

**ADDRESS BY MR RONNIE KASRILS, MP
ACTING-MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND
TOURISM, ON THE ARRIVAL OF THE SOUTHERN
SUPPORTER IN CAPE TOWN HARBOUR
ON FRIDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2003**

Your Excellency High Commissioner Ian Wilcock,
Representatives of the Australian Government,
Australian fisheries control officers
South African fisheries control officers,
Fellow members of the South African Government
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Members of the Media
Programme Director

South Africa is particularly pleased to have been able to come to the assistance of Australia in this dramatic, hot pursuit chase across the Southern Ocean.

This is indeed a significant as it is the second time that South Africa has co-operated with Australia in such a matter. Two years ago we assisted Australia in the arrest of the SouthTomy, leading to her arrest and conviction.

South Africa is committed to such co-operation, because not only is Patagonian toothfish highly endangered and requires protection, but also because it is an extremely valuable fish found in our own seas, notably around Marion Island and Prince Edward Islands. Beyond this, South Africa recognises its international obligations in terms of the high seas and protecting Patagonian toothfish. These obligations arise in terms of CCAMLR (pronounced "cam-ma-lar") – Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, of which South Africa is a member.

South Africa may very well wish to call on Australia in due course to affect an arrest where South Africa is the offended party.

Today we warmly welcome home the South Africans who participated and gave their unstinting support in this exercise. We also heartily welcome to Cape Town the Australian officials who have spent close to four weeks at sea and who must be desperate for good weather, a braai and a beer.

We also want to thank the many other South Africans who have assisted significantly to making our co-operation in this pursuit a reality. In particular, we thank the staff of the South African National Antarctic Program for having pulled out all the stops and having ensured that the SA Agulhas played a key supportive role.

We are also immensely proud of all the co-ordination and valuable role that was played by members of the staff of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.

We also thank various members of the private sector who provided service and support in this mission, through the deployment of the tug, the John Ross and the provision of additional officials who travelled with her.

We thank South African press for having reported extensively on this matter for bringing home to the SA public, the need to do all in our power, to prevent the plundering of the Patagonian toothfish.

We once again extend our friendship to the Australians and look forward to future co-operation and collaboration in the Marine Sector and other possible areas of co-operation.

Thank you,