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## 7<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

*The Hague, The Netherlands, 23 to 27 January 2019*

### COMM7-Report ANNEX 10a Opening Statement by Mr Johan Osinga

*Director-General for Nature, Fisheries and Rural Areas Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality*

Ladies and gentlemen,

A warm welcome to the Netherlands.

It is a pleasure and an honour to host the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation meeting on behalf of the European Union here in The Hague. A story which started in 2006 and has led to the first meeting in 2013 and now this 7th meeting of the Commission today.

In particular I would like to welcome the President of the Commission of SPRFMO, Mr. Urrutia, and Mr. Soldi, the Commission vice chairperson, all the members of SPRFMO and all other delegations, organisations and observers.

It is a chilly morning, and it seems we have reserved the coldest week of the year so far, for this meeting.

It's the first time that the general meeting of SPRFMO takes place in the northern hemisphere. Unfortunately this means a northern hemisphere winter, rather than an southern hemisphere summer.

None the less, I believe we have all the elements for a constructive and productive meeting and – I hope – an enjoyable social program yesterday, this evening and on Friday.

At this point, I would like to show my gratitude to the Pelagic Freeze Trawler Association and their representatives for their support and contributions to this program and their general cooperation.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
SPRFMO brings together delegations, representatives and organisations, literally from all corners of the world, in joint interest and commitment for sustainable fisheries and management of marine resources in the RFMO convention area.

To say this is important, is an understatement.

The recovery of jack mackerel stocks in the area is a testimony to the fact that international cooperation, legally binding agreements and commitment are essential to ensure sustainable fisheries, now and in the future.

Now, as you know better than me, this is easier said than done, and requires responsibility and continuous hard work from many people, members and organisations.

It requires an agreement on legal aspects, control and enforcement, common policies and, last but not least, scientific research and information exchange.



Scientific knowledge and research allows for science-and-fact-based underpinning of these policies. It is essential for the quality and direction of decision making.

A good example of this are the self-sampling programs that have been carried out by members.

These are a huge contribution to the setting up of a sustainable fisheries management framework in the Southern Pacific.

This has allowed us to start recently with the process to certify jack mackerel fishery under the MSC standards.

I think this is a great example of the success of the SPRFMO as a RFMO in terms of the sustainable management of fisheries resources in the convention area.

Equally important is putting in place a comprehensive framework for bottom fishing, to ensure the long term conservation and sustainable use of deepwater fishery resources and to protect the fragile marine ecosystems in which they occur.

There has also been a significant increase in the squid fishery in the Convention Area in the last years. We should need to make sure that also this fishery has a sound scientific basis and is defined by appropriate conservation and management measures.

Unfortunately, in order to manage the fisheries, having regulation alone is not enough.

We must also make sure that these rules are respected and implemented properly. There is potential for strengthening the SPRFMO monitoring and control rules.

A number of proposals to effect this have been tabled by the EU and other Members, including on the IUU listing of vessels, transshipment, high seas boarding and inspections, port inspections, marine pollution and the observer program.

Therefore I would call on all participants to give due consideration to these proposals – after all, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that we have a robust monitoring and control framework in place for the SPRFMO Convention Area.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have just outlined some of the work that lies ahead of you in the next days.

The decisions you will be making, for example on the budget, financial means and the follow-up to the recommendations from the performance review, will set the direction of your organization in the coming years.

We must reflect carefully on how to ensure SPRFMO's long-term sustainability, to carry out all the work that is needed and to fulfil the organisations' ambitions.

I hope this meeting will set the path and direction for the future.

I wish you all a successful meeting and a very pleasant stay here in The Netherlands  
Thank you.