

Your Excellences, distinguished participants of the High-level Meeting,

We would like to extend our gratitude to GFCM Secretariat for their efforts to organize this distinguished High Level meeting and for this chance to provide feedback on behalf of the Black Sea Commission' Permanent Secretariat.

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 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 respective Ministries of Environment of the six Black Sea riparian countries and we are really delighted to see some of them among participants of this meeting.

Being a Regional Sea Convention, the Black Sea Commission is responsible for promoting the implementation of Bucharest Convention and its Protocols, it was established to, *inter alia*, monitor and assess pollution, control pollution from land-based sources, ensure 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, GFCM and ACCOBAMS Agreement 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 Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between the Black Sea Commission and GFCM, is being successfully implemented. The MoU between the Black Sea Commission and the GFCM was signed on 14th May, 2012 in Marrakech, Morocco, during the 36th Session of the GFCM. The Joint GFCM-BSC Workshop on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing was a first activity in the framework of this MoU. The main outcome of the workshop was 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 work of the GFCM Working Group on 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 and GFCM in the future could cover the following topics:

- Promotion of ecosystem based approach in 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;
- Research and training.

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

Concluding this address, let us 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.