

CNL(13)39

Draft Report of the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Council Westcourt Hotel, Drogheda, Ireland

4 - 7 June 2013

1. Opening Session

- 1.1 The President, Ms Mary Colligan (US), opened the meeting and introduced Mr Fergus O'Dowd TD, Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, who welcomed delegates to Drogheda (Annex 1). The President then made an Opening Statement (Annex 2).
- 1.2 The representatives of Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States of America made Opening Statements (Annex 3).
- 1.3 An Opening Statement was made by the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Committee (EIFAAC) (Annex 4).
- 1.4 An Opening Statement was made on behalf of all the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) attending the Annual Meeting (Annex 5). A separate statement was made by Sami Parliament-Norway (Annex 6).
- 1.5 The President expressed appreciation for these statements and closed the Opening Session.
- 1.6 A list of participants is given in Annex 7.

2. Adoption of Agenda

- 2.1 The Council adopted its agenda, CNL(13)18 (Annex 8).

3. Financial and Administrative Issues

3.1 Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

The Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee, Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway), presented the report of the Committee, CNL(13)5. On the recommendation of the Committee, the Council took the following decisions:

- (i) to accept the 2012 audited accounts, FAC(13)2;
- (ii) to adopt a budget for 2014 and to note a forecast budget for 2015, CNL(13)37 (Annex 9);

- (iii) to confirm the appointment of Chiene and Tait of Edinburgh as auditors for the 2013 accounts;
- (iv) to adopt the report of the Finance and Administration Committee, CNL(13)5.

4. Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information

4.1 Secretary's Report

The Interim Secretary made a report to the Council, CNL(13)6, on: the status of ratifications of, and accessions to, the Convention; membership of the regional Commissions; the receipt of contributions for 2013; fishing for salmon in international waters by non-NASCO Parties; applications for observer status to NASCO; NASCO's public relations work; and the FAO FIRMS partnership.

Since the last Annual Meeting of the Council, observer status had been granted to the Sami Parliament-Norway. The Interim Secretary also reported that the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance was no longer able to participate in NASCO meetings and their accreditation had ceased. In total, NASCO currently has 34 accredited NGOs.

The primary aim of the Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) partnership is to provide access to a wide range of high-quality information on the global monitoring and management of fishery marine resources. It is part of the Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS) and the current partners include the FAO, ICES, DG MARE, ICCAT, NAFO and NEAFC. The Interim Secretary was asked to accept the invitation to join the FIRMS partnership on behalf of the Council. A factsheet for inclusion in the FIRMS database would be developed by the Secretariat and agreed by correspondence.

4.2 Report on the Activities of the Organization in 2012

In accordance with Article 5, paragraph 6 of the Convention, the Council adopted a report to the Parties on the Activities of the Organization in 2012, CNL(13)7.

4.3 Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize

The President announced that the winner of the \$2,500 Grand Prize was Ms Kathrine Pedersen. The winning tag was of Norwegian origin and had been applied to a hatchery smolt in the Altaelva river in Finnmark, Norway. It was recaptured from a salmon that was caught by rod and line in the sea at Bodø in Norway. The Council offered its congratulations to the winner.

4.4 Scientific Advice from ICES

The representative of ICES presented the report of the Advisory Committee (ACOM) to the Council, CNL(13)8 (Annex 10).

4.5 Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area

The Interim Secretary reported to the Council that there had been no applications to conduct scientific research fishing in the Convention area during 2013.

4.6 Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board

The report of the meeting of the Board, CNL(13)9 (Annex 11), was presented by its Chairman, Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway). At its last meeting, the Board had decided to review its future role in the light of the inter-sessional meeting of the Parties (see item 5 below) and the Report of the Meeting of its Scientific Advisory Group's (SAG) Sub-Group on the Future Direction of Research on Marine Survival of Salmon. The Board decided that one priority should be to analyse the remaining samples and data arising from the SALSEA programme and recognised that it would be important to first clarify what remaining samples are available, how their analysis could benefit salmon management and how much the analyses would cost. The SAG Chairman agreed to develop this information. The Sub-Group had proposed that a particular focus for the Board should be studies to partition mortality and it recommended that the Board consider if it wishes to facilitate a meeting to further develop a collaborative international programme of research. As a first step, the Sub-Group will work by correspondence or hold a workshop to develop a 'road map' outlining a large-scale international telemetry project to ultimately provide quantitative estimates of mortality. The 'road map' will identify how the research will support conservation and management, provide an overview of resources required, identify key partners and identify current and proposed telemetry projects that could be linked with and enhanced by the proposed project. The Board also decided that, in light of these developments, the Board and SAG will meet again next year.

4.7 Report of the Standing Scientific Committee

The Acting Chairman of the Standing Scientific Committee, Mr Tim Sheehan (US), presented a draft request to ICES for scientific advice. Upon the recommendation of the Committee, the Council adopted a request for scientific advice from ICES, CNL(13)10 (Annex 12).

5. Report of the Inter-sessional Meeting of the Parties – A Vision for the Future of NASCO

5.1 Last year, the Council had recognised that completion of the first cycle of reporting and review under the 'Next Steps' process and receipt of the External Performance Review Report had provided the Council with an opportunity to revisit its vision for the future of NASCO. An inter-sessional Meeting of the Parties was held in February 2013 in order to:

- discuss priority objectives and action areas for NASCO;
- review and evaluate the recommendations of the External Performance Review Panel;
- consider the recommendations from the 'Next Steps' process, other information concerning improvements of the functioning and operation of NASCO and input from stakeholders; and

- develop an Action Plan for consideration by the Council on potential actions.

5.2 The report of the Inter-sessional meeting of the Parties, CNL(13)11 (Annex 12) was presented by the President in a Special Session. The Parties had considered the priority objectives and action areas for NASCO. It was agreed that the vision, challenges and goals identified in the Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps' remain the priority areas for NASCO. The Parties had considered options for modernising and strengthening the work of NASCO in the light of the External Performance Review Panel's (EPRP) findings, focusing on the ability of the proposals to further salmon conservation and management. While it had been recognised that NASCO's Convention reflects the situation and circumstances at the time of its drafting, in practice the language had not constrained the Parties from incorporating modern fisheries management principles and addressing a broad range of impacts to the salmon and its habitat. In relation to protection and restoration of salmon habitat and aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics, the Parties had agreed that the ongoing actions in Implementation Plans and Annual Reports were the most productive way forward. However, for management of fisheries it was agreed that additional action was necessary and appropriate for strengthening efforts. The Parties had also considered NASCO's future liaison with the salmon farming industry and had concluded that while there was not a need for a permanent body (i.e. the Liaison Group) there remained the option to convene a joint *ad hoc* group if the need arose. It had been proposed that an item should be retained on the Council agenda to allow for an exchange of information between ISFA and NASCO on issues concerning impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon. A Plan of Action had been developed for taking forward the recommendations arising from the EPRP's report and the review of the 'Next Steps' process and this is contained in Annex 4 of the report of the inter-sessional meeting.

5.3 At the Inter-sessional Meeting, it had been agreed that the Parties should be invited to submit proposals for changes to the structure, frequency and location of NASCO meetings to the Secretariat, and discussion papers had been received from Canada, Norway, the Russian Federation and the USA, CNL(13)16.

6. Decisions by the Council in the light of the Recommendations of the Inter-sessional Meeting of the Parties

6.1 The Council welcomed the report from the inter-sessional meeting and adopted an Action Plan for Taking Forward the Recommendations of the External Performance Review and the Review of the 'Next Steps' for NASCO, CNL(13)38 (Annex 13) after minor changes to the recommendation NS17 concerning the future role for NASCO on aquaculture. The rationale for this change was that the Williamsburg Resolution states that Parties will cooperate in order to minimise impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics and is broader therefore than just addressing the impacts associated with sea lice and escapes.

6.2 The Council agreed that an item should be retained on the Council's agenda entitled 'Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry', during which a representative of the International Salmon Farmers' Association (ISFA) could be invited to participate in an exchange of information on issues concerning impacts of aquaculture on wild

salmon. The regular meetings of the Liaison Group would not be continued, but, if a specific need arose, consideration could be given to convening a joint *ad hoc* group.

- 6.3 The Council decided not to change the frequency of its Annual Meeting but agreed to change its structure on a trial basis for 2014 using the papers from Norway and the US as a basis to improve the opportunities for exchange of information during the meeting. The Council asked that the President and Secretary develop the agenda and schedule of meetings to allow for greater exchange of information through theme-based Special Sessions.
- 6.4 The Council agree to hold a theme-based Special Session in 2014 on the topic of management of single and mixed-stock fisheries with particular focus on fisheries on stocks below their conservation limits. The presentations at the Special Session should include details on how socio-economic issues are included in management decisions (see 8.4 below)

7. Report of the Implementation Plan Review Group

- 7.1 The cycle of reporting under the first Implementation Plans (2007 - 2012) was completed in 2013. During this period, reports on the actions taken under the Implementation Plans were made through detailed Focus Area Reports, which were critically reviewed, and Annual Reports. Following a comprehensive review of the strengths and weaknesses of the first reporting cycle, the Council had agreed that Implementation Plans would be the key documents in the second reporting cycle, but that greater emphasis should be placed on: the actions to be taken over a five year period; clearly identifiable measurable outcomes and timescales; and appropriate monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures taken. A template for preparation of Implementation Plans was developed, CNL(12)42, together with Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress, CNL(12)44. The Parties had been asked to submit their plans to the Secretariat by 1 February 2013 and a Review Group had been established to evaluate these plans to ensure that they provide a fair and equitable basis for assessing progress in implementing NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. The Review Group's report, CNL(13)12 was presented by Mr Ted Potter (European Union).
- 7.2 The Council welcomed the improvements that had been made in reporting although it noted that some issues of non-reporting and timeliness of reports had been highlighted by the Review Group. The Review Group and the Socio-economics Sub-Group had highlighted the fact that the Implementation Plan template did not include a question on how socio-economic factors are included in decisions relating to aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics. The Review Group Chairman indicated that there is a question in the template 'What is the approach for determining the location of aquaculture facilities in (a) freshwater and (b) marine environments to minimise the risks to the wild salmon stocks'. He advised that it had been anticipated that Parties and jurisdictions would provide an indication in their responses to this question on how socio-economic factors are included in decisions relating to siting of aquaculture facilities.

- 7.3 The President led discussions with the Parties on the Group's findings and the Council asked that remaining issues be addressed in the Implementation Plans prior to 1 September 2013. The representative of the US commended Greenland for developing a conservation plan for the Kapisillit River. He indicated that his delegation had developed some questions on the Implementation Plan for Greenland but these had been addressed by responses to questions raised in the West Greenland Commission. He asked the representative of Canada if there were any plans to increase the proportion of the >1,000 rivers in Canada that are assessed for attainment of conservation limits. He also asked Canada for further information on the project to increase understanding of the stock composition in the mixed-stock fishery in Labrador. He also sought information on the rearing of transgenic salmon in Canada.
- 7.4 The representative of Canada indicated that there are 64-74 rivers in Canada where there are adult counts or estimates covering the entire range of the salmon in Canada. Additionally there is a large number of rivers where additional information is collected through juvenile surveys and angling catches which can be used to track populations. He indicated that ICES had recommended that Parties use these data sets to estimate adult abundance but there is a need for progress in modelling to translate the data into adult returns. He indicated that the genetic stock identification project can assign salmon to 9 or 10 regional groups and that rivers specific arrangements may be possible using SNPs in the future. It was noted that current baselines lack US fish but that sampling from the Penebscot River have been obtained recently. The result of the genetic analysis of sampling from 2006 – 2011 will be presented for peer review in the Autumn of 2013. The representative of Canada indicated that eggs of transgenic salmon are currently being recovered in a secure land-based facility on Prince Edward Island for rearing in Panama for sale as foodstuff in the US.
- 7.5 The representative of the US asked Norway if the report of the findings, of monitoring for sea lice on wild salmonids was available as it would be of interest to his delegation. The representative of Norway indicated that the report in Norwegian is available on the Institute of Marine Research website.
- 7.6 The Secretary will liaise with the Parties to confirm that the Review Group members can continue to serve for the review of the Annual Progress Reports and to confirm if there will be a second representative from Europe.
- 7.7 The Council noted that the Implementation Plan Guidelines, CNL(12)44, only required the Review Group to highlight these plans that contained clear omissions or inadequacies in the answers/information provided. However, the Review Group had highlighted that this meant that some plans that had been accepted could still contain unclear or incomplete answers/information. The Council recognised that this could give rise to difficulties in evaluating Annual Progress Reports and asked that all Parties and jurisdictions take the opportunity to clarify the plans prior to 1 September when final plans are due for submission. In this regard the Review Group Coordinator could liaise with the Parties on the assessments of their plans.
- 7.8 The Council agreed that there should be a Special Session at its 2014 Annual Meeting to allow for presentation and discussion of the evaluations of the Annual Progress Reports under the Implementation Plans.

8. Conservation, Restoration, Enhancement and Rational Management of Atlantic Salmon under the Precautionary Approach

8.1 Annual Reports on Progress in Implementing NASCO's Agreements

The primary purpose of the annual returns is to track progress in implementing the actions contained in the Implementation Plans. In 2009, the Council had agreed a simple reporting structure for these annual reports. In 2012, the Council agreed that the Parties should provide information on the number of salmon reported to have escaped from salmon farms and, if available, an estimate of the number of escaped farmed salmon that is unreported. A summary of the returns was presented, CNL(13)13. The returns themselves are contained in documents CNL(13)21 to CNL(13)36.

8.2 Liaison with the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry

There has been no meeting of the Liaison Group since 2011. The Council had previously agreed to decide on future arrangements for liaison with the salmon farming industry in the light of the External Performance Review and the Review of the 'Next Steps' process. A representative from the International Salmon Farmers' Association (ISFA) indicated that ISFA is supportive of NASCO's goal of conserving and restoring wild Atlantic salmon. He indicated that NASCO meetings offer an excellent opportunity to engage with those involved in wild salmon conservation and it is important that ISFA is able to participate in NASCO's meetings if the agenda includes items relating to aquaculture (see paragraph 6.2 above).

8.3 New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management

In accordance with the 'Strategic Approach for NASCO's Next Steps', this item had been included on the Council's agenda and ICES had been requested to provide relevant information, which is contained in document CNL(13)8.

8.4 Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Salmon Management

The Sub-Group had previously developed tables of socio-economic information relating to rod and line and net and trap fisheries in a format suitable for inclusion on the NASCO website. These tables were not complete, but were considered to be work in progress, and gaps in the information presented had been highlighted. The Sub-Group had not yet included these tables on the website, but proposed that inclusion of these tables on the website would be a good way to disseminate basic socio-economic data about the fisheries. The Council asked that the Parties, to the extent possible, provide updated information to the Secretariat with a view to including the tables on the website.

For the Special Session, the Sub-Group suggested that this might either comprise:

- **Option 1:** case studies dealing with integration of socio-economic factors in decisions relating to: management of fisheries, habitat protection and

restoration, and aquaculture and related activities. The case studies could include an indication of how the Socio-economic Guidelines are used and consideration of their utility. There might also be discussion of NASCO's future role on socio-economics although, to an extent, this was resolved at the inter-sessional meeting of the Parties.

- **Option 2:** focus only on how socio-economic factors are integrated into decisions relating to the management of salmon fisheries, both single and mixed-stock fisheries, and particularly in situations where fisheries are permitted on stocks below their conservation limits. This would be consistent with the Council's desire to move to more focused, theme-based Special Sessions.

The Council decided that the presentations in the 2014 theme-based Special Session on management of salmon fisheries (see paragraph 6.4 above) should include consideration of how socio-economic factors are integrated into management decisions (i.e. option 2 above). The Council recognised the importance of ensuring that the Special Session allows for consideration of the interests of indigenous peoples. The President will liaise with the Parties and NGOs in order that a Steering Committee could be appointed at the earliest opportunity.

8.5 **Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery**

In recent years, the North American Commission and the Council have been concerned about catches of salmon at St Pierre and Miquelon which, although low, are occurring at a time when there are serious concerns about the abundance of North American stocks and when strict harvest restrictions have been introduced throughout the Northwest Atlantic. In accordance with a request from the Council, the President had written to the French authorities inviting them to become a Party to NASCO (see Annex 1 of CNL(13)15). The External Performance Review Panel had also recommended that dialogue with St Pierre and Miquelon should be increased in order to agree upon targets and a method for making decisions on its salmon fishery and also to improve data collection.

A report on the management of the salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon, (see Annex 2 of CNL(13)15), was presented by the representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon). There had been no scientific sampling of the fishery in 2012 and the provisional catch was 1.446 tonnes in 2012 compared to 3.756 tonnes in 2011. The representatives of Canada and the US welcomed the commitment from France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to enhance the sampling programme in the future and offered to provide support. The representative of the NGOs indicated that although the harvest in the fishery in 2012 had declined markedly it intercepts endangered stocks of salmon in the US and threatened stocks in Newfoundland. The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) indicated that in response to the letter from the President, the question of acceding to the Convention would be discussed again but she indicated that it is likely that, given there is no option to have status as a Cooperating Non-Member State, France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) would wish to retain observer status.

8.6 Reports on the Conservation Work of the Three Regional Commissions

[The Chairman of each of the three regional Commissions reported to the Council on the activities of their Commission.]

9. Appointment of a New Secretary

9.1 The President announced that Dr Peter Hutchinson had been appointed as Secretary of NASCO for a four year period commencing on 1 July 2013.

10. Other Business

10.1 There was no other business.

11. Date and Place of Next Meeting

11.1 The Council accepted an invitation from the European Union to hold its Thirty-First Annual Meeting during 3 – 6 June 2014 in France.

11.2 The Council agreed to hold its Thirty-Second Annual Meeting during 2 – 5 June 2015 at a place to be decided.

12. Report of the Meeting

12.1 [The Council agreed the report of the meeting.]

13. Press Release

13.1 [The Council agreed a press release, CNL(13)XX (Annex XX).]