară în condiții care să respecte standardele europene privind siguranța alimentelor.

Activitățile tradiționale de pescuit sunt de natură a încuraja dezvoltarea comunităților locale, care au rolul de a contribui la creșterea veniturilor pescarilor, prin diversificarea activităților legate de pescuit și angajarea forței de muncă în aceste comunități.

România are ca prioritate consolidarea flotei naționale de pescuit, care este caracterizată prin preponderența navelor de mici dimensiuni, pescuitul costier utilizând tehnici mai prietenoase cu mediul, comparativ cu pescuitul de tip industrial practicat de navele de mari dimensiuni.

De asemenea, provocările de mediu ridică probleme specifice pentru managementul pescăriilor. Păstrarea biodiversității habitatului marin este una din preocupările constante ale deciziilor pe care România le ia prin măsurile adoptate în domeniul pescuitului.

Trebuie să accelerăm, la nivelul tuturor statelor riverane, adoptarea acelor măsuri care sunt menite să diminueze, până la eliminarea totală, a capturilor accidentale de specii vulnerabile sau aflate în pericol, atât a speciilor de pești, cât și a mamiferelor acvatice, reptilelor și păsărilor.

În acest context trebuie subliniat că este absolut necesar ca cercetătorii implicați în activități specifice să poată beneficia de acele măsuri care să le permită intensificarea schimburilor de date, dar mai ales participarea la expediții de cercetare marină realizate în comun, în toate apele de sub jurisdicția națională a statelor riverane Mării Negre, în care se dezvoltă speciile supuse exploatații comune. Această chestiune este văzută de România ca o necesitate obiectivă pentru evaluarea cât mai corectă a evoluției stocurilor și astfel, autoritățile naționale să poată iniția un proces comun de adaptare a măsurilor necesare unei gestionări durabile a resurselor de pescuit din Marea Neagră.

În mod firesc, se impune necesitatea creării unei baze de date care să cuprindă serii istorice de informații privind datele biologice ale stocurilor, ale nivelului acestora, cu scopul eficientizării muncii de cercetare comună. Finalitatea acestui proces este furnizarea avizului științific necesar autorităților naționale competente pentru adoptarea acelor măsuri comune pentru atingerea aceluși scop, respectiv, exploatarea durabilă a resurselor la nivelul întregului bazin al Mării Negre.

Evaluarea reală atât a stării stocurilor, cât și a eficienței flotelor naționale, a activităților și tehnicilor de pescuit utilizate, trebuie să conducă în final la identificarea de către toate statele riverane a acelor măsuri standard de control și supraveghere, ca bază a realizării unui instrument eficace de cooperare pentru lupta împotriva pescuitului ilegal, neraportat și necontrolat.

Acvacultura este domeniul de activitate care determină, și ca urmare a tehnicilor specific utilizate, diminuarea presiunii asupra resurselor maritime naturale și completează aprovizionarea piețelor cu produse nutriționale de valoare echivalentă resurselor naturale.

De aceea, pentru dezvoltarea acestui sector, considerăm de o importanță deosebită schimbul de experiență la nivel regional, ținând cont de condițiile specifice Mării Negre, de diferențele hidro-climatice existente între diferitele sub-regiuni geografice ale acesteia. Diseminarea bunelor practici, inclusiv din alte zone maritime, trebuie să constituie unul din motoarele consolidării sectorului acvaculturii în ansamblu.

Se impune realizarea și implementarea unui plan de măsuri menit să contribuie decisiv la dezvoltarea acvaculturii în regiune, și reducerea diferențelor existente în ponderea acestui sector la nivel regional comparativ cu alte regiuni marine.

În acest sens, considerăm că ar fi benefic să se acorde o mai mare importanță dezvoltării sectorului de acvacultură în Marea Neagră, actualmente fiind mult sub potențialul optim de pescuit comercial care ar putea fi practicat.

În alta ordine de idei, utilitate ridicată în procesul implementării strategiei pe termen mediu a GFCM, o va reprezenta realizarea unei baze regionale de date la nivelul Mării Negre, care să permită factorilor implicați accesul la date fiabile și consistente. În acest mod

se va putea sprijini realizarea unui management sectorial bazat pe o guvernanta armonizata in directia exploatarii durabile a resurselor acvatice vii si valorificarea oportunitatilor pentru dezvoltarea acvaculturii care sa contribuie la "cresterea albastra" a tarilor din regiune.

Suntem convinsi ca aceasta Conferinta va fi continuata de alte activitati pentru intregirea unui cadru de sustinere a initiativelor GFCM in ceea ce priveste preocuparile specifice, integrate in "Strategia pe termen mediu 2017 - 2020 pentru pescuit sustenabil in Mediterana si Marea Neagra", precum si a lansarii "Proiectului BlackSea4Fish" impreuna cu alte organizatii partenere.

Avem convingerea ca luările de pozitie ce vor fi realizate astazi, aici, vor clarifica diversele aspecte privind pescuitul durabil si problemele sectorului, vor contribui la dezvoltarea acvaculturii in regiune, la extinderea cooperării regionale pentru protectia mediului marin si cresterea economica a tarilor riverane Mării Negre.

In incheiere, va doresc succes si va multumesc inca o data pentru participarea la aceasta reuniune, care trebuie sa marcheze un punct important in procesul de stabilire a echilibrului dintre interesele economice directe si cele care vizeaza protectia resurselor marine de pescuit din Marea Neagra.

MR JIANSAN JIA**Deputy Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO**

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to attend the High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture organized by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean in cooperation with ACCOBAMS, the Black Sea Commission, BSEC and Eurofish. First, please allow me, on behalf of Mr José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO, to thank the government of Romania for hosting the important event and, more specifically, His Excellency Achim Irimescu, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, for inviting FAO to participate in it. Taking the opportunity, on behalf of the Rome-based FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, I would also like to convey my best wishes for the success of this important conference for Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture development.

In recent years, the international community has established a set of very important objectives, which span from the Aichi Biodiversity Targets to the ones foreseen in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. FAO is involved in the monitoring and achievement of these targets, the overall objective of which is the conservation and sustainable use of the marine resources. This is done, among other, through a set of strategic objectives, including Strategic Objective 2 which addresses the important role of fisheries and aquaculture to promote sustainable development and blue growth.

The international community has also increasingly recognized the importance of regional cross-sectoral collaboration and cooperation in facilitating the achievements set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aim at maintaining the health of the ecosystems, including the oceans, so that they can increase their ability to contribute to food security and poverty reduction.

The importance of the oceans, including fisheries and aquaculture, cannot be underestimated. It is therefore a delight to witness this great moment and observe the tremendous interest devoted to the enhanced cooperation revolving around sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development in the Black Sea region. We all show our supportive and strong resolve for the successful fruition of these efforts.

The fisheries and aquaculture sector is a venture that generates important economic returns, improves nutrition and food security, boosts trade, well-being and development, and is instrumental to foster an equitable role for women and an active role for youth and coastal communities in general. In this regard, we should note that, according to FAO, fisheries and aquaculture are important economic activities in the Black Sea, with the capture fisheries sector alone employing directly up to 150 000 people while the production has declined to less than 300 000 tonnes in 2014, from almost 900 000 tonnes annually in the mid-1980s. Aquaculture, on the other hand, represents a concrete opportunity for enhancing food security, employment and economic growth in the Black Sea.

At the same time, and in addition to what stated before, we must recognize that overfishing and IUU fishing are imposing threats to Black Sea marine resources that need to be tackled by effective fisheries management at the basin scale. As you are aware, the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (or PSMA in short) was adopted by the FAO Conference in 2009. The main purpose of the PSMA is to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing through the implementation of robust port state measures. I am happy to report that the PSMA has reached this year the threshold of 25 parties needed for it to enter into force as a binding international treaty. As of today, there

are actually 35 parties to the PSMA plus the European Union (EU) on behalf of its Member States. This sends out a strong message as the PSMA has the potential, if effectively implemented, to deliver a powerful blow to IUU fishing in all oceans and seas. The success of this instrument, like all international treaties, though depends first and foremost on the number of countries that are parties to it. Among the six riparian countries around the Black Sea, two coastal countries (the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania) are formally committed to implementing the PSMA through the European Union's adherence; and two (the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey) have signed the PSMA but need to deposit their instruments of adherence as soon as possible. FAO encourages the other Black Sea riparian countries not yet parties to the PSMA to adhere to this instrument. This will support ongoing regional efforts to fight IUU fishing, as coordinated by the GFCM.

As for fisheries management in the Black Sea, I invite you to note that experience demonstrates that, to be effective, this management has to account for other anthropogenic and environmental processes that influence the dynamics of the ecosystem. The Black Sea ecosystem has undergone substantial changes over the last century resulting from a complex interaction of different processes, including eutrophication, introduction of alien species, overfishing and climate-driven changes in the ecosystem. The Black Sea receives freshwater runoff from three large rivers (Danube, Dnieper and Don), which drain a basin of more than 2 million square kilometres, representing almost one third of continental Europe and containing more than 160 million people (Heileman *et al.*, 2008). These three rivers are the main sources of nutrients as well as the pollutants input into the Black Sea basin.

Furthermore, the Black Sea coastal zone population numbers nearly 16 million people. Coastal tourism, short-sea shipping, inland waterway transport, as well as exploration and exploitation of oil and natural gas constitute important economic activities. These characteristics make it necessary to adopt more integrated ecosystem approaches to the management of fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea. Consequently, the call for enhanced cooperation in the Black Sea region by this conference is a timely opportunity to appraise ways as to make this effective in a fully encompassing manner.

I would like to remind that we live in a world where, in spite of progress, almost one billion people suffer from hunger every day and hundreds of millions of children suffer from various nutritional deficiencies. Millions of people are under threat due to climate changes while coastal communities relying on oceanic productivity and related fields make up a very large part of this large group of people. More than ever, we need solidarity, sharing and cooperation. To this end, it will be essential to strengthen cooperation and coordination in the Black Sea region, at the governmental and intra-governmental levels.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With a view to reaching this goal, FAO has established, in 1949, under Article XIV of its Constitution, the GFCM as the body entrusted at the regional level with the duty to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of marine living resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in both the Black Sea and Mediterranean regions. The GFCM has made tremendous efforts in recent years to facilitate better cooperation among Black Sea riparian countries via the establishment of an ad hoc working group in charge of all Black Sea-related matters. This working group has already produced unprecedented results for the region, including the adoption of binding recommendations on key commercial species such as turbot. Arguably, more important work is forthcoming in the remit of this working group which has an open participatory nature. This means that the doors are open also

for other countries in the Black Sea region, some of which are represented here today, that would like to partake in this important undertaking, given the economic and social impacts of fisheries and aquaculture in terms of trade and market opportunities. The same applies to relevant organizations having a mandate over the Black Sea. I am referring in particular to those represented in this conference. Underpinning blue growth and marine spatial planning calls for synergies, coordination and commonalities.

FAO, including its Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, supports the work of the GFCM in the Black Sea and stands ready to engage together with relevant countries and relevant organizations to develop capacity-building in the Black Sea region in order to face existing challenges and seize opportunities for blue growth. To this end, FAO would like to see increased participation in the GFCM. We welcome the recent cooperating status granted to Georgia and Ukraine and we encourage, on a priority basis for the Black Sea region, these riparian states and the Russian Federation to adhere to the GFCM Agreement. FAO would also like to see the realization of a regional scientific cooperative project formulated to improve technical work in support of responsible fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea, as recently approved by the fortieth session of the GFCM. We are grateful to the Republic of Turkey, that provided funds in the past to jump-start such a promising initiative, and we do hope that the GFCM will spearhead efforts to follow through with this. Another promising initiative, on which I would also like to inform you, is the ongoing negotiation of a memorandum of understanding between FAO and BSEC. This instrument, if adopted, will also refer to the synergies, which could be promoted by BSEC together with the GFCM in the Black Sea.

In conclusion, I would like to express again, on behalf of the Director-General of FAO, my deepest appreciation to you and through you to the Government of Romania for providing the excellent facilities for this High-level conference being organized with the GFCM. It is hoped that the efforts by countries and various organizations in the Black Sea region, including associated land-locked countries, will help us to enhance cooperation thus giving impetus to improving the sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture sector for better livelihood of all people in the Black Sea region.

I wish you every success in your discussion and deliberations.

Thank you!

Mulțumesc!

H.E. CRISTIANA PASCA-PALMER**Minister for Environment, Waters and Forests, Romania**

Stimate domnule ministru,
Stimate domnule Secretar General
Doamnelor și domnilor,

În primul rând doresc să mulțumesc organizatorilor acestei conferințe pentru invitația și oportunitatea de a mă adresa dumneavoastră cu ocazia acestui eveniment deosebit de important în contextul dezvoltării durabile a regiunii Mării Negre.

În acest sens, îmi revine deosebita onoare să vorbesc în deschiderea acestei conferințe privind problematica pescuitului în Marea Neagră, atât din perspectiva de ministru al mediului care trebuie să acționeze pentru protecția mediului și biodiversității marine din apele care sunt sub jurisdicția României cât și ca reprezentant al țării care deține președinția în exercițiu a Comisiei pentru protecția Mării Negre împotriva poluării, cel mai important organism regional care abordează problematicile legate de mediul marin al Mării Negre.

Așa cum probabil cunoașteți, Marea Neagră are un caracter special fiind o mare semiînchisă care are o conexiune redusă cu Oceanul Planetar prin strâmtoarea Bosfor. Aceasta colectează apele dintr-un bazin hidrografic în care trăiesc și se dezvoltă peste 160 de milioane de oameni, fapt ce pune o mare presiune pe capacitatea mării de a face față la impactul generat de diversele activități desfășurate atât pe uscat cât și pe mare. Impactul generat de aportul de poluanți din bazinul hidrografic, apariția și dezvoltarea speciilor invazive dar și pescuitul intensiv au făcut ca, la începutul anilor '90, Marea Neagră să fie considerată cel amenințat corp de apă de pe glob. Între timp, datorită schimbărilor politice și economice din regiune dar și a măsurilor luate în ceea ce privește reducerea poluării și protecția biodiversității, asistăm la o îmbunătățirea ușoară dar constantă a calității mediului marin al Mării Negre. Iar aceasta îmbunătățire a fost observată, nu în ultimul rând, prin reapariția unor specii de pești care nu mai au fost văzute în Marea Neagră, de o lungă perioadă de timp.

Marea Neagră reprezintă o importantă resursă pentru asigurarea siguranței alimentare, prin pescuit și acvacultură, dar trebuie să recunoștem că este o resursă limitată și că exploatarea nerațională a acestei o poate epuiza iremediabil. În plus, resursa piscicolă este parte și depinde de ecosistemul în care se dezvoltă iar deterioarea sau distrugerea acestuia va conduce la dispariția resursei. De aceea considerăm că este necesară o abordare sistemică a problematicii pescuitului și acvaculturii în Marea Neagră prin integrarea acestor problematici în procesul de implementare a Directivei Cadru privind Strategia Mediului Marin și Directivei Habitate ale Uniunii Europene.

În acest sens, România își exprimă regretul că la nivelul Comisiei pentru protecția Mării Negre împotriva poluării nu s-a acceptat ca această comisie să fie implicată în implementarea Directivei Cadru privind Strategia Mediului Marin, așa cum prevede directiva și cum se întâmplă în celelalte convenții regionale pentru alte mări europene, și unde există, ca și în situația noastră, State Membre și State ne-Membre ale Uniunii Europene. Din acest motiv, pe perioada președinției noastre a Comisiei Mării Negre, vom acorda o atenție deosebită activităților desfășurate de Grupului Consultativ privind aspectele de mediu legate de managementul pescuitului și a resurselor marine vii și a Grupului Consultativ privind protecția biodiversității și peisajului. De asemenea susținem activitățile promovate în cadrul colaborării cu Convenția Generală de Pescuit în Marea Mediterană (GFCM), care în acest moment considerăm că are un rol important în ceea ce privește promovarea unui pescuit responsabil în Marea Neagră pentru a se asigura durabilitatea acestei activități.

Pe de altă parte, la nivel național, România a investit și va continua să investească peste 20 de miliarde de euro pentru reducerea poluării apelor din bazinul hidrografic al Dunării atât prin realizarea de stații de epurare performante cât și pentru îmbunătățirea practicilor

legate de reducerea poluării difuze. În acest sens, recent Ministerul Mediului, Apelor și Pădurilor a convenit cu Banca Mondială extinderea proiectului privind reducerea poluării cu nitrați din surse agricole fapt ce va face ca investițiile în reducerea poluării difuze să depășească 110 milioane de euro. Toate aceste eforturi vor avea un impact semnificativ asupra calității mediului marin în special din partea de nord-vest a Mării Negre. În plus, România a luat măsuri pentru extinderea zonelor protejate în Marea Neagră fapt ce face ca circa 20% din apele marine de sub jurisdicția românească să fie protejate. Considerăm că aceste arii protejate nu au importanță doar pentru protecția mediului marin ci și pentru pescuitul în Marea Neagră întrucât sunt zone unde, prin regimul de protecția, există posibilitatea refacerii unor stocuri de pești.

Trebuie însă să subliniem că eforturile noastre nu sunt direcționate doar la nivel național ci și la nivelul bazinului internațional al fluviului Dunărea unde România este promotoarea unor proiecte regionale majore privind refacere luncii inundabile a Dunării și protejarea și conservarea sturionilor. România are o abordare activă privind protecția sturionilor prin introducerea de restricții la pescuit și susținerea repopulării dar și prin găsirea unor soluții legate de refacerea rutei de migrație a acestora pe Dunăre, în amonte de marile baraje. Ne-am bucura dacă activitățile pe care le promovăm în bazinul Dunării ar putea fi extinse în bazinul Mării Negre.

Legat de activitățile de pescuit în Marea Neagră aș dori să menționez că suntem foarte preocupați de capturile accidentale/by-catch ale delfinilor și de tehnicile de pescuit utilizate. Considerăm că este necesară îmbunătățirea tehnicilor de pescuit astfel încât acestea să nu afecteze ecosistemul și alte resurse marine vii care nu au valoare comercială. În ceea ce privește acvacultura marină, considerăm că este o alternativă majoră la exploatarea resurselor naturale însă este necesară o atenție deosebită în ceea ce privește introducerea de specii neindigene în mediul marin al Mării Negre. În acest sens considerăm că este necesară promovarea unor activități comune de cercetare și o abordare la nivel european prin valorificarea oportunităților existente în cadrul diferitelor programe finanțate de Comisia Europeană.

Credem că, la Marea Neagră, trebuie să promovăm o „creștere albastră” care să susțină acele sectoare care au potențial de creștere și crează locuri de muncă, să protejăm mediul marin care ne oferă cadrul necesar dezvoltării și pentru aceasta să îmbunătățim gradul de cunoaștere al acestuia și să intensificăm cooperarea la nivel regional în Marea Neagră.

România consideră deosebit de importantă implicarea Uniunii Europene în protecția mediului marin al Mării Negre și mai ales a pescuitului în această mare și de aceea încă de la aderare a acționat pentru amendarea Convenției pentru protecția Mării Negre împotriva poluării pentru a permite accesul Uniunii la acest instrument de drept internațional. Folosesc această ocazie pentru a reconfirma angajamentul nostru de acțiune în continuare pentru a avea o participare mai mare în zona Mării Negre a Uniunii Europene.

În încheiere, îmi exprim speranța că întâlnirea de astăzi se va constitui într-o bună ocazie pentru întărirea cooperării și pentru stabilirea etapelor de urmat în vederea realizării unui pescuit și unei acvaculturi durabile în Marea Neagră.

Vă mulțumesc.

H.E. DESSLAVA TANEVA**Minister for Agriculture and Food, Bulgaria**

Dear colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor for me to take part in person in this conference and I would like to evince my special thanks to Minister Irimescu, to our hosting country, Romania, and to the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean for the excellent organization and for this opportunity for all coastal countries to deepen efforts to achieve sustainability of fisheries in the Black Sea.

The Black Sea basin is characterized by specific conditions in hydro-biological aspect. We are all aware of what fishing means for the economy and stability of the coastal regions. Many work places and families depend on this activity. I am sure that we all want to have resilient marine living resources in the Black Sea, which in return will ensure the future of the fisheries sector and contribute to food security. We face many challenges, but we need to move forward ambitiously and work towards building even closer and fruitful cooperation in the management of shared stocks in this basin. I cannot miss to mention the crucial role of the international and regional organizations and the expectations we all have towards them.

The responsible exploitation of the biological resources, taking into account environmental, social and economic aspects and the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Black Sea are a very important step in the right direction towards ensuring economic growth, employment and nutritional balance in the region. This is why I strongly believe that, to deal successfully with these challenges, we need to stay focused on the basic priorities: sustainable scientific and economical advice, effective control, a fight without compromise against the illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities and last but not least, cooperation between all coastal countries to ensure a level playing field for all interested parties in the sector. Let me take a closer look at some of them.

One of the biggest challenges for the fisheries sector in the Black Sea is the need to conduct research, improve data collection and enhance scientific advice through cooperation between scientists at a regional level. The availability of detailed and reliable scientific data is the basis for the formation of sound and balanced management decisions in a way to ensure the long-term sustainability of fisheries, while taking into account socio-economic aspects. This is a precondition for the implementation of appropriate management measures in order to ensure a better protection of the marine environment. A key factor to sustainably manage funds and establish favorable conditions for the development of this sector in the Black Sea is the integration of scientific advice and the socio-economic characteristics of fisheries in the region.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing has a serious impact on good governance and conservation. Although the exact extent of its impact is not clearly measurable, undoubtedly it is a threat for the sustainability of fisheries in the Black Sea and impedes the efforts of the coastal states. The roadmap adopted in 2013 by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean to fight IUU fishing in the Black Sea is a step in the right direction and its implementation by all countries in the region is essential.

I am sure that we all highly appreciate the efforts of all countries and I believe we must ensure that all participants in the sector follow the same rules in the same way when it comes to control and fight.

One of the main priorities for Bulgaria, which is also the main challenge on the international scale, is creating a level playing field between all the Black Sea countries and the establishment of a common model for fisheries management in the Black Sea.

At the same time, I cannot omit to mention the tremendous work that has been done within the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, as a regional organization for fisheries management in the Black Sea. Many concrete actions have been taken and recommendations for the conservation and management of shared stocks have been made. After the last annual session, the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries has become a reality and it should be implemented in the next three years. Its main purpose is to stop the decrease of the stocks which should start to recover. On the other hand, this will give the needed predictability to our fishermen and ensure their future.

Also, a very important initiative to strengthen cooperation in the context of the technical and research work carried out by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, is the regional project for the Black Sea (BlackSea4Fish), which is to be discussed and developed.

Today, we are at a very important stage and we must continue to decisively move forward towards our common goal. The Joint Declaration, in which the guidelines to promote a common approach for cooperation between countries in the Black Sea region are effected, is a very encouraging result which will surely give further impetus to responsible exploitation of marine living resources, sustainable development of aquaculture and mitigate threats of negative interactions between fisheries and the marine environment.

Strengthening regional cooperation, while taking into consideration the specific characteristics of each country, is a prerequisite for achieving the aimed goals.

The complete process of cooperation and exchange of information is unthinkable without the support and the coordination of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and the interaction of the partner organizations in the region. I highly appreciate their efforts and believe that together we will achieve a significant progress in terms of sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in the Black Sea.

Thank you!

H.E. RONI TELEGRAFI

**Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Management,
Albania**

Dear delegates and FAO-GFCM representatives,

As representative of the Albanian delegation, I want to express my pleasure to participate in this important conference on strategic aspects for regional fisheries and aquaculture development, to reinforce the relationship for the sake and prosperity of the fisheries and aquaculture sector, as a vital and important sector of the Mediterranean and Black Sea regional economy.

The principal issues affecting fisheries management are common: sound scientific advice on biological and ecological aspects, management measures, environmental and ecological issues and the socio-economic impacts.

The Mediterranean basin, as a natural water body, represents a unique ecosystem and the Mediterranean coastal countries constitute an important component in the region, since they contribute significantly to rural development, poverty reduction as well as to food safety and security for Mediterranean populations. Albania, as part of this region, with its cultural heritage and traditions, is a modest contributor to this development, where fisheries are included.

The GFCM, as a regional organization, is playing a constructive and visionary role to enhance dialogue, knowledge sharing and cooperation among countries to ensure the sustainability of fisheries in their economic, social and environmental dimensions, with particular attention to the coastal communities and coastal aquaculture. This has clearly been reflected in the Albanian fisheries and aquaculture sector: preserving and managing marine stocks require international cooperation; working together is necessary to manage fish stocks in the Mediterranean.

As a Mediterranean country and within the context of the GFCM and the Black Sea, we are moving towards more sustainable fisheries. We are conscious that fish stocks are affected by overfishing, which is a real common problem. Building together strategies for fisheries resources management and ecosystem-based activities and for increasing the incomes of fishing communities that are dependent on these resources (especially for small-scale fisheries which play a key role in the sustainability of the fisheries sector), improving fleet selectivity and enhancing knowledge about the status of fish stocks are common goals within the GFCM.

All of this requires effective governance and capacity-building, comprehensive and solid legal instruments, systematic scientific assessments, more reliable data collection and control systems to fight IUU fishing through mechanisms such as VMS and MCS.

Albania is seeking to implement and develop all the above pillars which have been done through several activities with valuable advice and recommendations by the GFCM: Albania prepared and approved a national strategy on fisheries and aquaculture, a new law on aquaculture, etc.

We must act at all levels: international, European, regional and national, acting not only on fisheries conservation measures but also on control against illegal fishing as it is a major management challenge for Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries.

The 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (PSMA) is a significant international development in global efforts to combat IUU fishing.

The entry into force of the PSMA and its effective implementation would not only strengthen international efforts to curb IUU fishing but will, as a result, contribute also to strengthen fisheries management and governance at all levels. Albania ratified this agreement and shall send it to the Director-General of FAO as a depositary of this agreement.

Albania made good progress and we look forward to reaching other goals for which the support of the GFCM and European Union is precious. We are aware that improving data collection requires building a national data collection system to be able to collect the minimum set of information required to assess the status of their main fisheries and to allow appropriate measures on the fishing effort. At the same time we are conscious of the need to further support scientific assessment and fish resources monitoring and to increase the fight against IUU fishing.

Aquaculture is another sector that plays an important role in Albania, like in all the Mediterranean region, since it contributes to the economic development and represents not only an important food resource, but also a source of employment for coastal communities and inland areas. As a matter of fact, marine and brackish water aquaculture has been growing steadily over the last decades and has substantially helped meet the rising demand for fishery products.

The concept and the guidelines for allocated zones for aquaculture (AZAs) as well as the recently launched GFCM Aquaculture Multi-Stakeholder Platform, both developed and prepared within the framework of the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee on Aquaculture, are consistent with Albanian aquaculture developments and are contained in the new law on aquaculture.

All these developments and the needs for new challenges in fisheries and aquaculture in Albania are an excellent motivation to closely cooperate toward a common vision, define together specific actions to meet our goals and build strong bridges between us.

H.E. RAUF HAJIYEV**Deputy Minister for Ecology and Natural Resources, Azerbaijan**

Уважаемый Министр, г-н Ахим Ирмеску,
Уважаемые Министры и главы делегаций,
Уважаемый Исполнительный секретарь г-н Абделлах Сроур,
Уважаемые представители и эксперты ФАО,
Дамы и господа,

Прежде всего, от имени правительства Азербайджанской Республики, позвольте мне выразить благодарность принимающей стороне, Республике Румыния, за такой теплый прием и гостеприимство, а также за отличную организацию этого важного мероприятия.

Спасибо за любезное приглашение и возможность посетить вашу прекрасную страну.

Я хотел бы отметить, что Азербайджан, как страна с развивающейся экономикой и традиционно развитым нефтяным сектором, в то же время придает большое значение развитию сектора рыбного хозяйства и аквакультуры. В связи с этим, мы благодарим организаторов за приглашение нашей страны для обсуждения проблем, связанных с рыбной отраслью.

Проведение столь важного мероприятия с точки зрения развития взаимовыгодного регионального сотрудничества в области рыбного хозяйства, борьбы с браконьерством, развития товарной аквакультуры и рационального использования природных ресурсов Каспийского моря, свидетельствует о заинтересованности правительств черноморских и прикаспийских стран в усилении интеграционных процессов между нашими странами.

Каспийское море является уникальным водоемом нашей планеты и испокон веков славится своими биологическими ресурсами. Бережное отношение к экосистеме моря, его природной среде, ресурсной базе имеет большую значимость для прибрежных государств. Защита экосистемы Каспийского моря является важнейшей предпосылкой для устойчивого развития. Для достижения устойчивого развития региона необходимо предусмотреть все региональные потребности, как социально-экономические, так и экологические. Однако в настоящее время регион испытывает ряд трудностей, связанных с негативным влиянием нерешенных экологических проблем. Последствия нарушения экологического равновесия выражаются в виде деградации экосистемы прибрежной зоны, ухудшения среды обитания биоресурсов, угрозы биоразнообразию. Сегодня охрана экосистемы Каспия и рациональное использование его биоресурсов относятся к приоритетным направлениям общегосударственной политики Азербайджана.

За последние 20-30 лет потребление рыбной продукции в расчете на душу населения в Азербайджане сократилось в несколько раз и сейчас составляет около 7 килограммов в год. Тогда как среднемировой показатель на душу населения составляет 18 кг в год. Производство продукции аквакультуры в Азербайджане за последние 20 лет значительно снизилось. Однако в последние годы отмечается выраженная тенденция нарастания в развитии товарной аквакультуры, которое носит пока стихийный характер.

Министерством Экологии и Природных Ресурсов при технической поддержке экспертов ФАО был разработан и усовершенствован Закон Азербайджанской Республики «О рыбном хозяйстве», который был принят Парламентом и подписан Президентом страны в 2014 году. В новый усовершенствованный Закон были введены новые положения о правилах ведения аквакультуры. Это позволит обеспечить устойчивое развитие аквакультуры в сельской местности, создать альтернативные

источники заработка, повысить уровень здоровья и благосостояния прибрежного населения страны.

В последние годы расширяется участие Азербайджана в международных, региональных программах исследований и мероприятий по улучшению экологического состояния рыб Каспия с участием UNEP, UNDP, TACIS, GEF, FAO, Всемирного Банка, Каспийской Экологической Программы.

Азербайджанская Республика присоединилась к 13 Международным Конвенциям, три из которых связаны с водными биоресурсами. Это секретариат Конвенции «О международной торговле видами дикой фауны и флоры, находящимися под угрозой исчезновения» – СИТЕС, Конвенция «Об охране биологического разнообразия», а также «Рамочная Конвенция по защите морской среды Каспийского моря».

Азербайджан является членом ФАО, а также Комитета Рыбного Хозяйства ФАО (COFI). Начиная с 2009 года, Азербайджан начал активное международное сотрудничество с ФАО с целью возрождения и развития в нашей стране сектора рыбного хозяйства и аквакультуры. Для этого Азербайджан в 2010 году вступил в Программу FishDev для Центральной Азии и Кавказа, которая действовала до 2014 года и в рамках Программы партнерства ФАО-Турция осуществляла техническую помощь странам региона. ФАО подготовила для Азербайджана Среднесрочные Национальные Приоритеты развития сектора рыбного хозяйства и аквакультуры на период 2010-2013 и 2013-2016 гг. В рамках этих Приоритетов со стороны ФАО в этот период была проведена большая работа, которая высоко оценивается Азербайджанским Правительством. Эта работа проводится по разным направлениям: усовершенствование законодательной базы и основ управления системы рыбного хозяйства, укрепление ее кадрового потенциала, улучшение методики оценки запасов рыб, повышение уровня сертификации рыбной продукции и знаний о болезнях рыб, укрепление международного сотрудничества и еще во многих других направлениях.

Азербайджан в 2014 году вступил в Региональную Комиссию по рыбному хозяйству и аквакультуре в Центральной Азии и на Кавказе под эгидой ФАО и успешно провел ее 3-ю сессию у нас в городе Баку. Начиная с нынешнего 2016 года, Азербайджан в течение 2-х лет председательствует в этой Комиссии. Дальнейшее участие в деятельности этой региональной Комиссии создаст условия для увеличения производительности сектора рыболовства и аквакультуры с точки зрения потенциала производства продовольствия, уменьшения бедности и увеличения продовольственной обеспеченности, создания альтернативных рабочих мест и источников дохода, а также с точки зрения экономической жизнеспособности, экологической совместимости и социальной приемлемости. Мы возлагаем большие надежды на роль ФАО в обеспечении более тесной интеграции по развитию и организации рыбного хозяйства и аквакультуры, сохранения биологического разнообразия и охраны окружающей среды в нашем регионе.

Мы хотели бы отметить большое значение сотрудничества с ФАО, СИТЕС-ом, Интерполом, Программой по Окружающей среде ООН (UNEP), Всемирным обществом сохранения осетровых и Международным Союзом Охраны Природы по вопросам торговли и сохранения осетровых. В регионе Каспийского моря такое сотрудничество является необходимым для выживания и восстановления видов. Конечно, данные усилия должны объединяться с деятельностью по борьбе с ННН промыслом, чтобы успех был достигнут.

Состояние биоресурсов Каспия, оставаясь в целом сложным, не является таким уж катастрофическим и согласованно управляется региональной системой мероприятий, разработанной всеми прикаспийскими странами. Азербайджан с 1992 года является членом Комиссии по Водным Биоресурсам Каспийского моря. В конце ноября 2010 года на Саммите Прикаспийских стран, прошедшем в г.Баку (в Азербайджане), Президенты 5-ти Прикаспийских стран – Азербайджана, Исламской Республики Иран, Республики

Казахстан, Российской Федерации и Туркменистана – приняли совместное заявление о необходимости введения моратория на коммерческий вылов осетровых рыб в Каспийском море и поручили своим соответствующим государственным органам подготовить внутренние и международные механизмы вступления этого моратория. Начиная с 2011 года по настоящее время все прикаспийские страны выдерживают технический мораторий на коммерческий вылов осетровых рыб. В последние годы Прикаспийские страны не проводят коммерческого вылова осетровых рыб. Вылов осуществляется только для искусственного воспроизводства на рыбоводных заводах и для научных исследований.

На последней сессии Комиссии по Водным Биоресурсам Каспийского моря, прошедшей в июне текущего года, было объявлено, что все Прикаспийские страны завершили ратификацию «Соглашения о сохранении и рациональном использовании биологических ресурсов Каспийского моря». Согласно этому Соглашению, будет учреждена новая межгосударственная Комиссия по Водным Биоресурсам Каспийского моря, 1-я инаугурационная сессия которой состоится уже в этом году в Азербайджане и наша страна будет председательствовать в этой Комиссии в течение двух лет. Согласно этому Соглашению, в самое ближайшее время в рамках этой Комиссии между Прикаспийскими странами будет подписан протокол о сотрудничестве с браконьерством и будет введен межгосударственный мораторий на коммерческий вылов осетровых в Каспийском море.

Таким образом, в настоящее время Азербайджан председательствует в 2-х региональных комиссиях – в Комиссии по Водным Биоресурсам Каспийского моря и в Региональной Комиссии по рыбному хозяйству и аквакультуре в Центральной Азии и на Кавказе под эгидой ФАО. Это, безусловно, накладывает определенную ответственность на нашу страну.

Азербайджан придает большое значение сотрудничеству с черноморскими и прикаспийскими странами, а также с международными организациями в сфере рыбного хозяйства, борьбы с браконьерством, развития товарной аквакультуры и рационального использования природных ресурсов. Азербайджан разделяет общую обеспокоенность региона современным состоянием окружающей среды и биоресурсов Черного и Каспийского морей. В формате многостороннего сотрудничества черноморских и прикаспийских стран особое внимание следует уделять гармонизации региональных и международных подходов к природно-ресурсной и природоохранной деятельности с учетом национальных интересов.

Учитывая напряженное современное состояние биоресурсов Каспийского моря, необходимо определить предосторожный подход к рыболовной деятельности. Необходимо развивать аквакультуру в нашей стране и в целом в Прикаспийском регионе, привлекать население к аквакультуре, как новому виду деятельности. Это позволит уменьшить незаконный рыбный промысел и улучшить экологическое состояние Каспийского моря. В новых условиях возможного введения моратория на вылов осетровых рыб в Каспийском море основным приоритетом для рыбохозяйственного сектора всех Прикаспийских стран, в том числе и Азербайджана, является развитие ферм аквакультуры во внутренних водоемах. При этом огромное значение будет иметь создание правовых и социально-экономических условий для изменения направления деятельности прибрежного населения, которое будет переориентировано от рыболовства на разведение осетровых рыб на фермах, на товарную аквакультуру осетровых рыб. Это позволит уменьшить антропогенное давление на природные популяции рыб (особенно, осетровых), будет способствовать сохранению биологического разнообразия и охране окружающей среды.

Завершая свое выступление, хочу особенно отметить, что восстановление и сохранение уникальных запасов ценных промысловых рыб Черноморского и Каспийского бассейнов возможно только объединив совместные усилия. Азербайджан

и впредь готов сотрудничать с международными организациями как по вопросам предоставления и обмена данных, так и в практической деятельности.

В заключение позвольте еще раз выразить свою глубокую благодарность Правительству Республики Румыния за прекрасную организацию этого мероприятия и проявленное гостеприимство, и я надеюсь, что эта конференция внесет значительный вклад в процесс регионального сотрудничества.

Спасибо за внимание!

H.E. EKATERINE GRIGALAVA**Deputy Minister for Environment and Natural Resources Protection, Georgia**

Dear Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the Government of Georgia, I am honored to extend my cordial gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Romania for hosting this important event in the beautiful city of Bucharest and to the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for organizing the High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture.

I am pleased to be here with you and have an opportunity to underline the importance of regional cooperation among the countries of the Black Sea region for the sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture. We belong to different countries and live in different places, but we share the Black Sea and its protection is the most precious goal we share.

Special care from all of us is required to move towards common goals through more precise and concerted actions. Our insights and guidance as main players in the Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture are crucial for the development of these sectors.

The universal United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi Biodiversity Targets must be incorporated at all levels of development and delivered through the participation of all stakeholders, including the economic and business sectors, academia, civil society and international organizations.

Let me make a short review of the current state of fisheries and aquaculture in my country, Georgia. Despite Georgia is a coastal state, it experiences a certain recession in these sectors, especially in aquaculture.

I would like to note that freshwater aquaculture is more developed in Georgia than marine aquaculture. This might be caused by the abundance of small rivers rich of fish species traditionally used by local population. A lot of small trout farms can be found all over Georgia.

As for the sea, due to the sea coast features in Georgia, it is difficult to develop marine aquaculture. There are no suitable quiet lagoons where people could breed fish or shellfish species. We recognize the great importance of conservation and, despite the geographical conditions, we hope this sector will be developed in Georgia as various modern technologies, best practices and knowledge have been accumulated during the last years.

As regards fisheries, the whole sector recently underwent significant promising changes but it still needs further development to properly adjust to international requirements and ensure benefits for all stakeholders.

Taking into account that we share a common sea and its living aquatic resources, Georgia's main goal and task is to use them in a sustainable manner to contribute to achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals. We realize that significant efforts from the government are required for it. But the role of the international community is also essential for the success of the process. The only way out is coordination, cooperation and assistance.

Georgia is a party to international environmental treaties, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Bern and Bucharest Conventions, as well as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the FAO Agreement to Promote Compliance with International

Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas. All these treaties encourage us for further cooperation and synergies in our activities. By signing the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, we took significant commitments, including the obligation to cooperate with regional fisheries management organizations. Furthermore, I would like to note that we have an active cooperation with the GFCM and we are pleased to have recently obtained the status of cooperating non-contracting party to the Commission.

Let me particularly address the issues of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. This is a challenge that should be addressed at national, regional and global levels. To combat IUU fishing, the parties should undertake transparent, effective and concerted actions. They should implement policies and measures to exclude IUU products from trade and their markets. One of the advantages of regional cooperation is sharing the best practices in fisheries management with a view to ensuring conservation and management of fish stocks in a sustainable manner based on the principles of the ecosystem approach.

I would like to mention especially the initiative to implement a regional project: the BlackSea4Fish project. To make future plans and develop programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources, we definitely welcome this initiative that will support a regional survey, introduce a unified methodology to assess the common stocks and create shared database, including the best knowledge on the biology of species, their migration routes, population abundance, distribution, etc.

Addressing the needs for the implementation of the mentioned initiatives and future plans, alongside with the activities to be carried out at the national level, I would like to note once again the importance of cooperation among our countries and international organizations. Let me take the opportunity to thank FAO, the GFCM, BSEC and the Black Sea Commission for their continuous and fruitful cooperation and express hope for future close cooperation.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that it is up to each and every one of us to address the current challenges, deal with the needs and embrace opportunities. It depends on how we do it individually and as part of an international community. The declaration we are signing today is the expression of our will to cooperate and to take care of our shared resources in the most reasonable, appropriate and sustainable way. And we are happy to be part of this action.

Thank you.

H.E. VICTOR MORGOCI**Deputy Minister for Environment, Republic of Moldova**

Stimate dle ministru, stimați colegi, onorată asistență,

Am deosebită plăcere să vă salut în cadrul reuniunii de Nivel Înalt privind Cooperarea Consolidată pentru Pescuit și Acvacultură la Marea Neagră. Mai întâi de toate aș vrea să îmi exprim aprecierea pentru efortul depus de țările participante și organizatorii Conferinței, pentru consolidarea cooperării în scopul realizării schimbului de cunoștințe cu privire la aspectele principale în domeniul gestionării pescuitului, acvaculturii durabile, realizarea acțiunilor concrete în aceste sens, precum și evaluarea impactului socio-economic și de mediu.

Principalele corpuri acvatice unde se practică pescuitul comercial în Republica Moldova sunt râurile transfrontaliere Prut și Nistru. Anual, în aceste râuri, se pescuiau circa 30 tone de pește, cu excepția anului 2016, când Ministerul Mediului, din cauza reducerii stocului de pești, nu a aprobat cote de pescuit.

Fiind râuri transfrontaliere, cooperarea cu statele vecine România și Ucraina reprezintă un rol important în asigurarea protecției și utilizării durabile a resurselor piscicole.

Astfel, în scopul asigurării protecției mediului și utilizării raționale a resurselor piscicole și reglementării pescuitului în râul Prut la 1 august 2003, Guvernul Republicii Moldova și Guvernul României au semnat Acordul de cooperare în domeniul protecției resurselor piscicole și reglementarea pescuitului în râul Prut și lacul de acumulare Costești - Stâncă. În acest sens, reprezentanții autorităților responsabile de implementarea prevederilor Acordului se întrunesc în ședințe în cadrul cărora se discută despre acțiunile privind reglementarea pescuitului; combaterea pescuitului ilegal, inclusiv prin efectuarea controalelor comune; problema lucrărilor de regularizare/decumulare/reprofilare a albiei care afectează populațiile de pești; efectuarea cercetărilor științifice în vederea determinării stocurilor de pești.

În ceea ce privește pescuitul în fluviul Nistru, stocurile de pești ale căruia se diminuează treptat din cauza regularizării acestui fluviu prin construcția complexului hidroenergetic Nistren, la data de 29 noiembrie 2012, la Roma, a fost semnat Acordul dintre Guvernul Republicii Moldova și Cabinetul de Miniștri al Ucrainei privind colaborarea în domeniul protecției și dezvoltării durabile a bazinului fluviului Nistru. Însă până în prezent acest Acord nu a intrat în vigoare deoarece nu a fost ratificat de către partea ucraineană. Țin să menționez și faptul că, Delta Nistrului reprezintă boiști importante unde se reproduc numeroase specii de pești și este regretabil de constatat faptul că, gestionarea irațională a Complexului Hidroenergetic de la Novodnestrovsk, influențează negativ asupra debitului de apă în Nistru, afectând considerabil aceste boiști. În acest context, folosindu-mă de această ocazie, aș vrea să reiterez importanța ratificării Acordului menționat, dar și semnarea Acordului privind asigurarea funcționării Complexului hidroenergetic de la Novodnestrovsk, articolul 6 al căruia conține prevederi de mediu, în special privind respectarea regimului hidrologic, hidrobiologic, hidrochimic, care vor oferi o platformă juridică îmbunătățită pentru dezvoltarea în continuare a dialogului dintre Republica Moldova și Ucraina, dar și întreprinderea acțiunilor comune concrete pentru gestionarea durabilă a pescuitului în fluviul Nistru.

De asemenea, doresc să menționez și despre repopulările cu puiet de pești, întreprinse de către Ministerul Mediului al Republicii Moldova. Astfel de repopulări se realizează pe lacul de acumulare Costești-Stâncă (de pe râul Prut) și lacul de acumulare Dubăsari (de pe fluviul Nistru) cu specii de sânger, crap, novac, cosaș, plătică și babușcă.

Măsuri de populare cu puiet de pește mult mai eficiente ar putea fi efectuate doar prin construcția unui centru de reproducere modern. În acest sens, a fost inițiat un proiect în Republica Moldova și anume construcția unui Centru de reproducere a speciilor valoroase

de pești pe malul lacului de acumulare Costești-Stânca. Construcția unui asemenea centru a fost susținută și de către colegii din România.

Construcția Centrului este o soluție indispensabilă pentru soluționarea problemelor de repopulare, selecție, aclimatizare, răspândire, regenerare și ameliorare a resurselor piscicole, în special în râul Prut. Astfel, va fi creat un aport considerabil și pentru speciile de pești din fluviul Dunărea. Însă, efectuarea lucrărilor de proiectare și construcție a centrului de reproducere nu a fost posibilă din cauza lipsei surselor financiare, iar în prezent Ministerul Mediului este în proces de identificare a acestor surse.

Dezvoltarea pisciculturii în Republica Moldova este o ramură în curs de dezvoltare, iar lipsa unei strategii naționale de dezvoltare a pisciculturii și proiectelor investiționale insuficiente tergiversează dezvoltarea acestui sector.

Una din cele mai importante probleme în domeniul pisciculturii este asigurarea fermelor piscicole cu material piscicol calitativ, creat pe baza fondului genetic piscicol autohton și a tehnologiilor moderne de întreținere a fermelor piscicole, problemă care poate fi soluționată și prin construcția Centrului de reproducere menționat. În acest sens, Ministerul Mediului din Republica Moldova ar aprecia acordarea unui suport financiar de către instituțiile internaționale pentru construcția Centrului de reproducere.

Cu acest prilej, mă adresez Secretariatului Comisiei Generale pentru Piscicultură în Marea Mediterană, cu propunerea de a lua în calcul posibilitatea acordării Republicii Moldova a statutului de țară cooperantă non-membră a Comisiei, pentru a putea asigura implicarea activă a țării noastre în lucrările Grupului de Lucru a Mării Negre și a asigura astfel implementarea cu succes a angajamentelor Republicii Moldova față de partenerii săi de dezvoltare, în special Uniunea Europeană.

Acestea fiind spuse, Vă îndemn pe toți la o colaborare continuă și fructuoasă în viitor!

Vă mulțumesc pentru atenție!

H.E. IAREMA KOVALIV**Deputy Minister for Agrarian Policy and Food – Head of the State Agency of Fisheries, Ukraine**

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to the Ministry of agriculture and rural development of Romania and the GFCM as well as to all regional organizations for the invitation and excellent organization of the event.

The need to combine our efforts in the fight against the present challenges in the fisheries is of great importance. The majority of these problems are of comprehensive nature. A necessary result can be achieved only with the combined efforts of all the riparian states. It is logical, since we share the seas which have been connecting all the countries of the Black Sea and Mediterranean basins for many centuries.

The State Agency of Fisheries of Ukraine, as a state authority responsible for fisheries, supports and promotes the development of cooperation in the Black Sea region. I have to admit that the role of regional fisheries management organizations is crucial. Regarding this, I am very grateful to the GFCM for its support and assistance. We are trying to adopt the best world practices for the protection of fish stocks and management methods. Unfortunately, it is not possible to take the necessary measures in Ukraine by our own means, which is why GFCM support for this is extremely important.

I am sure that not only Ukraine is going to benefit from the strengthening of cooperation, but also that it is going to have a significant influence on the improvement of fish stocks in the whole Black Sea region. The Agency pays a lot of attention to the development of cooperation in the region and hopes that together we will be able to protect and enlarge the wealth of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

The realization of international projects on the conservation and management of the Black Sea resources has a great socio-economic potential for all the countries of the region, not only for Ukraine. Traditionally, the Black Sea is the main source of fish products on the national market and I hope that all riparian countries recognize the importance of the Black Sea as one of the main sources of food. Any measure on the fight against IUU fishing and the introduction of the principles of sustainable fishing might be of crucial importance for the future of fisheries.

Ukraine will support international projects aiming to improve the state of resources of the Black Sea and its marine ecosystems, such as BlackSea4Fish. We are ready to contribute to the implementation of such projects in order to have effective problem-solving instruments and to tackle today's challenges. I hope that other regional organizations will join the GFCM in the introduction of the principles of sustainable fishing and the effective use of resources.

The possibilities offered to us are a wonderful instrument for creating necessary mechanisms and a platform to reach consensus among all the countries. Thus, I do believe that this cooperation will benefit us.

H.E. VALERY IVANOVITCH KUZMIN**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to Romania**

Уважаемые дамы и господа!

Прежде всего мне хотелось бы от лица Российской Федерации поблагодарить наших румынских коллег за принятие этого важного мероприятия – Конференции высокого уровня по расширению сотрудничества в области рыболовства и аквакультуры в Черном море. Также хочу выразить слова благодарности и организаторам этой Конференции – Правительству Румынии, Продовольственной и сельскохозяйственной организации Объединенных Наций, Генеральной комиссии по рыболовству в Средиземном море, Комиссии по защите Черного моря от загрязнения, Организации по Черноморскому экономическому сотрудничеству, Секретариату Соглашения по сохранению китообразных в Чёрном и Средиземном морях, а также прилегающей районах Атлантики, Организации «Еврофиш».

Безусловно, Черное море – важнейшее для наших стран море, в котором все мы развивает весь комплекс хозяйственной деятельности – морской транспорт, портовое хозяйство, добыча полезных ископаемых, туризм, рыболовство и аквакультуру, поэтому в последнее время проводятся много разноплановых мероприятий, направленных на международное сотрудничество в части сохранения этого уникального моря, рационального использования его богатств.

Рыбное хозяйство в Черном море является для многих наших стран социально значимой отраслью, ориентированной на сохранение и развитие прибрежных поселений, важной и неотъемлемой частью обеспечения национальной продовольственной безопасности.

В тоже время необходимо отметить, что Черное море широко признано как одно из региональных морей наиболее сильно поврежденных хозяйственной деятельностью человека и другими антропогенными, биологическими, и природными факторами. Многие основные виды промышленного и спортивно-любительского рыболовства находятся в угнетенном и депрессивном состоянии, поэтому настал действительно ответственный период для разработки и принятия совместных действий на региональном уровне по прекращению опасной тенденции сокращения рыбных запасов Черного моря, именно совместных, так как большинство таких запасов имеют трансграничный характер, то есть в течение своего жизненного цикла они мигрируют через экономические зоны всех причерноморских стран. Главная, координирующая роль в сохранении, восстановлении и рациональном использовании рыбных запасов должна принадлежать Продовольственной и сельскохозяйственной организации Объединенных Наций и его региональной организации по управлению рыболовством в Средиземном и Черном морях, в тесном сотрудничестве с природоохранными организациями и национальными правительствами.

Хотел бы отметить еще, на мой взгляд, важную проблему - с конца 80-х годов прошлого века в связи с вселением атлантического гребневика мнемнопсиса (*Mnemiopsis leidyi*), мощного пищевого конкурента зоопланктонофагов, не имевшего на то время естественных врагов в Черном море, произошло резкое снижение запасов массовых видов. В конце 90-х годов, благодаря вселению другого гребневика - берое (*Beroe ovata*), потребителя мнемнопсиса, численность пелагических видов рыб стала постепенно расти, однако не достигла тех прошлых уровней. Считаем, что соответствующим международным организациям, в полномочия которых включены вопросы защиты морских экосистем, целесообразно рассмотреть проблему вселения чужеродных живых объектов и возможные меры сохранения биологического равновесия таких морских экосистем.

В отношении борьбы с незаконным, несообщаемым и нерегулируемым промыслом, который, к сожалению, имеет место в Черном море, хотел бы призвать все черноморские страны строго следовать «Дорожной карте по борьбе с ННН-промыслом в Черном море», утвержденной сессией Генеральной комиссии по рыболовству в Средиземном море в 2013 году.

Наверно многие из Вас знают, что в 70-х и 80-х годах 20-го века СССР ежегодно добывал в Чёрном море около 200 тыс. т водных биоресурсов. Основу вылова составляли хамса, шпрот, ставрида. В 1990-е годы отечественный вылов водных биоресурсов в Черном море резко уменьшился.

В СССР была создана эффективная система управления рыбным хозяйством, состоящая из управленческих и научно-исследовательских организаций рыбохозяйственного направления. В 70-е и 80-е годы прошлого века в Азовском и Черном морях СССР ежегодно проводилось 15-20 научно-исследовательских и поисковых экспедиций.

В настоящее время головным институтом рыбной отрасли Российской Федерации является Всероссийский научно-исследовательский институт рыбного хозяйства и океанографии ФГБНУ «ВНИРО», координирующий работу бассейнового института ФГБНУ «АзНИИРХ», отвечающего за проведение комплексных сырьевых и природоохранных исследований в Черном море.

Основу современного промысла российскими рыбаками в Черном море составляют хамса и шпрот, так в прошлом году в общем объеме вылова Россией в Черном море 70 тысяч тонн, на хамсу пришлось 40 тысяч тонн, а на шпрот – 25 тысяч тонн. В среднем на промысле находилось 15 среднетоннажных и малотоннажных судов.

Аквакультура в Черном море у нас находится в стадии развития, поэтому годовой объем выращенной продукции, в основном мидии, чуть выше 200 тонн.

В нашей стране в 2004 году принят Федеральный закон «О рыболовстве и сохранении водных биологических ресурсов», согласно которому по большинству основных промысловых объектов ежегодно устанавливаются объемы общих допустимых уловов, которые распределяются по направлениям использования, в том числе для промышленного и прибрежного рыболовства. Эти общие объемы квот распределяются в соответствии с закрепленными на 10 лет долями-процентами. Такой механизм позволяет российским компаниям осуществлять долгосрочное планирование своей деятельности. Учитывая техническое состояние рыбопромыслового флота и береговых рыбоперерабатывающих производств, в настоящее время Федеральным агентством по рыболовству Минсельхоза России, в соответствии с решением Госсовета, разрабатываются поправки в закон, предусматривающие дополнительный вид квот – для инвестиционных целей.

В преддверии 7-й сессии Подкомитета ФАО по аквакультуре, который проводился у нас в октябре 2013 года в г. Санкт-Петербурге, был принят Федеральный закон «Об аквакультуре (рыбоводстве)». Мы надеемся, что с помощью этого закона развитие аквакультуры в нашей стране, в том числе и в Азово-Черноморском бассейне, выйдет на новый качественный уровень. В контексте этого, хотелось также отметить, что в перечне особо ценных видов водных биоресурсов, отнесенных к объектам рыболовства, обитающим в Черном море, относятся белуга *Huso huso* (черноморская популяция), русский осетр *Acipenser gueldenstaedtii* (черноморская популяция), севрюга *Acipenser stellatus* (черноморская популяция), к ценным видам – камбала-калкан *Psetta maecotica* и черноморская кумжа *Salmo trutta*. Любое изъятие черноморских осетровых запрещено.

Искусственное воспроизводство в виде выпуска молоди в реки бассейна Черного моря осуществляется только для черноморской кумжи. Для этого в учреждениях по искусственному воспроизводству ФГБУ «Азчеррыбвод» сформированы ремонтно-маточные стада, численность которых в 2015 г. составила – 17, 5 тысяч

экземпляров. Выпуск молоди черноморской кумжи средней массой 3 грамма в 2014 г. составил 175 тысяч штук, в 2015 г. – 200 тысяч штук.

Сейчас проводятся работы по началу выпуска в Черное море молоди камбалы-калкана.

В 2013 году Правительство Российской Федерации одобрило «Государственную программу развития рыбного хозяйства до 2020 года». По итогам ее реализации планируется увеличить объем вылова водных биоресурсов к 2020 году до 6,1 миллиона тонн с 4 миллионов в 2012 году, объем производства продукции аквакультуры – до 410 тысяч тонн со 140 в 2012-м, а выпуск рыбных продуктов – до 5,25 миллиона тонн. Доля отечественной рыбной продукции на внутреннем рынке должна достигнуть 85% против 77–78% в настоящее время, потребление рыбы и рыбопродуктов в России к 2020 году, как ожидается, достигнет 28 килограммов против 21,5 в 2012 году. Соответствующий раздел этой Государственной программы посвящен развитию и рыбохозяйственного комплекса Азово-Черноморского бассейна.

В заключении своего выступления мне хотелось бы отметить, что только благодаря совместным усилиям всех черноморских стран мы можем сделать наш регион процветающим, с устойчивым социально-экономическим развитием в соответствии с глобальной инициативой ФАО «Синий Рост».

Благодарю за внимание.

H.E. MUSTAFA ALTUG ATALAY**Director-General of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, Turkey**

Distinguished ministers and delegates,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the kind invitation to the honourable hosting country, Romania, and for the opportunity to deliver this speech. Although our Minister his Excellency Faruk Çelik would have very much liked to join the conference today, unfortunately, he was not able to do so due to a last-minute change in his busy agenda. He wanted me to convey his deepest regards and wishes for the success of the conference.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We all agree that fish stocks are common heritage for the whole humankind, especially when highly migratory species are taken into account. Therefore, when a stock is collapsed somewhere, not only the region that is dependent on the fisheries of that particular stock is affected, but also other regions are influenced by this incident.

A collapse in the fishing industry would lead to negative results not only for the fishermen, but also for other relevant communities from the social, economic and even political points of view. For that reason, it could be too late if necessary and timely measures are not taken meticulously.

The foundation of sustainable fisheries management depends on reliable and accurate data, scientific research as well as efficient inspection and controls. In terms of Black Sea fisheries, data collection, scientific research, especially stock assessment and management, are gradually improving, even though there are still areas with no or inadequate fisheries information. However, the management of marine living resources in the Black Sea is easier than any other region due to the fact that the Black Sea countries agreed on exclusive economic zones (EEZ).

Even general measures related to fisheries and aquaculture should be taken by all riparian countries through regional fisheries management organizations. It is of prime importance that all riparian countries in the Black Sea should have their own management and monitoring, control and surveillance systems in their EEZ in terms of conservation and sustainable exploitation of fish stocks. The effective EEZ management is directly related to the success of sustainable fisheries management in the Black Sea. To that end, the cooperation among riparian countries should be enhanced. In this regard, the Working Group on Black Sea is an important platform to ensure this cooperation.

As the main fishing riparian country in the region, Turkey is aware of its responsibility to maintain sustainable fisheries management in its EEZ in the Black Sea, taking into consideration the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

Turkey also signed the FAO Port State Measures Agreement which is now awaiting ratification by our National Assembly. We expect that positive outcomes would be achieved if the provisions of this agreement are implemented by all parties.

On this occasion, I would like to share some examples regarding fisheries management at the national level. One of the most important steps that have been made is that we have stopped the fleet capacity since 2002 by restraining new entries to the fleet. Additionally, we have initiated a decommissioning scheme, withdrawing fishing vessels with a view to reducing the fishing pressure on the stocks. With this practice, which is still in force, 1 011 vessels of over 10 metres length have been withdrawn from the fishing fleet since 2013.

With a more conservative approach, we have set new arrangements for the regulation of domestic fisheries including, *inter alia*, minimum landing size, spatial and temporal restrictions and gear restrictions.

With the objective of conducting inspections more effectively, fisheries divisions have been established in all coastal provinces and they have been strengthened in terms of staff and vehicles.

There are 174 landing points and 22 fisheries port offices in the Black Sea region in Turkey. All kinds of infrastructure, staff recruitment and all required equipments to use during the inspections were provided in these landing points and offices. It is mandatory to land all fishery products in these designated landing ports.

As a result of the inspections conducted, it was decided that the penal sanctions in the current fishery law in Turkey should be more deterrent. For this purpose, we have updated and categorized the sanctions in the new draft fishery law.

In Turkey, fishing vessels over 15 metres are required to be equipped with automated identification systems. However, this monitoring system does not properly provide control. To this end, a new “Fishing Vessel Monitoring System” has been established for vessels over 12 metres. The implementation of electronic logbooks will also start with this system.

While finalizing my speech, I would like to reiterate my pleasure to take part in this close collaboration and to express that Turkey shall continue to increase its efforts to enhance closer and fruitful cooperation.

Thank you very much for your attention.

MS VALÉRIE LAINÉ

Acting Director, Directorate D (Mediterranean and Black Sea), Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission

Monsieur le Ministre,
Mesdames et Messieurs les représentants nationaux,
Monsieur le Président de la CGPM,
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Permettez-moi de remercier chaleureusement les autorités roumaines pour leur accueil et l'excellente organisation de cet événement.

L'Union européenne salue l'organisation de cette conférence, qui constitue un cadre privilégié pour réfléchir ensemble sur l'avenir de la pêche et de l'aquaculture en mer Noire. Nous avons un intérêt partagé pour organiser la préservation et, lorsque c'est possible, le développement de ces activités d'une grande importance socio-économique.

La situation

Le constat scientifique est sans appel: les stocks de la mer Noire sont dans une situation critique depuis plusieurs années. À l'exception du sprat, tous les stocks évalués en mer Noire sont aujourd'hui exploités à des niveaux non soutenables (turbot, anchois, chinchard, aiguillat, merlan bleu, rouget barbet). Pour le turbot, la mortalité par pêche est plus de cinq fois supérieure au niveau du rendement maximal durable. D'autres espèces telles que l'esturgeon sont en danger.

La coopération régionale a bien progressé depuis quelques années, notamment à travers la mise en place de mesures de suivi, de gestion et de lutte contre la pêche illicite, non déclarée et non réglementée (INN) ainsi que pour la gestion de l'aiguillat.

La situation reste néanmoins critique. La dégradation des stocks conduit à une érosion de la rentabilité des flottilles et met en cause la pérennité des 40 000 emplois directs que génère le secteur dans les pays riverains de la mer Noire.

Plusieurs défis menacent aujourd'hui l'avenir des stocks et des pêcheurs. La pêche INN constitue un fléau majeur qui met à mal les efforts de gestion. Les insuffisances en matière de collecte de données et de suivi scientifique constituent une faille critique. Le cadre régional de gouvernance doit également être développé et consolidé.

Le potentiel de rétablissement des stocks est encore important à condition d'agir rapidement. Nous nous trouvons aujourd'hui à un moment historique. L'avenir même de la pêche et des pêcheurs en mer Noire et en Méditerranée est aujourd'hui en jeu.

En parallèle, il est nécessaire de définir un cadre assurant le développement durable de l'aquaculture. Le travail mené dans le cadre de la CGPM par son Comité scientifique consultatif de l'aquaculture et la mise en place d'un groupe de travail (task force) pour élaborer une stratégie sur l'aquaculture doivent être particulièrement salués.

La dynamique lancée: le processus de Catane

Le Commissaire Vella a engagé début 2016 un processus destiné à rétablir les conditions d'une exploitation durable des stocks de la Méditerranée et de la mer Noire.

Cette dynamique repose sur plusieurs principes fondamentaux:

- La réponse doit être collective. Agir de façon isolée ne fonctionnera pas compte tenu du caractère partagé des stocks.
- Les mesures de gestion doivent être renforcées à tous les niveaux: international, européen, national.
- Il faut agir rapidement pour éviter l'effondrement des stocks tout en mettant en place des mesures avec une vision de moyen et long terme.

- Les mesures de gestion des pêches doivent être améliorées, mais il faut également renforcer le contrôle et la lutte contre la pêche INN ainsi que l'organisation de l'évaluation des stocks.
- L'impact socio-économique des mesures doit être anticipé et maîtrisé, en portant une attention particulière aux spécificités de la pêche artisanale.
- Tous les acteurs concernés, et en particulier les professionnels, doivent être associés à la préparation des décisions.
- Nous devons faire preuve de solidarité entre pays riverains en renforçant l'assistance pour permettre la modernisation du secteur de la pêche et le renforcement des capacités nationales de contrôle. L'Union européenne se tient prête à apporter le meilleur soutien possible dans ce cadre en mobilisant les outils de coopération de sa politique de voisinage, en utilisant notamment l'instrument TAIEX et le système des jumelages.

Les priorités pour les prochains mois

Cette nouvelle dynamique va être concrétisée par plusieurs actions-clés à court terme.

À l'échelle de l'Union européenne, l'interdiction des rejets entre graduellement en application depuis 2015. Le débarquement des espèces démersales deviendra obligatoire en janvier 2017. Un plan sur le rejet du turbot en mer Noire est en préparation et doit entrer en vigueur à cette date afin d'accompagner la mise en œuvre de cette obligation. Par ailleurs, les quotas de capture de turbot et de sprat pour 2017 applicables à la Roumanie et la Bulgarie sont en préparation, comme chaque année depuis 2008.

La Commission européenne travaille par ailleurs avec les États membres afin de définir des mesures nationales transitoires pouvant être mises en œuvre rapidement en vue de commencer à rétablir les stocks.

Sur le plan international, les efforts doivent maintenant se concentrer sur plusieurs axes:

La stratégie à moyen terme en faveur de la durabilité des pêches en Méditerranée et en mer Noire pour 2017–2020, adoptée cette année lors de la quarantième session de la CGPM, constitue une pierre angulaire de la nouvelle dynamique pour la Méditerranée et la mer Noire. Les actions définies par cette stratégie doivent être mises en œuvre sans tarder. Plusieurs actions revêtent une importance particulière pour la mer Noire.

En ce qui concerne l'évaluation des stocks, la création d'un forum de la CGPM sur les sciences halieutiques va permettre d'améliorer la coordination du travail d'évaluation et le partage des données. Ce forum doit également aboutir à une harmonisation des méthodes d'évaluation et de validation des résultats. Aujourd'hui, seule une minorité des stocks de la mer Noire est évaluée. Nous devons progresser en faisant un meilleur usage commun de nos moyens.

Le lancement de campagnes régionales d'évaluations pour compléter les données disponibles ainsi que le développement de modèles d'analyse bioéconomiques vont permettre de mieux préparer les mesures de gestion.

Le développement des plans de gestion est une priorité majeure. Notre attention doit se porter sur les stocks les plus fragilisés, tels que le turbot et l'aiguillat, mais aussi sur d'autres stocks d'intérêt commercial pour lesquels nous manquons de données et d'avis scientifiques.

Le contrôle et la lutte contre la pêche INN constituent un autre volet important de la stratégie. Les pratiques INN en Méditerranée et en mer Noire vont être caractérisées précisément et quantifiées par une étude spécifique. La mise en place d'un plan régional de lutte contre la pêche INN va permettre d'agir concrètement afin d'aboutir à l'éradication du phénomène. L'adaptation des législations nationales est un aspect essentiel de ce plan d'action.

La protection des écosystèmes et la prévention des captures accidentelles d'espèces sensibles fait partie intégrante de la stratégie. L'objectif visant à protéger 10 pourcent des espaces en Méditerranée et en mer Noire requiert un effort important afin de combler notre retard.

La stratégie à moyen terme permettra également de mieux prendre en compte la petite pêche côtière, notamment par la réalisation d'une étude régionale et la mise en place d'un groupe de travail permanent.

L'Union européenne apportera enfin tout son soutien au projet BlackSea4Fish afin de renforcer concrètement l'approche régionale pour la gestion des pêches.

Je suis convaincue que les défis auxquels nous faisons face doivent être relevés de manière intégrée, en agissant collectivement à tous les niveaux. Nous ne pourrons progresser que si nous sommes prêts à dialoguer et à coopérer, en particulier lorsqu'il s'agit de science.

Soyons honnêtes, ce n'est pas toujours facile. Cela implique de dialoguer à différents niveaux. Mais l'expérience montre que cela fonctionne. Si l'on accepte de coopérer dans quelques domaines concrets, il devient alors possible de progresser réellement dans le suivi scientifique comme dans les mesures de gestion des ressources.

La conférence ministérielle de mars 2017

Dans le cadre de cette nouvelle dynamique, le Commissaire européen chargé des affaires maritimes et de la pêche invite tous les ministres de la pêche des pays riverains de la Méditerranée à participer à une conférence les 29 et 30 mars 2017 à Malte.

Cette conférence doit permettre de sceller un engagement politique commun pour les 10 années à venir afin de parvenir à une gestion durable de la pêche en Méditerranée. Cet engagement prendra la forme d'une déclaration ministérielle pour assurer la durabilité des pêches, 14 ans après la déclaration ministérielle adoptée à Venise.

Cette déclaration doit refléter les préoccupations et objectifs des pays riverains. Un travail de préparation du projet de déclaration doit débiter rapidement au niveau technique. Ce travail devra se fonder sur les attentes exprimées par les différents pays.

La politique maritime de l'Union européenne

L'Union européenne soutient le développement de l'économie bleue.

Nous croyons que l'économie bleue a une valeur ajoutée pour la croissance au niveau national et des emplois pour les communautés côtières.

Nous favorisons également l'approche intégrée de la politique maritime, qui prend pleinement en compte le «système de la mer».

Dans ce contexte, nous pensons que nous avons besoin d'un environnement marin sain et productif dans la mer Noire.

Nous assurons déjà le financement d'un certain nombre de projets dans la région, et nous allons continuer à soutenir la croissance bleue durable dans la région avec des instruments financiers dédiés tels que le Fonds européen pour les affaires maritimes et la pêche, le programme Horizon 2020 et le Fonds européen pour les investissements stratégiques.

Conclusion

Notre conférence aujourd'hui est un jalon important pour améliorer la coopération régionale en matière de gestion des pêches et de développement durable de l'aquaculture.

Nous soutenons pleinement les résultats de cette conférence. Nous croyons que la coopération régionale et les synergies dans ce domaine devraient être développées.

Je tiens à vous assurer que l'Union européenne est prête et travaille actuellement sur des mesures pour soutenir la CGPM dans ses efforts pour améliorer les connaissances

scientifiques, la surveillance et le contrôle préalable, lutter contre la pêche INN et soutenir le renforcement des capacités dans ce domaine au bénéfice des peuples des États riverains.

Je vous remercie.

H.E. MICHAEL CHRISTIDES**Secretary General, BSEC**

Minister Irimescu,
High representatives from the member states,
Representatives of the international organizations,
Distinguished participants,

I am honoured and privileged to address the High-level conference on behalf of the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and I would like to thank the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and the hosting country for inviting us and for the excellent conditions created for this meeting.

Allow me to briefly highlight the activities and priorities of BSEC in the field of fisheries in the Black Sea region which comprises the territories of the 12 BSEC member states.

The activities of BSEC in the field of fisheries are directed by the provisions of the BSEC Economic Agenda, a strategic document approved by the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and endorsed by the heads of state and government. These activities are in line with Goal 6 of the BSEC Economic Agenda and comprises, among other activities, promoting regional cooperation for the sustainable management of fishery resources.

At the ministerial level, the ministers of agriculture of the BSEC member states adopted a Joint Declaration on the interactions between the BSEC countries in the field of agriculture and agro-industry. The Joint Declaration shapes a concise and ambitious roadmap to further enhance and intensify the cooperation in the field of agriculture of the BSEC member states. It puts an emphasis as well on the elaboration of efficient measures of control and surveillance for fishing activities in the boundary-neighbouring aquatories.

At the expert level, the BSEC Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-industry at its meeting on 12–13 May 2016 considered the prospects of the Black Sea regional cooperation in the field of fisheries. The national experts stressed the importance of enhancing regional cooperation in the field of fisheries and aquaculture, taking into account the relevant activity of other regional and international organizations.

Among those institutions, a special relationship has been established with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean. Apart from the consultations held regularly between the two entities, the representatives of both organizations are participating in each other meetings, making a significant contribution to the decision-making process.

While discussing the subject of unreported and unregulated fishing in the Black Sea area, and considering the measures to combat illegal and undeclared fishing, the national experts expressed the view of potentially beneficial significance for the BSEC member states to consider joining the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

The activities of the BSEC subsidiary body are in line with the relevant targets of the mid-term strategy towards the sustainability of the Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries and are aimed at curbing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing through a regional plan of action.

The BSEC experts will further consider these issues at the next meetings with a view to exploring practical means to enhance Black Sea regional cooperation in the field of fisheries. We expect to continue our interaction with the GFCM and other stakeholders on these matters.

In a more practical way, I would like to inform you that BSEC plans to organize, in spring 2017, in Istanbul, a Conference on Enhanced Cooperation on Black Sea Fisheries and Blue Growth. The main objective of the conference is to share knowledge and expertise in fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea area. The principal activities will consist of a two-day meeting with a plenary session and several round-table, informal discussions and consultations.

We believe that the conference will contribute to the efforts of so many stakeholders to reverse the declining trend of fish stocks through strengthened scientific advice in support of management by increasing scientific knowledge, developing research capacity and transferring marine technology.

The conference will build on the achievements of today's High-level conference and will contribute to the exchange and gathering of the relevant scientific data and advice on management measures, environmental issues and socio-economic impacts on marine living resources and ecosystems in the Black Sea.

Last but not least, we are in the final stage of concluding a memorandum of understanding between BSEC and FAO, which will define the areas of cooperation and would lead, in the future, to the implementation of joint projects in the Black Sea region. According to the proposed text, BSEC and FAO will cooperate in the implementation of joint projects in the Black Sea area. A special provision of the memorandum of understanding is foreseen for promoting regional cooperation for the sustainable management of fishery resources, including through the GFCM.

In concluding my remarks, I wish to underline that BSEC will continue to promote the cooperation in the field of fisheries in the Black Sea region. In this process, we will maintain our traditional cooperation with our partners, including the GFCM, with other regional organizations and initiatives as well as with international organizations and institutions.

Thank you.

MS IRINA MAKARENKO**Pollution Monitoring and Assessment Officer, Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution**

Your Excellencies,
Dear Chairman,
Distinguished participants of the High-level conference,

It is a great honor for me to be here today and I would like to extend my gratitude to the Romanian hosts and to the GFCM Secretariat for their efforts to organize this distinguished High-level conference and for this chance to be given a floor on behalf of the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission.

As you may know, the Black Sea Commission was created as an executive body to implement the provisions of the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution also known as the Bucharest Convention, actually signed in this beautiful city of Bucharest back in 1992 and ratified by all the Black Sea riparian countries immediately after. The Black Sea Commission consists of representatives of the respective Ministries of Environment of the six Black Sea riparian countries and I am really delighted to see some of them among us today in this meeting room.

Being a Regional Sea Convention, the Black Sea Commission is responsible for promoting the implementation of the Bucharest Convention and its protocols. It was established to, *inter alia*, monitor and assess pollution, control pollution from land-based sources, ensure the conservation of biological diversity, address environmental safety aspects of shipping, address environmental aspects of management of fisheries and other marine living resources and, last but not least, promote integrated coastal zone management and maritime policy.

There is no doubt that further development of cooperation between the Black Sea Commission, the GFCM and ACCOBAMS in relation with the imperative need to promote sustainable fisheries in the Black Sea region as well as sharing the same objective towards ensuring the preservation of the marine environment and ecosystems of the Black Sea is on our agenda today.

As you may know, in 2012 bilateral MoUs between the Black Sea Commission and the GFCM, as well as between the Black Sea Commission and ACCOBAMS entered into force and are being successfully implemented.

Therefore, recognizing the importance of implementing the provisions in the above-mentioned MoUs and addressing the current environmental challenges, given the need of carrying out joint activities in areas of common interest, enhancing the information exchange, sharing expertise and best practices, joining efforts and developing synergies, these three organizations are wishing to work together on joint initiatives/projects supporting the implementation of the MoUs concluded between them.

The MoU between the Black Sea Commission and the GFCM was signed on 14 May 2012 in Marrakech, Morocco, during the thirty-sixth session of the GFCM. The Joint GFCM-Black Sea Commission Workshop on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing was a first activity in the framework of this MoU. The main outcome of the workshop was the development of a roadmap identifying actions, objectives, means and actors of relevance for the Black Sea in order to fight IUU fishing. Another important forum for cooperation is the work of the GFCM Working Group on the Black Sea and joint efforts of our secretariats to develop common indicators to assess fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea region.

The joint activities in the Black Sea basin between the Black Sea Commission, the GFCM and ACCOBAMS could cover the following topics:

- promotion of an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management and aquaculture;
- mitigation of the impacts of fisheries and aquaculture on the marine habitats and species;
- data quality, data collection and analysis, stock assessment; and
- research and training.

In this context, we see a great potential and a great need to implement a dedicated project covering the above-mentioned issues and we fully support the efforts of the GFCM and fully commit to assist in its successful implementation in the Black Sea region.

Concluding my address, let me wish success to this meeting and to our future endeavors aimed at maintaining sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea region.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

MS FLORENCE DESCROIX-COMANDUCCI**Executive Secretary, ACCOBAMS**

Your Excellency, Mr Achim Irimescu, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Romania,
Excellencies,
Mr Jiansan Jia, FAO representative,
Mr Abdellah Srouf, GFCM Executive Secretary,
Dear delegates,

It is a great pleasure for me to extend my sincere thanks to the Romanian authorities and to the GFCM Secretariat for bringing us together in the city of Bucharest for this High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture aimed at addressing the critical issues being faced by the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the Black Sea region.

ACCOBAMS is the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area. Established under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme Convention on Migratory Species, this regional Agreement, adopted in 1996, is going to celebrate its twentieth Anniversary during the Sixth Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS that will be held in Monaco on 22–25 November 2016.

ACCOBAMS is aimed at achieving a favorable conservation status of the cetaceans of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Cetacean conservation can only be achieved by taking into account the impacts of the human activities on cetaceans, among which the incidental capture (or bycatch) of cetaceans in fisheries represents one of the most acute threats to cetaceans in many parts of the world.

Currently, bycatch in fishing gear constitutes the major source of human-induced mortality of Black Sea cetaceans and all three species (harbour porpoise, bottlenose dolphin and common dolphin) are known to be incidentally caught in fishing gear throughout the waters of all Black Sea riparian countries.

As we have discussed yesterday during the expert meeting, some fishing gear and techniques are known to be very detrimental to the conservation of cetaceans, in particular the bottom set gillnets for turbot that have been reported to be a considerable threat to cetaceans. However, issues to be tackled are complex and can only be achieved through the implementation of a comprehensive and regionally integrated strategy for improving cetacean conservation in the Black Sea, that includes first, improving the knowledge on the impact of fisheries through data collection and onboard observers programme and second, implementing conservation measures to mitigate the interaction between cetaceans and fishing gear.

Improving the knowledge on cetacean populations in the Black Sea is fundamental, as few information on their abundance and distribution is available and the lack of data is critical to monitor and assess the impacts of fisheries on cetacean populations. For this latter point, I do hope that thanks to the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative – a regional initiative to be officially launched in November 2016 aimed at establishing an integrated and coordinated monitoring system for cetaceans – we will be able to provide robust estimates of the cetacean populations in the Black Sea that will be useful for the fisheries managing authorities in the Black Sea, and first of all for the GFCM.

Institutional collaboration with competent organizations is also fundamental. This is one of the main priorities of the 2014–2025 ACCOBAMS Strategy and the GFCM is one of the key partners of ACCOBAMS. A memorandum of understanding has been established in 2012 between the secretariats of both organizations, providing a

concrete framework to support initiatives and to create opportunities for developing joint actions, in particular as regards the mitigation of interactions between endangered marine species and fisheries as well as on area-based conservation measures.

For the latter, a Joint Cooperation Strategy on Spatial-based Protection and Management Measures for Marine Biodiversity was elaborated among the secretariats of ACCOBAMS, the GFCM, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, the United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) through its Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) and in collaboration with the Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), to support the identification of priority spatial areas at a regional scale for the implementation of protection measures. I do hope that a similar strategic approach be followed in the Black Sea region in the near future with the participation of competent organizations, in particular the Black Sea Commission and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, in order to promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea.

In addition, during the forthcoming meeting of the parties to ACCOBAMS to be held in November, the parties to ACCOBAMS will be invited to review a draft resolution on the interactions between fisheries and cetaceans. The importance of the collaboration between ACCOBAMS and the GFCM will be reiterated, as well as the mandate of the ACCOBAMS Secretariat to provide assistance to the countries in addressing the issues of negative interactions between fisheries and cetaceans.

In this context, the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, in particular its Target 4 “minimize and mitigate unwanted interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems and environment”, represents a cross-sectorial strategic asset and an additional tool to strengthen the coordination of our actions, to create new opportunities for collaboration and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our efforts.

The goals we want to achieve are ambitious and it is only if we tackle them together, in collaboration and within our respective mandate, that we will be able to meet the challenges of the sustainable conservation of marine resources in the Black Sea, for the benefit of the riparian populations and of the marine ecosystems under increasing pressure from human activities.

The Declaration to be adopted today represents a unique opportunity to promote a collaborative approach to cooperation amongst countries in the Black Sea region with the support of, and in collaboration with, the relevant organizations.

In conclusion, I would like to confirm here the ACCOBAMS commitment to work with you on these issues for strengthening the effectiveness of our action and avoiding duplication of efforts in view of promoting sustainable use of marine resources in the Black Sea.

Thank you for your attention.

MS AINA AFANASJEVA**Director, Eurofish**

Ministers,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to first join others and thank our hosts for the excellent organization of the content-rich conference and for their very warm welcome and hospitality.

It is a great honor and privilege for me to participate in this conference and have the chance to address so many stakeholders, both public and private, from the Black Sea region; a region composed of six countries which unites different cultures and a place of a large variety of economic activities with an impact on the whole region. It is also an important fishing region, where most stocks are shared and transboundary in nature, and with an emerging aquaculture sector.

Different issues of common interest, such as conservation and sustainable use of marine resources and biodiversity, environmental protection and integrated coastal zone management, must be given an increased attention with a view to cultivating a shared responsibility and capitalizing the potential of the Black Sea.

It is in the common interest of all states of the region and also various intergovernmental and regional organizations to actively combine all efforts to address chief challenges and make use of the potentials the Black Sea offers. And a lot is achievable through joint efforts, joint initiatives which can deliver tangible results. In a constantly changing world, the key is that we have strong cooperation mechanisms in place. They are absolutely critical for dealing with issues that cannot be dealt with by single nations/states, those issues that stretch beyond national interests.

In this regard, let me praise the GFCM taking a lead role in building partnerships and carrying out various joint initiatives for the benefit of the Black Sea region, a good example of which is today's conference. But, cooperation and collaboration is not only limited to the conference. What is important is what happens after the conference.

We certainly shall complement each other and make synergies between what we do. We must make use of our knowledge, excellence in fisheries and aquaculture we possess and build our partnership on each other's strength.

I fairly believe that Eurofish, being an international organization and having the necessary tools in its hands, such as the Eurofish Magazine, well-known among professionals and a widely distributed specialized journal, can play an important role to give better visibility to Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture, to increase both the industry and public awareness about the sector, the countries surrounding the sea basin, and also valuable activities carried out by various partner organizations. It is important that we tell people what we do. We also can address the common values of the Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture, as part of the wider Mediterranean heritage.

Eurofish will continue to contribute to the development of the Europe-wide portal EMODnet (European Marine Observation and Data Network) consisting of a wide range of marine data, of which Black Sea is an integral part. We also are ready to actively participate in the BlacSea4Fish project activities.

Demonstrating continued efforts to engage with the region, Eurofish attaches high importance to continue its training and capacity-building initiatives by sharing experience and knowledge with an ultimate aim to foster the development of fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea region.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is still a large potential for fostering existing cooperation mechanisms and each of us has a role to play, ensuring better synergies between the activities carried out by various countries and partner organizations.

I truly look forward to strengthening and broadening the cooperation mechanisms in the Black Sea region and working together for the benefit of the sector and people who dedicate their lives to fisheries and aquaculture.

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S.E. Cristiana Pasca-Palmer,
Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les Directeurs,
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Chers collègues et amis,

Au nom de la Commission générale des pêches pour la Méditerranée de la FAO, je tiens à exprimer ma grande satisfaction pour les résultats qui ont été atteints au cours de ces deux journées de travail intenses et fructueuses.

Grâce à la Déclaration conjointe qui vient d'être adoptée aujourd'hui, une étape historique vient de se conclure. Cette déclaration est le fruit des efforts de tous et marque une volonté commune de l'ensemble des pays riverains de la mer Noire et des organisations, qui sont venus participer en force à cette conférence. Elle contient des messages forts et représente un engagement politique important. C'est l'instrument dont nous avons besoin pour aller de l'avant, ensemble, afin d'œuvrer en faveur d'une pêche et d'une aquaculture durables dans la région.

Cette déclaration repose en outre sur le produit des conclusions techniques particulièrement détaillées et de grande qualité, qui ont été élaborées à l'issue de discussions tenues au sein des différents panels. Ces éléments techniques ainsi que les recommandations formulées formeront la clé de voûte des actions futures qui seront menées par la CGPM et ses partenaires dans les différents domaines considérés comme prioritaires pour la mer Noire, qu'il s'agisse de la gestion des stocks surexploités, de la pêche illicite, non déclarée et non réglementée, de la conservation des ressources biologiques marines et de leurs écosystèmes ou encore du développement d'une aquaculture durable.

Les résultats très positifs qui ont été atteints durant cette conférence sont pleinement en accord avec les différentes initiatives en cours dans l'ensemble de la région, qui prennent en compte les problématiques spécifiques à la mer Noire. Il suffit de mentionner notamment la stratégie à moyen terme en faveur d'une pêche durable en Méditerranée et en mer Noire, qui vient d'être lancée, et la stratégie visant à assurer le développement durable de l'aquaculture, qui est sur le point d'être présentée aux membres de notre Commission. Naturellement, ces stratégies ne pourront être mises en œuvre sans l'appui de tous les partenaires et de toutes les institutions concernées.

À cet égard, le rôle central que devra jouer la CGPM en tant qu'organisation régionale compétente chargée de la gestion des pêches et du développement d'une aquaculture durable est indiscutable et je me réjouis en outre de constater que la coopération se place au cœur des préoccupations des pays riverains et de l'ensemble des organisations de la région. La présence à cette conférence de plusieurs représentants de haut niveau, de nombreuses organisations et administrations des pays riverains ainsi que de représentants de la société civile témoigne des liens qui se sont tissés dans la région et de la volonté de les renforcer. Cela démontre également la nature variée et multidimensionnelle des aspects liés à cette coopération.

Nous pouvons désormais compter sur un réseau d'acteurs particulièrement fourni et actif en mer Noire, un réseau qui sera appelé, dans un avenir proche, à se consolider encore davantage grâce au projet BlackSea4Fish. Je me félicite du large soutien qui a été exprimé en faveur de ce projet, qui a été reconnu comme un instrument fondamental

pour stimuler davantage la coordination entre les différentes administrations et les différents acteurs de la mer Noire en vue d'adopter une approche concertée pour garantir une pêche et une aquaculture durables.

Enfin, cette conférence n'aurait pas été un succès sans l'importante contribution fournie par le Gouvernement de la Roumanie, en particulier le Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement rural, qui nous a si chaleureusement accueillis ici à Bucarest et qui a assuré impeccablement l'organisation de cette manifestation. Ce succès n'aurait pas non plus eu lieu sans le rôle déterminant joué par nos partenaires, notamment l'Accord sur la Conservation des Cétacés de la Mer Noire, de la Méditerranée et de la zone Atlantique adjacente (ACCOBAMS), la Commission pour la protection de la mer Noire contre la pollution, l'Organisation de coopération économique de la mer Noire (BSEC) et l'Organisation internationale pour le développement des pêches en Europe centrale et orientale (Eurofish), ni sans le soutien apporté par le Département des pêches et de l'aquaculture de la FAO ainsi que par l'Union européenne. Je tiens en outre à remercier la modératrice qui a parfaitement mené et animé les discussions ainsi que tous les représentants des administrations, experts, participants et collègues qui, grâce à leur contribution scientifique, ont enrichi les débats. Enfin, je remercie chaleureusement tous les collègues du Secrétariat de la CGPM pour leur travail, non seulement ici sur place mais aussi dans nos bureaux à Rome. Un grand merci également aux interprètes ainsi qu'à toutes les personnes qui ont participé à l'organisation de cette conférence.

J'espère avoir le plaisir de vous revoir prochainement dans le cadre des activités qui découleront de cette conférence et je vous remercie pour votre attention.

Appendix 3 – List of participants

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GFCM High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture

**A declaration to boost regional cooperation
in the sector**

24–25 October 2016
Bucharest, Romania

The High-level conference towards enhanced cooperation on Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture was organized by the GFCM in partnership with the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea Commission), the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the International Organisation for the Development of Fisheries in Central and Eastern Europe (Eurofish), and in collaboration with the Romanian Government.

More than 100 participants from GFCM contracting parties, cooperating non-contracting parties, non contracting parties, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, universities and academia attended the conference. The conference was structured around an expert meeting followed by a high-level session where strategic aspects related to cooperation in fisheries and aquaculture at the Black Sea level were tackled.

The event was marked by the unanimous adoption of a declaration which clearly demonstrated a strong political commitment to increase collaboration among Black Sea riparian countries with a view to promoting the rational exploitation of marine living resources, the sustainable development of aquaculture and the mitigation of threats facing the marine ecosystems in the region.

