The Government of the Republic announces actions for the conservation of the vaquita

* Expansion of the existing polygon to one million 300 thousand ha to ensure coverage of the full range
* Financial compensation to fishermen in the region
* Mexican Navy, PROFEPA CONAPESCA will carry out inspections and surveillance
* Fishing with gillnets is be suspended

The Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources presented the Integral Strategy for the Recovery of the Vaquita, endemic to the Upper Gulf of California, which will ensure its conservation and preservation.

Assistant Secretary for Management of Environmental Protection SEMARNAT, Rafael Pacchiano Alamán thanked the collaboration of the Ministries of Social Development (SEDESOL), Navy(SEMAR) and the National Commission of Aquaculture and Fisheries (CONAPESCA) to carry out the Strategy

He said the population of vaquita has been decreasing in recent years due to two factors: illegal fishing for totoaba and its demand in the Asian market as well as the use of gillnets for shrimp and finfish affecting the species.

Pacchiano Alamán indicated that the Strategy will be implemented over two years, through four components: expand the existing polgon of 126 hectares to 1 million 300 thousand hectares to ensure the all the vaquita range; fishermen will be compensated economically ; inspections and surveillance in coordination with the Navy, CONAPESCA and the Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection (PROFEPA) and new fishing gear.

The Vaquita is endemic to the Upper Gulf of California, is the smallest cetacean that exists, has the most restricted distribution of any cetacean and is the most endangered of the 128 species worldwide.

Meanwhile, Omar Vidal, Director of World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Mexico, acknowledged that the government strategy of the Republic to recover the species is the most important for 22 years, taking into account the fair compensation fishermen and continuous monitoring in the area. He said WWF supports and adds to this initiative for the sustainable and fair development of this region , based on responsible fishing and other economic activities that benefit the fishermen and their families in the long term, while ensuring protection of this unique porpoise of Mexico.

In the event were also present Juan Manuel Lopez Arroyo, Head of the Unit of Planning and International Relations SEDESOL, and Victor Arriaga Haro, Director General of Fisheries and Aquaculture of CONAPESCA.

Press Release No. 47/15 |. Mexico City, February 27, 2015