

Agenda item 5.1(b)
For decision

Council

CNL(11)12

Report of the 'Next Steps' for NASCO Review Group

CNL(11)12

Report of the 'Next Steps' for NASCO Review Group

1. Commencing in 2004, NASCO undertook a comprehensive and critical review of its work which resulted in the adoption of a Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps', CNL(05)49. This Strategic Approach contained recommendations for actions relating to three main challenges: implementation, commitment and accountability; transparency and inclusivity; and raising NASCO's profile. The Council moved rapidly to address these challenges. Last year, the Council agreed to review the 'Next Steps' process to highlight what it had delivered, where it had worked well and to recommend any actions required to ensure that the Strategic Approach had been implemented. Accordingly, a 'Next Steps' for NASCO Review Group was established and the report of its meeting is attached.
2. The Group first reviewed progress in implementing the Strategic Approach under each of the seven challenges it identifies. The Group recognised that while NASCO has moved quickly in implementing the measures in the Strategic Approach these relate mainly to process. The Group made some recommendations for further actions relating to these challenges and has proposed that additional feedback be sought during the Special Session at the 2011 Annual Meeting with a view to updating the Strategic Approach.
3. For the next cycle of reporting, the Group suggests some streamlining and in the next round of Implementation Plans it recommends that greater emphasis should be placed on the activities and actions each jurisdiction plans to take over a period of five years. There should be greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of activities with clearly describe identifiable, measurable outcomes and timescales. It is recommended that, in future, Focus Area Reports should be developed around specific themes and that progress on Implementation Plans could be assessed through the Annual Reports, which would be reviewed. The establishment of a Working Group to develop a framework for future reporting and evaluation is proposed, which would report back to the 2012 Annual Meeting.
4. The Review Group considered the response from ISFA regarding the evolution of the Liaison Group and believes that the Council should resolve the future role it envisages for NASCO with regard to aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics before responding to ISFA. An initial discussion document on this topic will be tabled at the Annual Meeting. The Review Group also asked the Secretariat to prepare a paper looking at the costs and benefits of different meeting options and possible changes to the agendas for future Annual Meetings. Further, the Group asked the President and Secretary to develop draft Terms of Reference for the external performance review to be conducted in 2012.
5. The Council is asked to consider the report of the 'Next Steps' Review Group and decide on appropriate action. This is an important issue for NASCO, charting as it will its future approach to addressing the challenges in the Strategic Approach with the aim of restoring abundant Atlantic salmon stocks throughout the species' range so as to provide the greatest possible benefits to society and individuals.

Secretary
Edinburgh
7 April 2011

NS(11)9

Report of the Meeting of the 'Next Steps' for NASCO Review Group

*Nine Zero Hotel, Boston, USA
21 - 22 March 2011*

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The President of NASCO and Chair of the Working Group, Ms Mary Colligan, opened the meeting and welcomed participants to Boston. She noted that the important task before the Group was to evaluate the changes that have been made in the light of NASCO's very thoughtful and in-depth 'Next Steps' review of its Convention, mandate, structure and activities to ensure its continued fitness for the current and anticipated future challenges of Atlantic salmon conservation and management. She indicated that through a process of self-examination and stakeholder engagement that started approximately seven years ago, three areas of NASCO's work were identified for improvement: implementation, commitment and accountability; transparency and inclusivity; and raising NASCO's profile. NASCO had adopted a Strategic Approach to implement significant changes in order to advance these three goals. She noted that while the review may have resulted in change, the Review Group would need to question whether those changes have been effective. Effectiveness can be measured in multiple ways. The Group could question whether NASCO has furthered the three main objectives. However, even if NASCO can positively answer these questions, the ultimate metric must be the status of wild Atlantic salmon. She noted that the emphasis over the past reporting cycle was on demonstrating compliance with NASCO agreements and guidelines and perhaps the next cycle should be focused on outcomes. She thanked the members of the Review Group for taking time out of their busy schedules to participate in the review.
- 1.2 Ms Patricia Kurkul (USA) noted that the 'Next Steps' process was intended to be iterative; changing over time on the basis of experience gained. Overall, it represented a major step forward for NASCO and moving forward the process could be improved if there was greater focus on outcomes and effectiveness of the measures taken.
- 1.3 Mr Alan Gray (European Union) agreed with the sentiments expressed by the Chair and noted that while much has been achieved, further work is needed to build on the foundation laid. He indicated that in addition to planning how to take the process forward through this internal review, there would also be an external assessment in 2012 of NASCO's work to date.
- 1.4 Mr Richard Nadeau (Canada) indicated that he was pleased to be joining the work of NASCO at such an interesting time in its development.
- 1.5 Mr Steinar Hermansen (Norway) indicated that he was looking forward to strategic discussions rather than focusing on detail and, in this regard, he believed that consideration of the recommendations on future reporting and evaluation were the

most important. He noted that the recommendations from this Group would need to be carefully considered at the Annual Meeting in Greenland.

- 1.6 Mr Chris Poupard (NGOs) indicated that in 2004 the NGOs had played a central role in initiating the 'Next Steps' process. He thanked the Parties for their willingness to embrace the changes to NASCO's working methods and the Secretariat for its assistance. However, the NGOs felt that the agenda for the meeting could have been radical. While there have been some significant achievements as a result of the 'Next Steps' process, particularly with regard to transparency and inclusivity, there now needed to be much greater focus on outcomes. The principal conclusion, looking at the results of the 'Next Steps' process, is that there have been no material improvements in salmon conservation. The NGOs believe that there is a need to strengthen the Convention to improve implementation of NASCO's agreements and achievement of NASCO's objectives.
- 1.7 The Secretary reported that apologies had been received from both the Russian Federation and Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland).
- 1.8 A list of the members of the Review Group is contained in Annex 1.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Review Group adopted its agenda, NS(11)5 (Annex 2) after agreeing to include three new items on 'Consideration of the need to amend the NASCO Convention' (item 9) and 'NASCO's meeting schedule and structure' (item 11) and 'Response from ISFA on future Liaison with NASCO' (item 12).

3. Consideration of the Terms of Reference

- 3.1 The Review Group's Terms of Reference are contained in document CNL(10)48. The Group had been asked to:
 - (a) review the 'Next Steps' process, highlighting what this process had delivered, where it had worked well and making recommendations for any actions required to ensure that all the recommendations in the Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps' have been implemented;
 - (b) review the process used for reporting and evaluation of these reports and advise on any changes for the next reporting cycle;
 - (c) identify any additional areas that might need to be addressed to ensure that NASCO can meet the challenges it faces in managing and conserving Atlantic salmon;
 - (d) review the consistency of the 'Next Steps' review with UN General Assembly Resolution 61/105, and identify any further actions that might be required in accordance with the relevant provisions of this Resolution relating to RFMOs; and
 - (e) develop proposals for consideration by the Council on TORs, criteria and a budget for the external review. The attached annex could provide the basis for the development of such criteria and the Group could also consider TORs used by other RFMOs.

3.2 The Review Group was asked to complete its work no later than 1 April 2011 so that its report could be circulated to the Parties and accredited NGOs prior to the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting. The Review Group was also asked to present an overview of its findings during a Special Session at the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting to allow for an open debate and feedback from all delegates.

4. Overview of NASCO's work to date and the 'Next Steps' Process

4.1 The Secretary presented an overview of the work of NASCO since the Convention entered into force in 1983, NS(11)6. He indicated that prior to 1984, there was no international forum for cooperation on Atlantic salmon conservation and management and highlighted the following achievements:

- The NASCO Convention established a vast protection zone, resulting in the closure of the Northern Norwegian Sea salmon fishery which at its peak took around 1,000 tonnes of salmon.
- Diplomatic and other action by NASCO and its Parties successfully addressed the problem of fishing for salmon in international waters that developed in the late 1980s.
- Regulatory measures developed in NASCO have resulted in major reductions in the harvests in distant water fisheries which today only harvest around 25 tonnes (2% of the total catch).
- There have also been enormous reductions in fishing effort all around the North Atlantic because the Convention requires that States of Origin 'put their own house in order' before expecting other States to make sacrifices.
- There has been a marked change in recreational fisheries with the transition to 'catch and release' angling which NASCO has supported.
- The existence of NASCO has given a major boost to the development of scientific advice on salmon developed through ICES. This advice has informed management decisions in NASCO.
- There has been greatly increased exchange of information, for example, on social and economic data and on unreported catches.
- NASCO was one of the first international fishery organizations to introduce the Precautionary Approach to its work and agreements and guidelines have been developed on management of salmon fisheries; habitat protection and restoration; aquaculture and related activities and other topics.
- A process for Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry was established and then led to jointly agreed BMP Guidance relating to sea lice and containment.
- There has been much work in the Commissions of NASCO on issues such as *G.salaris*, acidification etc.

- A major, multi-million pound, innovative research programme on salmon at sea has been implemented, with only ‘pump priming’ funds from NASCO.

4.2 He concluded that NASCO has a record of which it can be proud but changes in the marine environment have been a challenge to stock re-building initiatives. The situation would, however, have been considerably worse without the progress made. He noted that the challenge ahead for the Review Group is to plan out what additional steps may be needed to ensure the future of this iconic and valuable resource.

5. Implementation of the Strategic Approach and recommendations for future actions

5.1 The Review Group considered document NS(11)2 (Annex 3) which provided an assessment of the progress in implementing each Decision and Key Issue in the Strategic Approach, CNL(05)49. This paper concluded that the ‘Next Steps’ process had resulted in major changes to the nature of NASCO’s work which is now conducted in a more transparent and inclusive manner. The majority of the decisions in the Strategic Approach have either been implemented or significant progress is being made. In particular, there is now far more transparency and greater accountability of the measures taken by jurisdictions in accordance with NASCO’s agreements, and progress is also being made in raising NASCO’s profile. While the first phase of implementation had focused on describing the actions being taken to comply with NASCO’s agreements, future reports could focus more on the effectiveness of these measures. There are only two decisions which have not been implemented; arranging a Ministerial Conference and holding follow-up stakeholder meetings. With regard to the Ministerial Conference, it had been recognized that this might only be required if a specific need arose and in this case it would be important to have clear objectives. With regard to stakeholder consultation meetings, the greater involvement of NGOs in NASCO and the enhancement of the websites may reduce the need for further consultation meetings. Progress is being made on most of the key issues although there has been limited progress on initiatives for endangered salmon populations.

5.2 The Review Group recognised that NASCO had moved quickly in adopting the Strategic Approach and implementing the measures it contains, although some different views were expressed about the extent of implementation of some of the decisions and key issues as reported in NS(11)2. The Group noted that many of the key issues identified for each challenge related to the process and not to outcomes which the Group agreed should be the ultimate objective. The Group recognised that while there had been major improvements in transparency and inclusivity and commitment to NASCO’s agreements the focus of reporting to date had been on measures taken and not their effectiveness. However, in other areas such as socio-economics, while there had been progress, further work is needed. The Review Group agreed that it would consider progress on each of the seven challenges identified in the Strategic Approach with a view to highlighting where further action was required to ensure the Strategic Approach was fully implemented. The view was expressed that it was important to focus on those aspects of the Strategic Approach where international cooperation through NASCO could make a significant contribution in supporting the conservation effort of the jurisdictions. It was noted

that in Norway, the NASCO Guidelines relating to management of fisheries had been very useful and SALSEA had been a great success whereas NASCO's work relating to socio-economic aspects had been less valuable.

Challenge 1: Management of salmon fisheries

- 5.3 The Review Group recognised that there had been substantial progress in the management of salmon fisheries and in improving 'fairness and balance' but the assessment of the FARs had indicated the need for additional actions in 11 of the 12 jurisdictions whose FARs were reviewed. While the 5 key issues relating to management of salmon fisheries remain valid, the Group recognised the need for further progress to address the additional actions highlighted by the FAR Review Group. The fisheries management guidelines adopted in 2009 should assist jurisdictions in making further progress in implementing NASCO's agreements and with future reporting.

Challenge 2: Social and economic aspects of the Atlantic salmon

- 5.4 It was noted that work is on-going in order to compile social and economic information relating to Atlantic salmon for inclusion on the NASCO website. The Review Group recognised that while some information on the economic value of salmon had been provided in the FARs very limited information had been included on how jurisdictions incorporate social and economic factors in management decisions. It was agreed that NASCO could provide a useful forum for exchange of information on how different jurisdictions are incorporating social and economic factors in managing their salmon resource and the Council has agreed to hold a Special Session on this topic at its 2012 Annual Meeting. Proposals for this Special Session are being developed by a Sub-Group of the Socio-Economics Working Group. The Review Group suggested that it would be valuable to consider not only case studies on how social and economic factors are included in decisions relating to each of the three focus areas but to have discussions on the value of NASCO's social and economic guidelines and what NASCO's future role on this topic might be.

Challenge 3: Research on salmon at sea

- 5.5 The Review Group considered that the key issues in the Strategic Approach relating to research on salmon at sea had been implemented and that the SALSEA Programme has been a highly successful public/private initiative that had allowed important research on salmon at sea to be conducted. The findings will be presented at the Salmon Summit in October 2011 and the management implications of this research reported back to NASCO in 2012. The Council will then need to consider if further actions are required. The Review Group believes that the research inventory relating to mortality of salmon at sea that is maintained by the IASRB is a very useful initiative and that the Board might consider if NASCO might play a broader role in providing a forum for coordination of research of relevance to NASCO's work.

Challenge 4: Protection and restoration of Atlantic salmon habitat

- 5.6 The Review Group recognised that there had been some significant gains through restoration of degraded habitat and that these might be highlighted to serve as models for initiatives on other rivers. However, the assessment of the FARs had indicated the need for additional actions in 9 of the 13 jurisdictions whose FARs were reviewed. It was recognised that NASCO's Habitat Plan of Action is vague and that most habitat issues are a matter for the jurisdictions. It was felt that the habitat guidelines adopted in 2010 may assist jurisdictions in making further progress in implementing NASCO's agreements and with future reporting.

Challenge 5: Aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics

- 5.7 The assessment of the FARs had indicated the need for additional actions in 9 of the 13 jurisdictions whose FARs were reviewed. The Group considered that the BMP Guidance on sea lice and containment adopted by NASCO and ISFA in 2009 may assist jurisdictions in making further progress in implementing NASCO's agreements and with future reporting but there might also be improved guidance on other aspects of reporting e.g. in relation to transgenic salmon. The Group considered that key issue 7 ('Consider the consequences of aquaculture of Atlantic salmon in countries that are not parties to NASCO') may not be required if the Strategic Approach was revised in future.

Challenge 6: Gyrodactylus salaris

- 5.8 The Review Group noted that there had been limited reporting in the FARs on progress in implementing the North-East Atlantic Commission's 'Road Map' that contains recommendations on enhancing cooperation on monitoring, research and exchange of information and for strengthened national and regional legislation and measures to prevent the further spread of the parasite. It was, however, noted that the additional guarantees relating to *G.salaris* under the EU Fish Health Directive would continue to apply and this was an important development. While there is an item on the Commission's agenda relating to *G.salaris*, limited information had been presented. The Review Group agreed that given the risks posed by the spread of this parasite, further exchange of information among the jurisdictions is important and that future reporting under the Implementation Plans may be the most appropriate way to facilitate this exchange. It was recognised that *G.salaris* is a specific issue, that was highlighted in the Strategic Approach, but in the event that the Strategic Approach is revised in the future, the Group recommends that the goal and key issue relating to *G.salaris* be incorporated in Challenge 5 (Aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics).

Challenge 7: Initiatives for endangered salmon populations

- 5.9 The Review Group discussed the merit of having separate key issues in the Strategic Approach relating to initiatives for endangered salmon populations and believed that the exchange of information sought by NASCO might be achieved by developing guidance on reporting on this aspect under each of the three focus areas: management of fisheries; habitat protection and restoration; and aquaculture and related activities. The Group did consider that the stock categories used in the NASCO rivers database

were now out-dated and that consideration should be given to reviewing these in the future. The Review Group felt that consideration might be given to including the goals and key issues relating to initiatives for endangered salmon populations under the other challenges if the Strategic Approach is revised in the future.

- 5.10 The Review Group recommends that the Council seek additional feedback on these challenges at the Special Session to be held at the 2011 Annual Meeting with a view to updating the Strategic Approach.

6. Reporting and Evaluation of Reports and recommendations for the next reporting cycle

- 6.1 The Review Group considered document NS(11)3 (Annex 4) which provided a review of the process used for reporting and evaluation of the reports. This had probably been the most comprehensive review of Atlantic salmon conservation efforts of all Parties ever conducted. The Parties should be congratulated for their willingness to put their conservation work before an international jury which had been a brave step. This document concluded that, with some adjustments, the Focus Area Review process should serve NASCO well in the future, but it would benefit from more consistency in reporting and a much greater focus on outcomes. Some streamlining should make the work of submission less onerous and the development of Guidelines on all three focus areas (fisheries management, habitat and aquaculture) in the first cycle should assist in the preparation of future Implementation Plans and FARs and their evaluation. The issues raised in document NS(11)3 would need to be addressed in any future reporting cycle.
- 6.2 The Review Group considers that the first cycle of reporting under the ‘Next Steps’ process had created a sound basis for assessing the measures being taken in accordance with NASCO’s agreements and had highlighted where additional actions are needed. It had led to a valuable exchange of information among the jurisdictions. While the first cycle of reporting had focused on the process, the Review Group agreed that the next cycle should build on the strong foundation that has been laid and focus on: changes since the last reporting; measurable progress towards agreed objectives; and furthering information exchange.
- 6.3 In the next cycle of reporting, the Group recommends streamlining the process so as to reduce the reporting burden, avoid duplication and focus the reports and reviews on information and analysis to further NASCO’s objectives of conserving, restoring, enhancing and rationally managing salmon stocks in the North Atlantic. The Group believes that it would assist the streamlining of future reporting if templates were developed to facilitate the development of consistent plans and reports and the possibility of electronic reporting should be considered. This work could be conducted by the Working Group recommended in paragraph 6.5 below. The Group considers that the Implementation Plans are the key document in the next reporting cycle in which each jurisdiction should describe the activities and actions it intends to undertake over a five year period. The second round of Implementation Plans should place greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of activities and describe clearly identifiable measurable outcomes and timescales. In developing updated Implementation Plans it is envisaged that jurisdictions will use their existing plans as a starting point and involvement of NGOs and other stakeholders is encouraged. The

findings from the first round of reviews should be taken into account in developing updated Implementation Plans. The Review Group recommends that these updated Implementation Plans should be subjected to a critical review since these plans will set the stage for activities and reporting for a five year period. The Group recommends that any plan that is not sufficiently specific should be returned to the jurisdiction for further drafting. It is proposed that each year the jurisdictions should provide a report identifying the status of actions within their plan as well as available data on monitoring the effectiveness of those actions. A review of the Annual Reports should be conducted to assess if the commitments in the plan have been fulfilled and whether progress has been made towards achievement of the stated objectives. The Council may wish to consider if presentation of these reports should be made in Special Sessions or during the Council sessions. Consideration should be given as to whether these annual reports should be reviewed by a Review Group and, if so, how frequently.

- 6.4 The Review Group also recommends that there should be a new cycle of Focus Area Reports but that these should be developed around specific themes e.g. during the year when the focus area is habitat protection and restoration the theme might be an exchange of information on fish passage issues. Reports may be solicited from jurisdictions and could be presented during the Special Session.
- 6.5 While the Review Group considers that the suggestions made in paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4 above provide a framework for future reporting there is a need to further develop these concepts and it recommends that the Council establish a Working Group to undertake this task and report back to the 2012 Annual Meeting. The Review Group recommends that, in the light of the experience from the first reporting cycle, the Terms of Reference for this Working Group should be as follows:
- (a) Develop new guidelines for the preparation of Implementation Plans, drawing on document NSTF(06)10 but with greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation and including criteria for acceptability, and guidelines for the preparation of Annual Reports. These guidelines should describe the content and format of these reports, the timing for submission of these reports, and the timing and process for distribution of these reports;
 - (b) Develop a process for the review of Implementation Plans and Annual Reports including the criteria to be used for the reviews, the timing of the reviews, the composition of the Review Groups, and arrangements for reporting on the reviews;
 - (c) Develop a schedule for the development and review of Implementation Plans, submission and review of the Annual Reports, and planning for and conduct of theme-based FAR Special Sessions.
- 6.6 The Review Group should report its findings to the Council at the 2012 Annual Meeting. At this meeting the findings of the external performance review will also be presented and the Council should then agree on arrangements for future reporting which could commence with the development and review of Implementation Plans in 2012/2013.

7. Identification of any additional areas to be addressed in meeting NASCO's challenges

- 7.1 The Review Group noted that in accordance with the Strategic Approach the Council had included an item entitled 'New or emerging opportunities for, or threats to, salmon conservation and management' to allow for feedback from the Parties, the NGOs and ICES. The Review Group recognised that climate change poses real challenges for salmon management that may require management approaches to be more flexible and adaptive to changes that may be difficult to predict. The Group was advised that, in Norway, the scientific committee has been requested to review the challenges for salmon management posed by climate change and there will be contributions at the 'Salmon Summit' in October on this topic. The Review Group recommends that the Council might, in the first instance, consider holding a Special Session on this topic in the future to allow for information exchange.
- 7.2 The Review Group noted that following the withdrawal of Iceland in response to the severe economic situation in that country, valuable information on the scientific and management issues was no longer available to NASCO. The Review Group recognised that the loss of Iceland from NASCO is a challenge as important information is no longer available to the Organization. The Review Group recommends that the Council ask that the President and Secretary engage in discussions with the former Head of Delegation for Iceland to keep him informed of the work of NASCO.

8. Consistency of the 'Next Steps' process with UN General Assembly Resolution 61/105

- 8.1 The Review Group's Terms of Reference note that during implementation of the recommendations in the Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps', the United Nations' General Assembly had adopted Resolution 61/105 entitled 'Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments'. This Resolution, (hereinafter referred to as UNGA Resolution 61/105), includes recommendations concerning the performance of regional and sub-regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements and the Council, therefore, agreed that the Review Group should review the consistency of the 'Next Steps' process with UNGA Resolution 61/105, and identify any further actions that might be required in accordance with the relevant provisions of this Resolution relating to RFMOs.
- 8.2 The Review Group considered document, NS(11)4, which noted that NASCO has also already undertaken a very open performance review of its work and will be conducting a further external review after reviewing the 'Next Steps' process. Through the 'Next Steps' process, NASCO has rapidly implemented major changes to further increase its transparency and inclusivity, consistent with UNGA Resolution 61/105. Furthermore, NASCO has adopted the Precautionary Approach, and has either adapted its existing resolutions and agreements, or developed new ones, and has taken actions that are consistent with an Ecosystem Approach. The Group noted that while NASCO appears to have taken actions consistent with those described for

RFMOs in UNGA Resolution 61/105, the Terms of Reference for the external performance review include an assessment of the performance of NASCO against the objectives set out in its Convention and other relevant international instruments addressing the conservation and management of aquatic living resources including UNGA Resolution 61/105.

9. Consideration of the need to amend the NASCO Convention

9.1 Mr Poupard (NGOs) indicated that he had been requested by the NGO Group to raise the issue of possible amendments to the Convention. He advised the Group that all the accredited NGOs to NASCO supported the views he would express with the exception of the Salmon Net Fishing Association of Scotland, which felt that NASCO had successfully achieved its objectives and there was no longer a need for international cooperation on salmon matters. However, all the other accredited NGOs strongly supported NASCO and the need for enhanced international cooperation in future. He indicated that in 2004, the NGOs had proposed amending the Convention but this approach was not supported by the Parties. The NGOs are, however, aware that other RFMO's have done so with a view to meeting their obligations under UN and other international instruments. The reason for amending the NASCO Convention would be to improve salmon conservation. For example, he suggested that the ICES advice is clear with regard to mixed stock fisheries and yet these fisheries still exist in a number of homewater jurisdictions and it is recognised that there are difficult socio-economic issues related to these fisheries. If there was a mechanism to enforce NASCO's guidelines this might assist jurisdictions in achieving NASCO's goals. He referred to EU Directives and it was indicated that while these are binding it is a matter for the Member States to decide the means to implement them. He suggested this model might work with regard to NASCO's agreements.

9.2 The NGOs tabled a draft NGO position paper, NS(11)7 (Annex 5) which contained a range of possible changes that might be made to the Convention. The major issue concerned how to make NASCO's agreements more enforceable. Mr Poupard indicated that informal consultations suggested that some of these proposed changes may not be needed as they are already covered by the Convention. It was agreed that the Chairman of the NGOs will liaise with the NASCO Secretariat before finalising any proposals for changes to the Convention which could then be presented at the Council meeting in June. It was noted that the TORs for the external review would include consideration of the 'Next Steps' review so the NGOs' views would be available to the external review panel.

10. Proposals for TORs, criteria and budget for an external performance review

10.1 At its 2010 Annual Meeting the Council had agreed TORs, CNL(10)48, for an external performance review of NASCO that would assess the performance of NASCO since 1983 against the objectives set out in its Convention and other relevant international instruments addressing the conservation and management of aquatic living resources, taking into account *inter alia* the NASCO 'Next Steps' process and the criteria associated with UN Resolution 61/105. The TORs propose that the Review Panel should comprise three internationally recognized external experts and any additional individuals to facilitate the work of the Panel will be agreed at the 2011

Annual Meeting. The NASCO Secretariat will provide logistical support to the Review Panel.

- 10.2 With regard to a budget for external review, the Secretary advised the Group that the projected costs would need to be included in the proposed 2012 budget, which is likely to show a significant increase due to the need to include sums for recruitment of a new Secretary and his own retirement from NASCO.
- 10.3 The Review Group discussed possible composition of the external review Panel and asked that the Secretary contact organizations such as FAO and the UN Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) with regard to seeking nominees to serve on the panel. The Group recommends that the third expert should be a fisheries scientist, with management experience, and having no previous involvement with NASCO. It was agreed that the Secretary contact a scientific organization such as PICES to seek a third nominee. The Group considers that as this is an external review it is not appropriate for representatives of the NASCO Parties or NGOs to serve on the panel. The Review Group noted that the TORs contain an annex with criteria that might be used by the external Review Panel. However, it was noted that these had been developed for use by the tuna RFMOs and included elements that were not relevant to NASCO including those relating to the special requirements of developing States. There were also elements that related to human and financial resources that are already addressed annually by the Finance and Administration Committee. The Review Group, therefore, recommends that the President and Secretary develop draft TORs for the external review, taking into account document CNL(10)48 and drawing on those used by other RFMOs as appropriate, and including criteria appropriate to NASCO. The Council will review and agree TORs at the 2011 Annual Meeting.

11. NASCO's meeting schedule and structure

- 11.1 The Review Group discussed a number of options for changes to the structure, frequency and location of NASCO's Annual Meetings so as to achieve efficiency gains. It was recognised that this is a complex matter and the Secretariat was asked to prepare a paper looking at the costs and benefits of different meeting options and changes to the agenda for consideration by the Council.

12. Response from ISFA on future Liaison with NASCO

- 12.1 The Chair indicated that at the NASCO/ISFA Liaison Group meeting on 18 and 19 March there had been discussions about the evolution of the Liaison Group and a number of options had been considered for the future role of NASCO in relation to salmon farming. ISFA had agreed to consider these options further and report back to the Review Group. The Liaison Group had also suggested that the NGOs and industry should be involved in the development of any subsequent FARs on aquaculture and related activities. At that meeting ISFA had also stated its commitment to the BMP Guidance. The Secretary advised the Group that ISFA had responded and he read out the response which included the following statements:

- The International Salmon Farmers Association (ISFA) values the liaison that the Salmon Farming industry has maintained with the Parties of NASCO since 1999.

- ISFA remains committed to the Guiding Principles for Cooperation between NASCO and its Contracting Parties and the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry SLG(01)11.
- ISFA looks forward to the outcome of the NASCO ‘Next Steps’ process and welcomes recommendations from and direct discussions with the Parties regarding the future scope and structure of the Liaison Group.
- ISFA members share a vested interest in and contribute to the conservation of wild salmon.
- ISFA expects the Parties to engage their respective ISFA members in the development of their Delegation policies and positions regarding salmon.
- ISFA welcomes the offer to engage directly with the Parties through a seat at the NASCO Annual Meeting consistent with that afforded to the NGOs.

12.2 The Review Group was aware that the discussions at the Liaison Group meeting had concerned possible options for the evolution of the Liaison Group and not a formal offer to ISFA. The Review Group noted that following consideration of the aquaculture FAR Review Group’s report, the Liaison Group had proposed that NASCO Parties should carefully consider the extent of NASCO’s role with respect to aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics. The Review Group had lengthy discussions about this role and various views were expressed. It agreed that before responding to ISFA on the matter of future liaison, which it welcomes, the Council should resolve the future role envisaged for NASCO on this issue, as soon as possible, with initial exchange and discussion at the 2011 Annual Meeting. The final decision would need to take into account the findings from the external performance review. An initial discussion document on this topic will be prepared for consideration at the Annual Meeting.

13. Arrangements for the Special Session

13.1 The Review Group agreed that it would finalise, by correspondence, the arrangements for the presentation at the Special Session to be held during the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting.

14. Any other business

14.1 There was no other business.

15. Report of the Meeting

15.1 The Review Group agreed a report of its meeting.

16. Close of the meeting

16.1 The Chair thanked the members of the Review Group for their contributions and closed the meeting.

List of Participants

Mary Colligan (Chair)	NOAA Fisheries, Gloucester, Massachusetts, US
Marco D'Ambrosio	European Commission, Brussels, Belgium
Arne Eggereide	Directorate for Nature Management, Trondheim, Norway
Alan Gray	European Commission, Brussels, Belgium
Steinar Hermansen	Ministry of Environment, Oslo, Norway
Peter Hutchinson	NASCO, Edinburgh, UK
Patricia Kurkul	NOAA Fisheries, Gloucester, Massachusetts, US
Richard Nadeau	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Quebec, Canada
Brett Norton	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Ted Potter	CEFAS, Lowestoft, UK
Chris Poupard	Chairman of NASCO's NGOs, Truro, Cornwall, UK
Nicole Ricci	US Department of State, Washington DC, US
Rory Saunders	NOAA Fisheries, Orono, Maine, US
Sue Scott	Atlantic Salmon Federation, St Andrews, New Brunswick, Canada
Boyce Thorne-Miller	Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance, Maryland, US
Malcolm Windsor	NASCO, Edinburgh, UK

NS(11)5

Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Consideration of the Terms of Reference
4. Overview of NASCO's work to date and the 'Next Steps' Process
5. Implementation of the Strategic Approach and recommendations for future actions
6. Reporting and Evaluation of Reports and recommendations for the next reporting cycle
7. Identification of any additional areas to be addressed in meeting NASCO's challenges
8. Consistency of the 'Next Steps' process with UN General Assembly Resolution 61/105
9. Consideration of the need to amend the NASCO Convention
10. Proposals for TORs, criteria and budget for an external performance review
11. NASCO's meeting schedule and structure
12. Response from ISFA on future Liaison with NASCO
13. Arrangements for the Special Session
14. Any other business
15. Report of the Meeting
16. Close of the meeting

NS(11)2

Progress in Implementing the Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps'

1. Introduction

Commencing in 2004, NASCO undertook a comprehensive and critical review of its work. This review, called the 'Next Steps' for NASCO, identified the challenges facing NASCO in the management and conservation of wild Atlantic salmon and ways to address these; reviewed the management and organizational structure of NASCO; and considered the procedural aspects of NASCO and the relationship between the Organization, its Parties and stakeholders. This work was conducted by a Working Group comprising representatives of the Parties and the NGOs and involved open consultation meetings with stakeholders in Europe and North America. It resulted in the adoption, in 2005, of a Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps', CNL(05)49, (hereinafter referred to as the 'Strategic Approach').

The stated vision in this Strategic Approach is that *'NASCO will pursue the restoration of abundant Atlantic salmon stocks throughout the species' range with the aim of providing the greatest possible benefits to society and individuals'*. To achieve this vision, the Strategic Approach indicates that NASCO will: be committed to the measures and agreements it develops and actively review progress with implementation plans; increase its effectiveness and efficiency by ensuring that it uses the best available knowledge to inform its actions and by actively seeking to identify and respond to new opportunities and threats; ensure transparency in its operations and enhance the use of NGO and stakeholder knowledge and experience; and increase its visibility and raise its profile in international, national and local communities by developing its communications and public relations activities.

The Strategic Approach contains **decisions** in relation to three main areas:

- implementation, commitment and accountability;
- transparency and inclusivity; and
- raising NASCO's profile.

Many of the decisions in the Strategic Approach were identified for immediate implementation while others, requiring further consideration, were referred to a Task Force and decisions in relation to these elements were adopted by the Council in 2006.

The Strategic Approach also identifies the **challenges** facing NASCO in the management and conservation of wild Atlantic salmon, highlighting areas which would benefit from international cooperation. For each challenge, the Strategic Approach identifies the goal and key issues. The primary challenges identified are:

- managing salmon fisheries;
- social and economic aspects of Atlantic salmon;
- research on salmon at sea (including by-catch of salmon);
- habitat protection and restoration;

- aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics (including *Gyrodactylus salaris*);
- initiatives for endangered species.

The ‘Next Steps’ Review Group has been asked, *inter alia*, to review the ‘Next Steps’ process, highlighting what this process had delivered, where it had worked well and making recommendations for any actions required to ensure that all the recommendations in the Strategic Approach have been implemented. In this review, a summary of the actions taken in relation to each **decision** and each **key issue** in the Strategic Approach is presented.

2. Progress to Date on the Decisions in the Strategic Approach

Progress to date in implementing the twenty-three decisions in the Strategic Approach is detailed in the paragraphs below and summarized in Table 1 on page 9 of this report.

Decision 1: The Council will keep its agreements under regular review and adapt them, in the light of new information as to their effectiveness.

In 1998, NASCO and its Parties agreed to adopt and apply a Precautionary Approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of salmon in order to protect the resource and preserve the environments in which it lives. As part of the process of applying the Precautionary Approach, NASCO reviewed its existing agreements, adapted them where required, and developed new ones (e.g. the Habitat Plan of Action). As a consequence, NASCO’s main agreements were all developed or reviewed in the period 2001 - 2004. A clear message arising from the 2005 consultation meetings was that NASCO had developed good agreements but there was a need for further progress with their implementation (see Decision 20 below).

During the review of the FARs (2008 - 2010), guidelines relating to the management of salmon fisheries, CNL(09)43, and to habitat protection, restoration and enhancement, CNL(10)51, were developed as a way of providing clarification for NASCO’s agreements. These guidelines should assist jurisdictions in making further progress in implementing NASCO’s agreements and guidelines, provide a basis for exchange of information, and assist in the preparation and review of subsequent FARs. Similarly, Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks, SLG(09)5, (hereinafter referred to as ‘BMP Guidance’), developed through the Liaison Group is intended to supplement the Williamsburg Resolution, and to assist in the management of salmon aquaculture and in the development of future NASCO Implementation Plans and aquaculture FARs. Thus, NASCO’s principal agreements have all recently been reviewed and new guidance developed. The reviews did not highlight any fundamental flaws or significant shortcomings but steps were taken to introduce improved, transparent reporting procedures and to supplement the agreements with guidelines. It is anticipated that this process of reviewing the agreements and guidelines will continue in the next cycle of reporting and review.

Decision 2: The Council will explore the feasibility of arranging a Ministerial Conference to strengthen the Parties' commitment to the conservation of wild salmon through the NASCO Convention.

The Council has not arranged a Ministerial Conference. The 'Next Steps' Task Force concluded that it would not be feasible to arrange such an event at that time (2006) and that clear objectives would be needed if such an event was planned in the future, e.g. to launch the Implementation Plans or the SALSEA programme, both of which have now occurred. However, actions have been taken to improve commitment to NASCO's agreements (see Decision 20 below). It was noted by the Task Force that there might also be opportunities to raise salmon-related issues when two or more Ministers meet.

Decision 3: The homewater Parties will inform the relevant NASCO Commission of the management measures established or envisaged and their expected effects.

One of the key issues identified in the Strategic Approach with regard to management of salmon fisheries was the need to explore opportunities to improve the fairness and balance in the management of homewater and distant-water fisheries. The Task Force had proposed that this element of reporting should be included under the annual reporting on the Implementation Plans. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had confirmed that this arrangement would be adequate to allow it to assess fairness and balance in management of fisheries and the Council adopted this approach to reporting. The Implementation Plans, FARs and the annual reports on Implementation Plans contain information on management measures in homewaters. However, it should be noted that the annual reports do not provide information on the expected effects of the measures and the FAR Review Groups have all concluded that most FARs generally failed to report adequately on the effectiveness of management measures. Subsequent reporting might need to be better focused on this aspect.

Decision 4: The Commissions of NASCO will consider whether regulatory measures for fisheries could be adopted, and scientific advice from ICES sought, on a biennial or multi-year basis.

The Task Force recognised that it would be beneficial to have multi-year regulatory measures, but that this may or may not be accompanied by a reduction in the frequency of scientific advice because of the importance of maintaining the scientific databases and ensuring availability of information on any change in abundance that would require changes to the measure. One of the reasons for seeking multi-annual advice would be to make more time available to the ICES Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS) to focus on other issues including factors affecting marine survival.

Since 2005, all requests to ICES have sought annual catch options or alternative management advice on a multi-annual basis for each Commission area. Three year regulatory measures were adopted by the West Greenland Commission in both 2006 (2006 – 2008) and 2009 (2009 – 2011). In the second and third years of these measures, a Framework of Indicators (FWI) is used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual catch advice. In the event that no significant change is detected, the multi-annual measure continues to apply. A significant change would trigger a request for a full assessment and new catch advice.

For the North-East Atlantic Commission area, while multi-annual advice is provided, only initial discussions have been held on developing a risk framework for the Faroese fishery. Furthermore, ICES has indicated that none of the available indicator data sets would meet the criteria for inclusion in a FWI, so the only indication of a change in the status of stocks would be provided by a full assessment of the NEAC stock complexes. In the absence of a FWI, decisions concerning the Faroese fishery have continued to be adopted annually based on a full assessment of stock status, despite the availability of multi-annual catch advice (not quantitative). However, the Council has continued to ask ICES to investigate opportunities to develop a FWI or alternative methods that could be used to identify any significant change in previously provided multi-annual management advice.

In years when the FWI indicates no change in the stock status that would trigger a full assessment, ICES does not need to formulate catch advice for the West Greenland and North American Commissions. However, it does continue to develop information on stock status which is included in the WGNAS report but not the ACOM advice. Consultations suggest that the adoption of multi-annual regulatory measures for the West Greenland fishery has not greatly reduced the workload of the WGNAS but ICES has been able to provide very useful information on biological characteristics of salmon and analysis of historical tagging data, developed through Study Groups reporting to the WGNAS. These initiatives were supported by the IASRB.

Decision 5: The Council will continue and expand, as necessary, existing efforts to incorporate social and economic factors into its work.

In 2003 and 2004, NASCO held Technical Workshops on the social and economic aspects of the wild Atlantic salmon. These meetings resulted in the development of: a listing of all the elements making up the wild Atlantic salmon's economic value and impacts; broad guidelines on the type of economic analysis that would be needed to produce estimates of value and the data required; and guidelines for incorporating social and economic factors in decision under the Precautionary Approach, CNL(04)57. Under the Strategic Approach the key issues identified in relation to the social and economic aspects of the wild Atlantic salmon are: ensuring that appropriate emphasis is given to the social and economic aspects of the wild Atlantic salmon; strengthening the socio-economic data as a basis for managing salmon; integrating socio-economic aspects in decision-making processes; and disseminating socio-economic information to ensure due weight is given to the salmon compared to other important commercial and public interests.

In order to make progress on the issues identified in the Strategic Approach, the Council established a Working Group which met in 2008 and which noted that the collection, analysis and integration of socio-economic information to aid management is far behind the collection, analysis and integration of biological information. The Group had, therefore, started to develop an international collation of available social and economic information on the wild Atlantic salmon so as to allow the wild Atlantic salmon to be assessed at its rightful social, economic and cultural levels. This work has continued by developing data on social and economic values associated with wild Atlantic salmon, a format for presentation of socio-economic information on the website and proposals for a Special Session on social and economic aspects to be held in 2012. This work is on-going. It has been noted by each of the FAR Review Groups that limited information has been presented in the FARs on how social and economic issues are included in management decisions and a well-planned Special Session may provide an excellent forum for a more in depth exchange of information on this

subject. The collation of social and economic information is also one element of the ‘State of the Salmon’ report envisaged under the Public Relations Strategy (see Decision 15 below).

Decision 6: The Council will include an item on its agenda entitled “New or emerging opportunities for, or threats to, salmon conservation and management” and request ICES and the NGOs to provide relevant information.

Since 2006, the Council’s agenda has included an item entitled ‘New or emerging opportunities for, or threats to, salmon conservation and management’ to provide an opportunity for any relevant information to be presented by the Parties, the NGOs and ICES (the requests to ICES since 2005 have also asked that relevant information be provided). A wide range of both threats (e.g. near shore and offshore energy developments, resistance of sea lice to treatments, and by-catch) and opportunities (e.g. restoration initiatives) have been noted. Where new or emerging threats or opportunities are identified, it will be important that NASCO and its Parties respond effectively.

Decision 7: Stakeholder input will be solicited on standing or *Ad hoc* working groups as appropriate.

The conditions governing NGO participation were greatly revised in 2006 and observer status now applies to all plenary sessions of the Council and the Commissions, whether at the Annual Meeting or at inter-sessional meetings, and the Council and Commissions may solicit NGO and other stakeholder input to meetings of working groups and other subsidiary bodies. The NGOs now participate in all NASCO meetings (other than the Finance and Administration Committee and Heads of Delegations meetings) including those of the Implementation Plan, FAR and ‘Next Steps’ Review Groups, the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (IASRB) and its Scientific Advisory Group (SAG), the ISFA/NASCO Liaison Group (see Decision 8 below) and the Steering Committee for the 2011 Salmon Summit. NASCO has also sought broader stakeholder involvement in meetings of its working groups. For example, representatives of the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission (IBSFC) participated in the NEAC *Gyrodactylus salaris* Working Group meetings and representatives of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) have attended NASCO’s Annual Meetings. There is, of course, a very broad range of stakeholder interests represented within NASCO’s 33 accredited NGOs.

Decision 8: The Council will continue to support broader stakeholder participation in the Liaison Group between NASCO and the North Atlantic salmon farming industry.

The issue of participation by its accredited NGOs in the meetings of the Liaison Group was raised on a number of occasions by NASCO representatives. A welcome development is that since 2007, the industry has agreed to such representation and conditions governing this participation have been developed, SLG(07)12. NGO representatives also participated in the work of the Liaison Group’s Task Force.

Decision 9: The Council will periodically conduct stakeholder dialogue meetings to improve outreach and education with regard to NASCO and its work and to seek information on ways to continue to improve the Organization's work.

A NASCO/ICES Dialogue meeting on salmon was held in Edinburgh in 1993. In 2005, as part of the 'Next Steps' review, the Council held stakeholder consultation (dialogue) meetings in London, UK and Portland, Maine, USA. These meetings were welcomed by stakeholders and provided valuable feedback on NASCO's work. The recommendations arising from these meetings (see CNL(05)15) were taken into account by the 'Next Steps' Working Group in developing its recommendations. One key issue identified by the stakeholders was research on salmon at sea. No subsequent dialogue meetings have been held and the Council may wish to consider if it wishes to hold further meetings in 2012 or 2013. The purpose of these meetings might be to report on developments since 2005, including the findings from the SALSEA Programme.

Decision 10: The Council will encourage accredited NGOs and, as appropriate, other stakeholders to continue to improve their cooperation with NASCO.

NASCO currently has 33 accredited NGOs that make a valuable contribution to its work. The Council has welcomed this involvement and has modified its protocols to provide greater opportunities for contributions from, and engagement with, its NGOs. The most recent amendment to these conditions was in 2006. In summary, under the revised conditions, the accredited NGO Chairperson and/or designee can make opening statements at the meetings of the Council and Commissions, the NGO Chairperson and/or designee can contribute to discussions on agenda items before and after the debate by the Parties (in practice the Council decided that such interventions could be made on all agenda items other than finance and administrative matters), and all NGOs can contribute to sessions designated as Special Sessions. The NGOs also participate in the work of the IASRB and its SAG, in all inter-sessional NASCO meetings including the Implementation Plan and Focus Area Report Review Groups, and the Steering Committee for the 2011 Salmon Summit. The NGOs have also played a central role in the Public Relations Group (until 2010 this was Chaired by the NGO Chairman), in developing NASCO's media strategy and in contributing funding to the SALSEA Programme. NASCO has welcomed the increased involvement of the NGOs in its work. The following statement by the NGO Chairman on the NASCO website perhaps highlights the cooperation that exists:

'The NGOs have worked successfully together with NASCO Parties to facilitate much greater transparency in its work, notably the requirement for each jurisdiction to produce an implementation plan which now creates public accountability for wild salmon management around the North Atlantic. Close co-operation and constructive criticism are essential to help implement both vital research and practical salmon management measures aimed at conserving and restoring this iconic species'.

Decision 11: Initial discussion of all agenda items will occur within the Council and Commissions. For agenda items that are discussed at Heads of Delegations meetings, the decision and rationale will be provided during discussion of those items at the full Council and Commission meetings.

This Decision was implemented in 2005 and has applied since. Most agenda items for either the Council or Commission meetings are no longer discussed in Heads of Delegations

meetings. When substantive discussions do occur, the nature of the discussions is summarized by the President in the plenary sessions before a final decision is taken. It is, however, to some extent a balance between being transparent and working as efficiently as possible.

Decision 12: The Council will review its relationships with other international organizations and explore areas of mutual interest.

This topic was reviewed by the Council in 2006, CNL(06)15. A review prepared by the Secretariat had noted that NASCO's broad remit means that there are many potential organizations with which it could, and should, cooperate subject to budgetary considerations. NASCO has established a good working relationship with ICES, which is subject to a Memorandum of Understanding. Improvements have been made to the timeliness and presentation of the scientific advice, through consultations with ICES. At the time of the 2006 review, cooperation was already underway with the RFBs in the Baltic Sea and North Pacific through, for example, joint meetings. In addition, it was suggested that NASCO should continue to participate in the meetings of the North Atlantic Regional Fishery Management Organizations (NARFMOs) and the FAO hosted Regional Fishery Bodies Secretariats Network (RSN) meetings and, where appropriate the annual meetings of other RFBs (e.g. NEAFC, NAFO) and meetings of the FAO Committee on Fisheries and the United Nations (UN) fisheries meetings. Furthermore, where specific issues arise, it was suggested that NASCO should seek cooperation from other relevant international organizations so as to share information on common problems, raise the profile of NASCO with these other international organizations, address problems of fisheries for other species affecting Atlantic salmon and share experience of working methods. The Council agreed to this approach and accordingly the Secretariat has continued to participate in the NARFMO and the RSN meetings. Following consultations between NASCO and NEAFC, additional information on pelagic fisheries was made available to ICES to assist in estimating the by-catch of salmon in these fisheries in the North-East Atlantic. It is hoped that the 'Salmon Summit' scheduled for October 2011 will involve participation from, and presentations by, scientists and managers from the North Pacific and Baltic areas. Informal consultations have also been held with the Oslo and Paris Commission (OSPAR) on issues of mutual interest. The European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) is represented at NASCO's Annual Meetings.

Decision 13: The Council will create a Public Relations Group.

One of the central themes of the Strategic Approach is the need for NASCO to better promote its work and achievements. The Council, therefore, established a Public Relations Group to develop a clear public relations strategy aimed at enhancing NASCO's profile and ensuring the most effective publicity for its work and achievements. This Group has met only once and its report was presented to the Council in 2007, CNL(07)16. However, the Council has struggled to some extent with identification of the messages, its target audience and resource availability. A Sub-Group has met during the Annual Meetings and worked by correspondence to further develop a media strategy and press releases.

Decision 14: The Council will seek input from NASCO's accredited NGOs to the development of the Organization's media strategy.

The NGOs, particularly those in North America, have much expertise and experience in public relations work and they have supported a partnership with NASCO through the Public Relations Group and its Sub-Group. Two representatives of the NGOs participated in the work of the Public Relations Group and until 2010, its Sub-Group was chaired by the Chairman of NASCO's NGOs. The Parties have had many discussions about the appropriate scope of a media strategy for the Organization but has made significant progress in redesigning the NASCO and IASRB websites.

Decision 15: NASCO will develop and implement a clear public relations strategy, including the establishment of a public relations group, aimed at enhancing its profile and ensuring the most effective publicity for its work and achievements.

In late 2005 and early 2006, a pilot study to raise NASCO's profile was conducted with the involvement of Porter Novelli, a public relations firm. The objectives of this study were to stimulate media interest in NASCO and its work. The experience from newspaper articles was that while they no doubt increased public awareness of NASCO's work, some were inaccurate (despite a large amount of factual information being made available to the journalists concerned) and could damage NASCO's reputation. Furthermore, the journalists tended to focus on particular aspects, where there might be conflict, such as impacts of aquaculture and not the bigger picture of the wide range of threats to the resource that NASCO is addressing. Porter Novelli had also made some recommendations for developing a longer term media strategy for NASCO and these were considered by the Public Relations Group (see Decision 13 above).

The main tasks identified by the Public Relations Group in developing a public relations strategy are: to identify key messages; to identify target audiences; to identify products and methods for delivering the message; to identify educational programmes with a view to initially establishing a database of such programmes on the basis of information provided by the Parties; and to establish a network of media contacts within the Parties and the NGOs and to contract, on a part-time, flexible basis, an information officer with good public relations skills.

There has been progress on several of these elements, through cooperation between the NGOs and Secretariat without employing an information officer. For example, the PR Group provided some examples of key messages and target audiences and a media fact sheet has been developed and is available on the NASCO website. The database of educational programmes has been established and links to these programmes' websites have been included on the NASCO website. The Public Relations Group believed that NASCO should develop an annual 'state of salmon populations' report and undertake a major enhancement of the Organization's websites. Both the NASCO and IASRB websites have been expanded and enhanced, and very favourable comments have been received. Monitoring indicates that both sites have attracted a good level of interest. It is intended that the rivers database will be available on the website by June 2011 so as to include an interactive element to the site. Progress towards developing the social and economic elements of the 'State of the Salmon' report is being made.

Decision 16: The Secretariat will engage professional expertise to produce media products and to develop a more relevant, attractive, informative and interactive website.

The Public Relations Group identified two main products that would be used for enhancing NASCO's profile and awareness of its work. These are the development of an annual 'State of the Salmon' report and a major enhancement of the Organization's websites. As indicated above, the websites have been enhanced and expanded and progress is being made on the social and economic elements of a 'State of the Salmon' report, but not the other elements.

Decision	Status	Comments
1: Review and adapt agreements	Implemented	Agreements adapted or developed during 2001 - 2004. During the FAR reviews; new guidelines developed in 2009 and 2010 to assist implementation
2: Ministerial Conference	Not implemented	Not held but steps taken to improve commitment and accountability (see Decision 20).
3: Homewater management measures	Implemented	Information provided in Implementation Plans, FARs (subject to review) and annual reports on Implementation Plans
4: Multi-annual regulatory measures	Partially implemented	Achieved since 2006 for WGC; lack of a risk assessment framework and FWI an issue in NEAC.
5: Social & economic factors	Partially implemented	Working Group established; international collation commenced with much new data collected. Special Session in 2012.
6: New or emerging threats & opportunities	Implemented	Included on Council agenda and request to ICES annually since 2006. ICES, NGOs and Parties provide information.
7: Stakeholder input to Working Groups	Implemented	NGOs involved in all Working Group meetings.
8: Participation in Liaison Group	Implemented	NGO participation in Liaison Group since 2007 and more recently in its Task Force.
9: Stakeholder dialogue meetings	Not implemented	None held since 2005 but greater NGO involvement in NASCO's work and websites greatly enhanced.
10: NGO cooperation	Implemented	NGO involvement in NASCO greatly enhanced including valuable support provided to SALSEA programme
11: Initial discussions in plenary	Implemented	Implemented in 2005; important that when discussions are held in Heads of Delegations a clear rationale is given
12: Relationship with other IGOs	Implemented	Reviewed in 2006 and effective. IGOs participate in NASCO's Annual Meeting and Working Groups
13: Public Relations Group	Partially implemented	Established and recommendations developed in 2007. Sub-Group continuing the work. Websites greatly enhanced.
14: NGO input to media strategy	Implemented	NGOs participated in the PR Group and in the ongoing work of its Sub-Group
15: Public relations strategy	Partially implemented	Key elements identified and media fact sheet developed but further development required; no information officer appointed
16: Media products & website	Partially implemented	Major website enhancement complete; rivers database being included (June 2011) and work on 'State of Salmon' report has commenced
17: Educational programmes	Implemented	Database created, links established through NASCO website
18: Additional reports on NASCO's work	Implemented	Twenty-year review published; guidelines developed and published in several languages (targeted at managers)
19: Task Force	Implemented	Recommendations of Task Force on commitment, transparency, and inclusivity adopted by Council in 2006
20: Implementation Plans	Partially implemented	Most but not all jurisdictions have developed Plans and FARs
21: Reporting on achievement of objectives at Special Sessions	Implemented	<i>Ad Hoc</i> Review Group reports presented annually at Special Sessions since 2007 for open discussion
22: Establish <i>Ad Hoc</i> Groups	Implemented	Groups established to review Implementation Plans and FARs. First cycle will be completed in 2011
23: NGO input on all agenda items	Implemented	Achieved since 2006 with NGO input on all agenda items other than Finance and Administrative matters

Table 1: Summary of progress on each decision in the Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps'

The publication ‘NASCO’s Twenty-Year Milestones and Next Steps – A Vision for the Future’, printed in 2005, has been extremely well received and is considered a very useful summary of NASCO’s work and future challenges (see decision 18 below). It has been widely circulated and is available on the NASCO website. Similarly, the guidelines referred to in Decision 1 have been printed in brochure format and widely distributed and made available on the NASCO website.

Decision 17: NASCO will develop links with educational programmes and establish the means to achieve mutual benefits from such alignment.

The Public Relations Group recognised that while educational programmes have an important role in communicating with the public, NASCO does not have the resources to develop and deliver educational programmes. It noted, however, that there are some excellent educational programmes for Atlantic salmon around the North Atlantic and that there might be benefits from enhanced cooperation and information exchange among these programmes. NASCO might also wish to consider providing information, for example in relation to the SALSEA programme that could be incorporated into such programmes. The Council decided that, as a first step, the Parties, their relevant jurisdictions and the accredited NGOs be requested to provide information to the Secretariat on these educational programmes so that a database of information can be developed and made available on the NASCO website and links to these programmes established. This has been done (see <http://www.nasco.int/links.html>).

Decision 18: The Council will consider the need for additional reports to improve the public understanding of information relevant to NASCO’s activities.

As reported under Decision 16, the publication ‘NASCO’s Twenty-Year Milestones and Next Steps – A Vision for the Future’ is considered to provide a useful summary of NASCO’s work. It may be worth updating this document following the review of the ‘Next Steps’ process. Both the NASCO and IASRB websites provide background information on the life-cycle of the salmon, the issues facing the resource and the management actions being taken both internationally through NASCO and by individual jurisdictions. Following the FAR reviews, the guidelines referred to in Decision 1 above were adopted by the Council. These guidelines aim to assist the jurisdictions in making further progress in implementing NASCO’s agreements and guidelines; to provide for an exchange of information; to assist in the preparation of future FARs and their review; and to assist in the identification of what additional actions may be required. The guidelines are available on the NASCO website. They are not intended for the public but have been widely distributed including to managers, presumably increasing awareness of NASCO’s work. The fisheries management and habitat guidelines have been published by the Secretariat in booklet format in English and French and widely distributed. The intention was to do the same for the salmon farming BMP Guidance but the Liaison Group decided that the need to publish this Guidance should be revisited once the aquaculture and related activities FAR review process was completed. The fisheries management guidelines have also been translated into Russian.

Decision 19: The Council will create a Task Force representing the Heads of Delegations in order to further consider Council Decisions regarding implementation, commitment and accountability.

This Council did create a Task Force which met in 2006 and reported the same year to the Council. In the light of the Task Force’s recommendations the Council adopted Guidelines

for the Preparation of Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress, NSTF(06)10, decided on the structure and functioning of the *Ad hoc* Review Groups that would review both the Implementation Plans and FARs (although the process and timing used by the Review Groups has evolved from those originally envisaged by the Task Force), and agreed on new conditions to increase NGO participation in NASCO's meetings.

Decision 20: Each Party or relevant jurisdiction should develop an implementation plan for meeting the objectives of NASCO's agreements. Each Party or relevant jurisdiction should then report on steps taken pursuant to the Plan. These approaches should be evaluated after a trial period.

One clear message from the 'Next Steps' process was that the reporting arrangements existing at that time were not transparent, did not facilitate information exchange on best practice and did not facilitate challenging and critical review. New arrangements were, therefore, put in place. Implementation Plans, FARs and Annual Reports have been developed by most, but not all, jurisdictions, although not all of the Plans and FARs were submitted in time to be reviewed. The *Ad Hoc* Review Groups have highlighted where additional actions would be required to improve consistency with NASCO's agreements.

In addition, there are annual reports on all aspects of the Implementation Plans (since 2009 using a new format designed to ensure that the reporting burden could be minimized but well focused) so as to allow progress to be tracked. Under its TORs the 'Next Steps' Review Group has been asked to review the process used for reporting and evaluation of these reports and advise on any changes for the next reporting cycle. A separate report on this aspect has been prepared, NS(11)3.

Decision 21: Reporting to the Council on progress in achieving the objectives should be conducted in a Special Session so as to allow direct NGO involvement, greater opportunity for discussion, and critical review of the reports made by the Parties in implementation of agreements.

Special Sessions have been held annually since 2006 to allow for presentation of the Implementation Plans and FARs and the findings of the *Ad Hoc* Review Groups. The first round of this process will be completed in June 2011, with the presentation of the final report of the aquaculture and related activities FAR Review Group. A separate document on reporting and evaluation of reports has been prepared, NS(11)3.

Decision 22: The Council should establish an *Ad hoc* group to support the President in determining the conclusions of the Special Sessions at which progress reports on Implementation Plans have been presented and reviewed.

As indicated under Decision 20, *Ad Hoc* Review Groups have reviewed both the Implementation Plans and the FARs and the findings from these reviews have been presented at Special Sessions during the Annual Meetings. In practice, the Review Groups reviewed the FARs and presented their draft findings in one year but then submitted their final report, the following year. This allowed for thorough consideration of any feedback received during the Special Session and direct from the Parties.

Decision 23: The Council should seek ways to increase NGO involvement in its meetings by amending current NGO observer rules to provide discretion to the NASCO President and Commission Chairmen to recognise requests for the floor by observers on any agenda item under discussion before and after debate by the Parties on that item.

This has been achieved. See report under Decision 10 above.

3. Progress to Date on the Challenges in the Strategic Approach

Progress to date on each of the key issues for the challenges identified in the Strategic Approach is described in the paragraphs below and is summarized in Table 2 on pages 20 - 21 of this document. Where progress has already been described in relation to the Decisions (section 2 above), it is not described again here.

Challenge 1: Management of salmon fisheries

The goals for the management of salmon fisheries for NASCO and its Parties are to promote the diversity and abundance of salmon stocks and to maintain all stocks above their conservation limits.

Key issue 1: Maintain an effective prohibition on fishing for salmon beyond areas of fisheries jurisdiction

The NASCO Convention created an enormous ‘protected zone’ free of salmon fishing, in most areas of the North Atlantic beyond 12 nautical miles from the baselines. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Council acted quickly to address fishing for salmon in international waters in the North-East Atlantic by vessels registered to Panama and Poland. A combination of diplomatic action and cooperation to prevent landings appears to have addressed the problem. Measures were also taken to improve exchange of surveillance information and there have been no sightings since the early 1990s, although airborne surveillance is limited during the winter months.

Key issue 2: Further improve the ‘fairness’ and balance in management of distant-water fisheries

See progress report under Decision 3 above.

Key issue 3: Explore possibilities for longer-term regulatory measures

See progress report under Decision 4 above.

Key issue 4: Exchange information and transfer expertise and knowledge between Parties and between NGOs and the authorities

The ‘Next Steps’ process resulted in the introduction of comprehensive new reporting procedures intended to facilitate a transparent and meaningful exchange of information and greater NGO involvement. An enormous amount of information on how each jurisdiction manages its salmon fisheries is now available in the Implementation Plans and FARs, and an overview of this material has been produced. These plans and reports have been evaluated by Review Groups and have been made available on the NASCO website together with the

results of the evaluations. To assist jurisdictions make further progress in implementing NASCO's agreements and to provide a basis for exchange of information on more consistent approaches to managing fisheries, Guidelines for the Management of Salmon Fisheries were adopted in 2009. The NGOs participated in the Review Groups and can now contribute on all Council and Commission agenda items including those concerning establishment of regulatory measures.

Key issue 5: Further develop the knowledge basis for fisheries regulations

See comments in previous paragraph concerning reporting procedures and adoption of Guidelines for the Management of Salmon Fisheries. While progress has been made, not all jurisdictions have, as yet, established conservation limits and, where they have been established, it is clear from the ICES advice that many stocks are currently below these limits.

Challenge 2: Social and economic aspects of the Atlantic salmon

The goal for NASCO and its Parties on the social and economic aspects of the Atlantic salmon is to ensure that the salmon stocks provide the greatest possible benefits to society and individuals.

Key issue 1: Ensure that appropriate emphasis is given to the social and economic aspects of the Atlantic salmon

See Decision 5 above.

Key issue 2: Strengthen the socio-economic data as a basis for managing Atlantic salmon

See Decision 5 above.

Key issue 3: Integrate social and economic aspects and considerations in an open and transparent way into the decision-making processes within NASCO

See Decision 5 above. Through the Council's initiatives referred to in Decision 5 above, 'Guidelines for Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Decisions under the Precautionary Approach' were adopted in 2004 and the first international collation of social and economic information relating to Atlantic salmon is being developed. There has, however, been little exchange of information on how the Guidelines are used by the jurisdictions. Furthermore, each of the FAR Review Groups has highlighted the fact that limited information was provided on how social and economic factors are taken into account in management decisions. One of the aims of a Special Session on social and economic issues to be held in 2012 is to allow for an exchange among the Parties on their experiences of using the Guidelines, with a view to considering if further work is required on this aspect of NASCO's work.

Key issue 4: Disseminate information on the social and economic aspects of the wild Atlantic salmon in order to ensure that they are given due weight compared to other important commercial and public interests

See Decision 5 above. A Sub-Group is developing information for inclusion on the NASCO website and for inclusion in a 'State of the Salmon' report.

Challenge 3: Research on salmon at sea (including studies of by-catch of salmon)

The goal for NASCO and its Parties is to promote collaboration and cooperation on research into the causes of marine mortality of Atlantic salmon and the opportunities to counteract this mortality.

Key issue 1: Develop an effective fund-raising strategy and identify and target potential sponsors

The SALSEA Programme is a very major, innovative public/private research initiative that from modest 'pump-priming' funds from NASCO has resulted in more than £5 million being committed to research on salmon at sea. An effective fund-raising effort has allowed what is believed to be the single largest international research effort related to Atlantic salmon ever to be implemented. Future research needs and the management implications arising from the SALSEA Programme will be considered at the 'Salmon Summit' in 2011. The need for any future fund-raising initiatives will depend on the research needs identified.

Key issue 2: Strengthen NGO involvement in, and support for, the Board and for its fund-raising activities

The NGOs have played a central role both in developing and implementing the SALSEA Programme, including providing valuable assistance in identifying funding e.g. from the TOTAL Foundation, and in funding the research e.g. AST funding for the SALSEA-Merge scientific coordinator and ASF funding for acoustic tagging studies in North America. With regard to by-catch of salmon, NASCO annually requests information from ICES. New information obtained under the SALSEA Programme on the distribution and migration of salmon at sea may assist in identifying overlap of post-smolts with pelagic fisheries and this topic will be covered at the 'Salmon Summit'.

Challenge 4: Protection and restoration of Atlantic salmon habitat

The goal for NASCO and its Parties is to maintain and, where possible, increase the current productive capacity of Atlantic salmon habitat.

Key issue 1: Ensure effective implementation of NASCO's Plan of Action

While it is clear that progress has been made in implementing the Plan of Action, the habitat *Ad Hoc* Review Group concluded that in the case of nine of the thirteen FARs, the approach outlined was not consistent with the NASCO Plan of Action. Thus, while there have been some notable improvements, major challenges remain not least those related to climate change. The development of Guidelines for the Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Salmon Habitat should assist jurisdictions in making further progress in implementing NASCO's agreements.

Key issue 2: Enhance sharing and exchange of information on habitat issues and best management practices between NASCO Parties and other relevant international bodies

The 'Next Steps' process resulted in the introduction of comprehensive new reporting procedures intended to facilitate a transparent and meaningful exchange of information. An enormous amount of information on how each jurisdiction manages its salmon habitat is now available in the Implementation Plans and FARs, and an overview of this material has been produced for each focus area. These plans and reports have been evaluated by Review Groups and have been made available on the NASCO website together with the results of the evaluations. To assist jurisdictions make further progress in implementing NASCO's agreements and to provide a basis for exchange of information on the management of salmon habitat, Guidelines for the Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Salmon Habitat were adopted in 2010.

With regard to information exchange with other international bodies, see the summary of progress under Decision 12 above.

Key issue 3: Maintain the NASCO salmon rivers database

The information held in the rivers database, has been sent to the jurisdictions with a request that it be validated with the intention of making the information available on the NASCO website before the 2011 Annual Meeting. The database is seen as an important component of NASCO's Public Relations Strategy.

Challenge 4: Aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics

The goal for NASCO and its Parties is to minimise the possible adverse impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics on the wild stocks of Atlantic salmon, including working with industry stakeholders, where appropriate.

Key issue 1: Determine the need for internationally agreed regulations or standards for aquaculture and related activities

The NASCO/ISFA Liaison Group established a Task Force with the aim of: identifying a series of best practice guidelines and standards to address the impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon stocks; to identify knowledge gaps and research requirements to address them; and to consider if, and how, impact targets can be identified. This work resulted in NASCO and ISFA adopting BMP Guidance, framed around the elements of the Williamsburg Resolution. The basic principle is that wild salmon stocks in areas with salmon farms should be as healthy as those in areas without farms and progress towards the international goals in this BMP Guidance is being reviewed through the FARs. The guidance includes international goals relating to escapees and sea lice and elements on reporting and tracking and factors facilitating implementation. The guidance provides a range of measures from which those most appropriate to the local conditions should be put into place to safeguard the wild salmon stocks. With regard to the parasite *G.salaris*, a 'Road Map' has been developed (see Challenge 5 below).

Key issue 2: Enhance public awareness of developments concerning aquaculture and related activities

Information relating to NASCO's work in relation to aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics is available on the NASCO website, including details of the work of the Liaison Group and copies of Implementation Plans and FARs. The broader aspects of NASCO's Public Relations initiatives are described in Decisions 15 and 16 above.

Key issue 3: Minimise the escape of farmed salmon to a level that is as close as practicable to zero

Key issue 5: Minimise the adverse genetic and other biological interactions from salmon enhancement activities

Key issue 6: Minimise the risk of transmission to wild salmon stocks of diseases and parasites

The review of the aquaculture, introductions and transfers FARs has highlighted that while progress has been made there is a need for additional actions to ensure consistency with NASCO's agreements.

Key issue 4: Minimise any negative impacts of ranched salmon

No salmon ranching, as defined in the Williamsburg Resolution, is currently undertaken in the North Atlantic other than on an experimental scale, and in these cases the NASCO guidance appears to be applied.

Key issue 7: Consider the consequences of aquaculture of Atlantic salmon in countries that are not parties to NASCO

This aspect has been discussed at the meetings of the Liaison Group and, while it is recognised as an issue, there is probably little that the Liaison Group can do to ensure a 'level playing field' for the industry internationally.

Challenge 5: *Gyrodactylus salaris*

The goal for NASCO and its Parties is to prevent the further spread of this parasite and to eradicate it from infected areas, working with stakeholders, where appropriate.

Key issue 1: Minimise the threat posed by G.salaris to Atlantic salmon

In order to provide a forum for exchange of information on monitoring programmes for the parasite, its distribution, measures to prevent its spread and approaches to its eradication, the North-East Atlantic Commission established a Working Group that met in 2004, 2006 and 2008. In 2004, a 'Road Map' was adopted by the Commission that contained recommendations on enhancing cooperation on monitoring, research and exchange of information and for strengthened national and regional legislation and measures to prevent the further spread of the parasite. The recommendations in the 'Road Map' when implemented should minimise the risk of further spread of the parasite and assist in its containment and eradication. However, the Working Group has not met since 2008 so progress on the elements in the 'Road Map' has not been reported although relevant information relating to the parasite has been included in several FARs. While the North-East Atlantic Commission invites reporting in relation to the parasite, limited information on the

elements in the 'Road Map' has been provided. The Commission might, therefore, wish to consider if additional procedures are required to allow more comprehensive reporting on, and review of, progress in relation to the elements in the 'Road Map' e.g. a biennial meeting of the Working Group.

Key issue 2: Enhance cooperation on monitoring, research and dissemination of information regarding G.salaris

See progress report under key issue 1 above.

Key issue 3: Strengthen international, national and regional legislation and guidelines to prevent the further spread of G.salaris

One of the key issues identified by the Working Group, was the importance of maintaining the Additional Guarantees that allow jurisdictions to take additional protective measures in relation to *G.salaris* under the EU Fish Health Directive. At the Commission's 2010 Annual Meeting the EU referred to the adoption of decision 2010/221 EU, the effect of which was that the previous measures in Article 4.3 of Directive 2006/88 relating to *G.salaris* would continue to apply. This would mean that certain jurisdictions (Ireland, UK, and specified river catchments in Finland) would be able to continue to take protective measures against the parasite.

Challenge 6: Initiatives for endangered salmon populations

The goal for NASCO and its Parties is to cooperate internationally to protect and rebuild threatened and endangered salmon populations in order to preserve natural diversity.

Key issue 1: Develop a common terminology to describe the level of threat

The NASCO Rivers Database categorizes rivers as threatened with loss, not threatened with loss, lost etc. but these categories do not differentiate to the level identified in the Strategic Approach (e.g. vulnerable, near threatened, endangered, etc.).

Key issue 2: Choose the appropriate strategy, management actions and conservation approaches

While information has been presented by some jurisdictions in their Implementation Plans and FARs relating to specific initiatives for endangered salmon populations and, in 2004, Guidelines on the Use of Stock rebuilding Programmes in the Context of the Precautionary Management of Salmon Stocks were adopted by the Council, there has been no specific focus on this issue by the Council in the light of the 'Next Steps' review.

Key issue 3: Facilitate a regular exchange of know-how in this field

Information has been provided in the FARs, for example in relation to Atlantic salmon populations listed under the US Endangered Species Act, the Canadian Species at Risk Act, and other designations, but there have been no discussions focusing solely on endangered populations.

Key issue 4: Identify efficient stock monitoring techniques to measure success

No specific actions have been taken although the Guidelines on the Use of Stock Rebuilding Programmes in the Context of the Precautionary Management of Salmon Stocks include elements on monitoring.

4. Further actions

In the Tables 1 and 2, we have tried to assess, subjectively, the progress made in relation to each decision and key issue in the Strategic Approach. In these tables, a traffic light system has been used to indicate those decisions and key issues which appear to us to have been implemented (green), those where implementation is partial (amber) and those where no progress has been made to date (red). This is only the view of the Secretariat and is presented only to aid discussion.

Decisions

There are only two decisions which have not been implemented; arranging a Ministerial Conference and holding follow-up stakeholder meetings. With regard to the Ministerial Conference, the Task Force recognized that this might only be required if a specific need arose and in this case it would be important to have clear objectives. The original intention had been to hold such a meeting to improve commitment to NASCO's agreements and it will be for the Review Group to assess if the arrangements that have been put in place to achieve this are considered to be adequate or whether it feels that a Ministerial Conference on this issue might offer benefits.

With regard to stakeholder consultation meetings, no such meetings have been held since 2005 but the greater involvement of accredited NGOs in NASCO today may mean that further stakeholder consultation meetings are less necessary assuming that our NGOs report back to their membership on the Organization's activities. Furthermore, the major enhancement of both the NASCO and IASRB websites means that much more information on the Organization's work is now readily available to all stakeholders. As noted earlier, monitoring suggests that these websites are receiving greatly increased traffic.

With regard to those decisions that are considered to have been partially implemented, there has been progress in relation to establishing multi-annual measures, developing social and economic information, in developing Implementation Plans and in developing a Public Relations Strategy. This work is still ongoing and on some issues there are significant challenges (e.g. in setting multi-annual measures for the Faroese salmon fishery in the absence of a Risk Framework and a Framework of Indicators).

Key issues

Similarly, in relation to the key issues on each challenge, real progress has been made in addressing those concerning management of salmon fisheries and research on salmon at sea. Work is also underway in relation to: the social and economic aspects of Atlantic salmon; habitat protection and restoration; and aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics (including *G.salaris*). However, there has been little specific consideration of initiatives for endangered salmon populations. It is fair to say that there is now a process in place to better assess progress on the key issues on each challenge for NASCO as identified

in the Strategic Approach. While it is clear from the first round of reporting that progress has been made, there are also still major challenges to be addressed. The Review Group's assessments indicate that only 1 jurisdiction had implemented measures consistent with NASCO's agreements relating to management of fisheries, 4 in relation to habitat protection and restoration and 2 in relation to aquaculture and related activities. It will be important that momentum is maintained on all of these issues and the Review Group's have also suggested that there should be greater focus on the effectiveness of the measures so that the adequacy of NASCO's agreements can be assessed.

5. Conclusions

The 'Next Steps' review process has resulted in major changes to the nature of NASCO's work and to the way it conducts its work in a more transparent and inclusive manner. It is gratifying that the majority of the decisions arising from this process have either been implemented or significant progress has been made. In particular, there is now far more transparency and greater accountability of the measures taken by jurisdictions in accordance with NASCO's agreements and much greater NGO involvement in NASCO's work. Progress is also being made in raising NASCO's profile. The first phase of implementation has focused on describing the actions being taken by each jurisdiction to comply with NASCO's agreements. Future reports could focus more on the effectiveness of these measures.

The Review Group may wish to consider the assessments made in this review and decide if it wishes to make recommendations to the Council for further action on the elements in the Strategic Approach or consider if any new actions might be considered to ensure that NASCO can meet its objectives of conserving, restoring, enhancing and rationally managing Atlantic salmon in the face of the many challenges to the resource. It could be argued that, in the light of present stock status, despite the progress made, the need for international cooperation on salmon matters has never been greater.

Secretary
Edinburgh
2 February 2011

Table 2: Summary of progress on each of the key issues in the Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps'

Key issue	Status	Comments
Challenge 1: Management of salmon fisheries		
1: Maintain an effective prohibition on fishing for salmon beyond areas of fisheries jurisdiction	Implemented	No sightings of fishing in international waters since early 1990s. Measures taken to improve exchange of airborne surveillance information
2: Further improve the 'fairness' and balance in management of distant-water fisheries.	Implemented	See decision 3 above
3: Explore possibilities for longer-term regulatory measures.	Partially implemented	See decision 4 above
4: Exchange information and transfer expertise and knowledge between Parties and between NGOs and the authorities.	Implemented	'Next Steps' process resulted in the introduction of comprehensive new reporting procedures; Implementation Plans and FARs available on the website. New Guidelines should facilitate a transparent and meaningful exchange of information in future
5: Further develop the knowledge basis for fisheries regulations.	Implemented	'Next Steps' process resulted in the introduction of comprehensive new reporting procedures; Implementation Plans and FARs available on the website. New Guidelines should facilitate a transparent and meaningful exchange of information in future
Challenge 2: Social and economic aspects of the Atlantic salmon		
1: Ensure that appropriate emphasis is given to the social and economic aspects of the Atlantic salmon.	Partially implemented	See Decision 5 above
2: Strengthen the socio-economic data as a basis for managing Atlantic salmon.	Partially implemented	See Decision 5 above
3: Integrate social and economic aspects into the decision-making processes within NASCO.	Partially implemented	See Decision 5 above. Special Session in 2012 to explore <i>inter alia</i> if improvements could be made to the Guidelines
4: Disseminate information on the social and economic aspects of the wild Atlantic	Partially implemented	See Decision 5 above. A Sub-Group is developing information for inclusion on the NASCO website and for inclusion in a 'State of the Salmon' report.
Challenge 3: Research on salmon at sea (including studies of by-catch of salmon)		
1: Develop an effective fund-raising strategy and identify and target potential sponsors.	Implemented	SALSEA Programme adopted and implemented through major public/private partnership
2: Strengthen NGO involvement in, and support for, the Board and for its fund-raising activities.	Implemented	NGOs are major contributors to SALSEA through provision of funding to the Board, assisting in identifying sponsors and in conducting their own research projects.
Challenge 4: Protection and restoration of Atlantic salmon habitat		
1: Ensure effective implementation of NASCO's Plan of Action for Habitat Protection and Restoration	Partially implemented	Considerable progress made but for most jurisdictions the approach outlined in the FARs was not yet consistent with the NASCO Plan of Action.
2: Enhance sharing and exchange of information on habitat issues and best management practices.	Implemented	Through Implementation Plans and FARs (see Decision 12 regarding cooperation with other international organizations).

3: Maintain the NASCO salmon rivers database.	Partially implemented	Updating of information underway with a view to the database being made available on the website in 2011.
Challenge 5: Aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics		
1: Determine the need for internationally agreed regulations or standards	Implemented	BMP Guidance developed following review of international agreements etc. 'Road Map' for <i>G.salaris</i> developed and Additional Guarantees under EU Fish Health Directive in place.
2: Enhance public awareness of developments concerning aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics.	Partially implemented	NASCO website includes details of the work of the Liaison Group and the Implementation Plans and FARs. NASCO's broader PR initiatives are described in Decisions 15 and 16.
3: Minimise the escape of farmed salmon to a level that is as close as practicable to zero.	Partially implemented	FARs review has highlighted that while progress has been made further progress is needed to ensure consistency with NASCO's agreements.
4: Minimise any negative impacts of ranched salmon	Implemented	Currently no ranching other than experimental which appears consistent with guidance.
5: Minimise the adverse genetic and other biological interactions from salmon enhancement activities	Partially implemented	FARs review has highlighted that while progress has been made further progress is needed to ensure consistency with NASCO's agreements.
6: Minimise the risk of transmission to wild salmon stocks of diseases and parasites	Partially implemented	FARs review has highlighted that while progress has been made further progress is needed to ensure consistency with NASCO's agreements.
7: Consider the consequences of aquaculture of Atlantic salmon in countries that are not parties to NASCO.	Implemented	Considered by the Liaison Group but little scope for action.
Challenge 6: <i>Gyrodactylus salaris</i>		
1: Minimise the threat posed by <i>G.salaris</i> to Atlantic salmon.	Partially implemented	The recommendations in the 'Road Map', when implemented, should minimise the risk of further spread of the parasite and assist in its containment and eradication if introduced.
2: Enhance cooperation on monitoring, research and dissemination of information.	Partially implemented	'Road Map' contains recommendations on improvements to monitoring, research needs etc.
3: Strengthen international, national and regional legislation and guidelines to prevent the further spread of <i>G.salaris</i> .	Partially implemented	Additional Guarantees available under EU Fish Health Directive.
Challenge 7: Initiatives for endangered salmon populations		
1: Develop a common terminology to describe the level of threat	Not implemented	The NASCO Rivers Database categories do not differentiate to the level identified in the Strategic Approach
2: Choose the appropriate strategy, management actions and conservation approaches.	Not implemented	Not considered by NASCO although information has been provided for a number of jurisdictions in their Implementation Plans and FARs
3: Facilitate a regular exchange of know-how.	Partially implemented	Information has been provided for a number of jurisdictions in their Implementation Plans and FARs
4: Identify efficient stock monitoring techniques.	Partially implemented	Guidelines on the Use of Stock rebuilding Programmes in the Context of the Precautionary Management of Salmon Stocks and other guidelines include elements on monitoring

NS(11)3

Review of the process used for reporting and evaluation of the reports

1. **Introduction**

The ‘Guidelines for the Preparation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress’, NSTF(06)10, developed as part of the Next Steps process envisage two forms of reports – Annual Reports and Focus Area (Special Session) Reports (FARs). The primary purpose of the Annual Reports is to provide a summary of all the actions that have been taken under the Implementation Plan in the previous year. In addition, any significant changes to the status of stocks, factors affecting stocks and the management regime in place should be included in these reports. The FARs provide a more in-depth assessment of actions taken under one of the Focus Areas and provide the basis for review of management actions taken within each jurisdiction over more than one year to meet the objectives of the Implementation Plan and their efficacy in addressing the overall objectives of NASCO.

Under its Terms of Reference, the Review Group has been asked to review the process used for reporting and evaluation of these reports and advise on any changes for the next reporting cycle. This document draws on comments made by the Review Groups and at the Special Sessions in relation to reporting and evaluation.

2. **Reporting to date**

Background

The intention was that all jurisdictions would submit an Implementation Plan that would be reviewed by an *Ad Hoc* Review Group and amended in the light of any comments received. This process was completed in 2007. It is important to note that these Implementation Plans were reviewed only for their consistency with the ‘Guidelines for the Preparation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress’, not on the adequacy of the measures they contain. FARs were then requested on fisheries management (2008), habitat protection and restoration (2009) and aquaculture and related activities (2010) and these were assessed for consistency of the actions taken with NASCO’s agreements. Again, the effectiveness of the actions was not the focus of the evaluation. In 2009, a reporting format for the annual returns was agreed and this was used in reporting to the Council in 2009 and 2010.

Contributions from all jurisdictions

Most, but not all, jurisdictions have submitted Implementation Plans, FARs and Annual returns (see document NS(11)2). The Review Groups have expressed concern that the lack of these documents for some jurisdictions jeopardises the process that was intended to improve commitment to NASCO’s agreements. It could be argued that a minimum requirement of belonging to an international organization would be to

follow its agreed decisions and it will be important, if there is another cycle of reporting, that all jurisdictions provide all the documents requested.

Following the requested format

Each of the Review Groups has noted that some FARs did not follow the agreed format developed to assist with the preparation of FARs and Implementation Plans. This makes the review process more difficult and time consuming. The formats used for reporting were developed by the Council not by the Review Groups. It was noted by some jurisdictions that these formats led to some duplication of effort (perhaps particularly so for the aquaculture FARs) while other jurisdictions indicated that the format constrained the information that could be presented. In this regard, the development of guidelines by the Review Groups is intended to assist in the development and evaluation of FARs in future. If there is another cycle of reporting, Terms of Reference will need to be agreed that indicate whether reporting is to be against the agreements, guidelines or some combination of the two.

Timeliness

The Council had established deadlines for submitting Implementation Plans and FARs. The Review Group reports indicate that many FARs were received late, at the meeting or even after the meeting. The Review Groups had an enormous amount of information to digest and assess and all the Groups went to great lengths to ensure they were fair in their assessments. However, late submission of FARs reduced the amount of time for preparatory work prior to the meetings and this was perhaps a particular problem for the NGO members of the Group who needed to consult their colleagues.

Volume of information

While the Council did not develop guidance on the length of Implementation Plans and FARs, some of these documents contained an enormous amount of information e.g. some FARs were over 200 pages long. The Habitat Review Group had proposed to the Council that for future reports a maximum length of 20 pages should be set with additional information contained in annexes. However, for the aquaculture review this led to some FARs containing huge amounts of information in annexes without any summary in the body of the report. Other FARs provided links to websites but the Review Groups simply don't have the time either to digest such large volumes of information or to access material on the web. It is important, therefore, that for future reporting the measures in place are succinctly summarised in the report with more detailed information annexed to the report should the Groups feel they need to check the details. Conversely, one or two of the FARs were so short that it was impossible to obtain a clear picture of the management approach in place.

Content

Each of the FAR Review Groups has highlighted issues in their reports that were generally poorly covered in the reporting. These issues include evaluation of the effectiveness of management measures, social and economic factors, placement of the

burden of proof and implementation of corrective measures. As these issues are all important aspects of a Precautionary Approach, it will be important that they are addressed in the next reporting cycle. It is clear that those jurisdictions using English as their first language had an advantage in preparing a FAR. It has to be remembered that the FAR reviews are conducted by a small group studying a large volume of information. The Review Groups did not visit the jurisdictions and had to rely entirely on the words on the paper. Some writers of FARs may have been more skilled than others in English and better at presenting their case than others. However, it was also noted by some Review Groups that some FARs were written in a less defensive, more transparent and open way than others.

The habitat Review Group considered that it might be useful for the Council to facilitate a more detailed exchange on a specific topic so as to further enhance the collaborative learning process under the 'Next Steps' process e.g. on fish passage or liming of acidified waters.

Focus on outcomes

The Implementation Plan Review Group noted that some Plans lacked specific management actions with timescales for their implementation. In this regard, the Group noted that an action specifies what will be done in a given period of time rather than identifying general goals. This Group believed that this failing would compromise the next stage of reporting under the FARs and Annual Reports. Similarly, a criticism raised by the aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics Review Group was that while some FARs contained considerable information to describe the activities, policy and management structures in place, they failed to focus on the outcomes of measures taken and on demonstrating progress towards achieving the international goals to safeguard the wild stocks.

3. Evaluation of reports

Objectivity

The Council had agreed, and it was stressed strongly to the members of the Review Groups, that they were there to represent NASCO and not their own jurisdictions. There was no instance where it seemed that a reviewer was ignoring this request. To formalise this, each representative of a jurisdiction left the room when his/her jurisdiction's Implementation Plan or FAR was being reviewed.

Fairness and balance

The Review Groups went to great lengths to be fair and their efforts to produce a balanced report were impressive. Initial reviews were undertaken by a representative of the jurisdictions and by the NGOs. These initial reviews formed the basis of discussions in the Groups and an agreed review was then developed. In all cases, the reviews were unanimously agreed; although in the case of the aquaculture Group several general statements were made by the NGOs that did not find unanimous support from the rest of the Review Group. These statements were annexed to the

Group's final report. All the assessments were reviewed again at the end of the process to ensure consistency. The Implementation Plan Review Group also recognised that it would not be reasonable to expect management actions to be implemented to address every threat to the resource within a five year period and that the extent to which management actions specified in the plan could be implemented within the period of the plan would depend on the availability of adequate resources at the time of their implementation. So the Groups' were realistic in their expectations of what could be achieved and sought to assess progress towards implementation of NASCO's agreements.

The Review Groups were also aware that in some jurisdictions the management responsibility lies to some extent with riparian owners while in others the management of the resource and its habitat are the responsibility of the public sector. Furthermore, the extent of the salmon stocks and the resources available to manage them vary markedly among jurisdictions. The Review Groups did not penalise or compensate for these differences.

Each of the Review Groups conducted their reviews solely on the basis of information provided in the reports even when some members of the Group may have been aware of other measures that might have been included in the FARs.

Special Session Presentations

Each Review Group presented both its draft and final reports in Special Sessions during the Annual Meetings. These sessions were certainly a breakthrough in transparency and inclusivity, but feedback suggests that they were not always as stimulating and challenging as might have been expected. Perhaps this is inevitable given the nature of the report under consideration. In future, if there is a further round of reporting the reviews might be better discussed in plenary with consideration being given to Special Sessions focusing on a specific issue on which an exchange of information could be beneficial e.g. fish passage, management of mixed stock fisheries, incorporation of socio-economic factors in management decisions (planned for 2012) etc. Some Review Groups noted that there was a lack of reporting on issues in one jurisdiction that might be adversely affecting salmon stocks in another and these issues were, perhaps surprisingly, not raised in the Special Sessions either.

Composition of the Review Groups

The Council had agreed that each Review Group should comprise two NGO representatives, a member of the Standing Scientific Committee and three representatives of the Parties (including one from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland). Representatives of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) were invited to participate in all the Groups in order to allow them to assess fairness and balance between the measures taken for the distant water fisheries and those being taken by States of Origin. Certainly, the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) made a significant contribution to the fisheries management Review Group but this delegation was unable to participate in

the other two Review Groups. This involvement will need to be considered in preparing for the next cycle.

With regard to the aquaculture review, ISFA has indicated that it wished to be represented on the Group. No representatives of industry attended the other reviews relating to management of fisheries and habitat. ISFA did, however, have the opportunity to comment on the TORs for the Review Group and the Group's reports were presented first at the Liaison Group, before consideration by the Council, so as to allow for feedback from the industry. It should be noted that the review is an internal review by NASCO of its progress in implementing its own agreements.

4. Future Reporting

It was envisaged under the 'Guidelines for the Preparation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress' that the Implementation Plans would apply for a period of at least five years during which they would generally require no modification unless circumstances changed significantly. The Implementation Plans were submitted in draft form in 2006 and in final form in 2007. If the Next Steps Review Group recommended and the Council agreed, a new reporting cycle could commence in 2012 with the submission of new Implementation Plans. If this is the preferred approach, then the FAR reporting might recommence in 2013 and, if the same order is followed as in the first cycle, then the sequence might be as follows: management of salmon fisheries (2013); habitat protection, restoration and enhancement (2014); and aquaculture and related activities (2015). Additional guidance could be developed for future Review Groups and jurisdictions to ensure that the issues highlighted in this review and any others raised by the 'Next Steps' Review Group are addressed in the next cycle

5. In Conclusion

The feedback we have received suggests that the reporting and evaluation process was a very valuable experiment where we all learnt an enormous amount about the ways that different Parties manage the many conservation issues that arise. It must be a very good thing that we can learn from each other in that way. One of our important aims here was to improve commitment, transparency and inclusivity. Commitment to carrying out the review process at all was to be commended; it gave vital information, allowed criticism and comment. It may not always have been comfortable but it was more transparent and inclusive than any previous review, probably more than any other international organization has achieved. The Council has certainly made real progress in moving from a rather onerous annual reporting system that fulfilled the requirement to report but did not allow for a valuable exchange of information and assessment of progress.

With some adjustments the Focus Area Review process should stand NASCO well in the future, but it would benefit from more consistency in reporting and a greater focus on outcomes. Having gone through the process once we should be able to improve on all of these and make the work of submission less onerous at the same time. It is also worth noting that the process has produced a really significant bonus in that we have

emerged with Guidelines on all three focus areas (fisheries management, habitat and aquaculture) that should assist in the preparation of future Implementation Plans and FARs and their evaluation. These will prove highly valuable in future as a measure of how far and how fast we are progressing along the course that we set out in 2005. The Next Steps Review Group may wish to discuss the following questions in order to assist in developing its recommendations to the Council:

1. Should future reporting follow the format used in the first reporting cycle of a 5-year Implementation Plan, triennial Focus Area Reports and Annual Reports, or should new reporting arrangements be considered?
2. Should the next reporting cycle commence with Implementation Plans (e.g. in 2012) followed by FARs in the following three year period, or should a new cycle be considered?
3. Should the same sequence of FARs be followed as for the first reporting cycle e.g.. management of salmon fisheries (2013), habitat protection restoration and enhancement (2014) and aquaculture and related activities (2015), or should a new sequence be considered?
4. Should the Implementation Plans and FARs continue to be reviewed by *Ad Hoc* Review Groups with the same composition as for the first reporting cycle, or should alternative structures for the review process be considered?
5. Should the Implementation Plans and FARs use the existing guidance on format and content or should new guidance be developed based on experience gained and the guidelines adopted during the first reporting cycle?
6. Should future reporting in the FARs be focused more on the effectiveness of actions taken rather than on the nature of the actions implemented?
7. Should the format for Annual Reports adopted in 2009 continue to be used, or should an alternative format be developed?
8. Should the same timetable be used as in the first reporting cycle i.e. Implementation Plans and FARs submitted by 31 December, draft review presented the following June and the final review the year after?
9. Should Special Sessions continue to be used for presentation of the reviews (both in draft and final form)? If so, can they be improved in any way?

Secretary
Edinburgh
2 February 2011

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Draft NGO Position Paper

1. Changing the NASCO Convention

During the initial discussions on the future of NASCO in 2004, NGOs argued that the NASCO convention should be strengthened to give the organisation more “teeth”. This was rejected by the Parties in favour of the Next Steps process. Now we have completed the first cycle of Next Steps, NGOs acknowledge gains from the process in terms of transparency and participation, but continue to be disappointed by a lack of outcomes relating to material improvements in wild salmon conservation. We consider that this is an appropriate time to re-examine the convention.

The forthcoming external review of NASCO is part of a wider UN initiative to review RFMOs. From a UN point of view, it may be appropriate to highlight the poor conservation status of Atlantic salmon and the very slow progress by Parties to fully implement NASCO guidelines in home waters. We appreciate that this is often because of social, economic or political problems. Strengthening the convention would assist Parties in implementing salmon conservation measures.

Atlantic salmon is an international traveller; NASCO was set up in 1984 to manage exploitation in the high seas fisheries, which it has done very successfully. When it became apparent that the problems were much wider, NASCO introduced a series of agreements and guidelines (habitat, fisheries management, impacts of aquaculture) but these are all voluntary since the convention does not extend NASCO jurisdiction into home-waters. The UN resolution lists the objective of sustainable fisheries, the adoption of the precautionary approach and the recognition of best scientific advice. Despite some progress over the years, ICES advice to NASCO on mixed stock fisheries is routinely being disregarded and despite the adoption of the precautionary approach, Parties appear to pick and choose if or when to apply it.

The NGO position is to argue for convention change, while promoting more focus on outcomes in the next cycle of Implementation Plans and Focus Area Reports.

The example of EU Directives eg Habitat, WFD etc. could be helpful: these Directives are binding on the member states but how they are implemented remains the prerogative of individual jurisdictions. The single most dramatic salmon conservation gain in recent years was the closure of the Irish drift net fishery in 2007 following a challenge under the Habitats Directive from Wessex Salmon (UK NGO). The Habitats Directive is now being used to challenge the impacts of salmon aquaculture in the Irish Republic. NGOs believe that the “Directive” model is one which could be considered by NASCO.

All these arguments could be helped by the fact that convention change is being considered as part of current reviews of other regional fishery management organisations (RFMOs) under the UN resolution.

NGOs believe that the time has come for changes to the NASCO convention to assist the Parties in implementing salmon conservation measures in home waters.

2. Proposed changes to the convention for consideration

This list includes a range of suggestions from a number of sources including NGOs and former delegation members; some are minor and some major changes. NGOs are not experts in the language of the convention and it may be that some of these proposals, which are all aimed at strengthening the role of NASCO in salmon conservation, could be achieved by other means.

- a. Re-define “High seas fisheries” to “distant water fisheries”. (Greenland and Faroes are fishing within their EEZs, not on the high seas).
- b. NAC. To include consideration of lsw fish (grilse) jurisdictions have interpreted the convention to apply to msw salmon, but the recovery of grilse means they are now an important part of the stock complex.
- c. NAC. Changes required to enable Greenland (and possibly St P & M) to intercede with other Parties on interception.
- d. NEAC. Changes required to allow Parties to intercede with each other on interception. At present NGOs have to bring these matters up! Examples might be Russia proposing a regulatory measure for the Norwegian coastal fishery, or Norway proposing a measure to limit stocking of alien species (Pacific salmon) by Russia.
- e. NASCO guidelines and agreements to become “mandatory” for Parties in home waters, with the provision for both derogation (exclusions in particular circumstances) and infraction proceedings (penalties) for failure to meet targets. The example of EU Directives here is informative; these Directives are binding on member states but allow individual jurisdictions freedom of implementation. This approach may be more palatable than use of the word “mandatory”.

This suggestion is the most contentious and needs to be considered carefully.

It is likely that most support would be forthcoming from certain Parties for applying this to fishery management (and mixed stock fisheries) in home waters which continue to operate in contravention of ICES advice. Derogations for aboriginal fisheries or other exceptional cases would be required.

It is much less clear how this could apply to the application of the precautionary approach but in the case of aquaculture, the conservation goals of both the BMP guidelines and the Williamsburg resolution should all be binding while the methods of achieving them could remain as guidance, with the responsibility for implementation resting where it belongs, with the Parties.

NGOs request that serious consideration is given to these suggestions by the Secretariat and Review Group.

Chris Poupard
NASCO NGO Chairman
21.03.11