

Welcoming Address made by Ms Elisabeth Dupont-Kerlan, Chief Executive Officer of the French National Agency for Water and Aquatic Environments (ONEMA) at the Thirty-First Annual Meeting of NASCO

I am extremely pleased to be here with you this morning at the Opening of the Thirty-First Annual Meeting of NASCO, which I am delighted to say has been organised by ONEMA on behalf of the Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy. The last NASCO Annual Meeting here in France was held in 2005, in Vichy, on the Loire-Allier axis, and the Loire salmon conservation plan is still on-going today, as we will see in the presentation later.

I would like to thank both the President and the Secretary of NASCO for accepting our invitation and for your warm words. We chose to host the meeting in this magnificent part of France as the rivers of Brittany and Normandy are renowned for salmon fishing and have been subject to TACs since 1996, which are currently under review. These rivers are still highly important for salmon, and migratory fish in general.

I would like to thank so many of you for coming here, and to apologise on behalf of Mr Laurent Roy, the Director of Water and Biodiversity at the Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy who could not be here this morning. He will, however, join us this afternoon.

If the aim of this meeting is to bring together all of us with an interest in managing Atlantic salmon, to share our experiences, exchange information on the many measures which have been implemented in order to conserve salmon habitat and restore the stocks, I am sure we can all agree that, due to its requirement for high quality habitat, the Atlantic salmon is a great indicator of the state of our watercourses and the effectiveness of our conservation efforts.

This Annual Meeting comes at a fitting time in France as the Government has decided to carry out two major projects aimed at restoring ecological continuity and I, along with our partners at EDF and the Seine-Normandy Water Agency, am pleased to be able to invite you to the premiere of a film on the subject this evening. The conservation and return of Atlantic salmon to our rivers is a symbol of the achievement of good ecological status as required under the Water Framework Directive, and that is what we are committed to doing.

Finally, I would like to remind you that success comes from the steps taken by all of us. I thank you for your attention and wish you a useful, productive and enjoyable week.