

**STATEMENT BY THE FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN
OF THE STATE COMMITTEE FOR FISHERIES
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
AT THE 18TH MEETING OF THE CITES ANIMALS COMMITTEE**

Esteemed Mr.Chairman!

Just a few weeks ago 46th meeting of the Standing Committee was concluded, at it was noted that the range countries were demonstrating their adherence to the decisions of the 45th meeting of the Standing Committee and to shifting to the principle of joint management of the sturgeon stocks.

I would like to note that the decisions of the 46th meeting of the Standing Committee became as an impetus for the Caspian Sea countries on a whole number of areas of the activities of the States, in issues of a general policy conducted on the Caspian Sea.

During 29-30 March 2002 the extraordinary meeting of the Commission on aquatic bioresources of the Caspian Sea was held in Baku. The Islamic republic of Iran having accepted the Caspian Sea countries' proposal became a full member of the Commission. Now we can definitely state about the start of the new stage of the joint management of the Caspian Sea sturgeons.

During the meeting important issues in relation to the joint actions on the Caspian Sea were discussed.

First, the draft Agreement on conservation and management of biological resources of the Caspian Sea was discussed. It was decided to finalize the joint drafting the text of the Agreement.

Second, The Commission considered the issue of joint actions against illegal harvesting, as a result of which a decision was taken to prepare by 31 May 2002 a specific program of actions in the fight against poaching for the period of 2002-2004 and plans for improving national legislations to govern the turnover of the sturgeon products.

The principle of a unified approach to scientific research was developed.

It is important to note that the mechanism of implementing decisions of the Commission was established. Within the framework of the mechanism working groups, which must carry out the work on implementing the decisions, on major activities of the Commission were defined as follows:

1. on finalizing the draft of the Agreement on conservation of bioresources of the Caspian Sea;
2. on combatting poaching and governing the turnover of the sturgeon products in the local markets;
3. on the control over the quantity and quality of the released juvenile sturgeons;
4. on scientific research and TAC prognosis;
5. on export quotas, catch quotas and interactions with CITES.

We are satisfied to note that the second all Caspian Sea survey for assessing the state of the sturgeon populations in the Caspian Sea has successfully started, now the research in the waters of Turkmenistan has been done and it is being conducted in accordance with approved schedule. More than that, fully in accordance with the Paris Agreement, the expeditions to study the state of the

sturgeons of the Caspian Sea will be conducted on an agreed long term basis and their data will a basis for the joint management of the Caspian Sea bioresources.

These events confirm, that direction taken by the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran and other Caspian Sea States towards conservation and rational use of such a natural treasure of the Caspian Sea as the unique sturgeon fish stocks is not a declarative but is a regular process of cooperation and a determination to protect those riches for our descendents.