

**OPENING SPEECH BY
MR. CAMILLE JEAN PIERRE MANEL, ICCAT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

Minister of Agriculture and Food,
Ministers in attendance,
Secretary of State for Fisheries,
Chair of the Regional Coordination and Development Commission of the Algarve,
Mayor of the Municipality of Loulé,
ICCAT Chair,
ICCAT Vice-Chairs,
Commission Officers,
Delegates,
Partners,
Interpreters,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Colleagues,

Following two years in which the pandemic has put us at a distance, it is with great joy that I bid you a warm welcome. Despite the exceptional moments that we have all lived through, our resilience has enabled us to experience new realities which will certainly constitute an integral part of our environment. These include the possibility of holding hybrid meetings like the meeting that is currently being held in this magnificent place, Vale do Lobo, here in the Algarve. It is the occasion to heartily thank the Portuguese authorities for hosting this meeting, and also the European Union for its funding.

ICCAT Chair, delegates, continued strengthening of its pillars through an adaptive response is essential for the dynamics of our work environment. Within the framework of anticipation, this year, the Secretariat is pleased to propose to the Commission the update of the Staff Regulations and Rules. In the same vein, it continues the development of its policies on information security, personal data protection and the guidelines for remote working, which are processes that have been particularly delayed due to an overloaded schedule.

In fact, as raised in the past few years, the Secretariat continues to face an increase in the work overload as evidenced by the record number of meetings this year, accompanied by their list of related tasks. While it is true that the need for measures taken by the Commission for better conservation and management of the stocks is beyond any doubt, it is reiterated the pressing invitation for adjustment of the Secretariat's means. Nevertheless, the Secretariat will continue its strong performance in spite of the challenges.

This is why I would like to express my exceptional satisfaction to all the Secretariat staff who, with the support of the Commission and the participation of the partners, demonstrate great professionalism and tireless work that often result in performance beyond expectations. Dear colleagues, I am very proud of you!

Thank you for your very kind attention!