New Year’s Message from the President

By Junichiro Okamoto
NPAFC President

A Happy New Year to my colleague members of the NPAFC, Secretariat staff, and people involved in salmon fisheries, research, and enforcement in the North Pacific. On behalf of NPAFC, I would like to express my best wishes and make a brief remark about where the NPAFC is headed in 2015.

Salmon stocks in the North Pacific are biologically unique and represent great economic and cultural blessings to people in the North Pacific Rim. Following the legacy of a predecessor organization (INPFC; International North Pacific Fisheries Commission; established in 1953), the NPAFC has performed well in conserving anadromous stocks in the North Pacific since its establishment in 1993 through the cooperation of its member countries. Cooperation among the member countries in support of human networks in administration, research, and enforcement is one of the most important assets of NPAFC.

In 2015, it is expected that a new regional fisheries management organization, the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC), will take effect. While the competencies of NPAFC and NPFC are clearly demarcated, the NPFC will be a brother organization of NPAFC in the North Pacific because a major part of the convention areas and current membership of the two organizations overlap. NPAFC has to step into a new era in coordination with NPFC in various fields in order to promote effectiveness of NPAFC business and for the mutual benefit of both organizations.

Enforcement efforts have successfully contained IUU (illegal, unreported, and unregulated) fishing that targets salmon in the NPAFC Convention Area. I congratulate the people who have contributed to such a consequential outcome through cooperation within the framework of NPAFC. To preserve this outcome, NPAFC needs to continue to maintain these successful cooperative efforts.

Although scientists of the member countries of NPAFC have long cooperated in their best efforts to analyze the mysterious life of anadromous stocks in nature, we have not yet completely heard the dream and reality of life for these stocks. A long task remains ahead for NPAFC-related science to develop an understanding of the dynamics of salmon stocks in the North Pacific environment.

In this connection, it is timely that NPAFC will hold the International Symposium on Pacific Salmon and Steelhead Production in a Changing Climate: Past, Present and Future from 17 to 19 May, 2015, in conjunction with 23rd Annual Meeting of NPAFC. The Annual Meeting will be held in Kobe, Japan, from 11 to 15 May, 2015. As the President of NPAFC, I would like to warmly welcome all the delegations to Kobe and I hope they will enjoy their visit to Kobe very much.

In closing, may the New Year bring us peaceful times, happiness, success, wealth, and prosperity.