

CNL(12)37

Draft Report of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Council George Hotel Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

5 - 8 June, 2012

1. Opening Session

- 1.1 The President, Ms Mary Colligan (US), opened the meeting and welcomed delegates to Edinburgh (Annex 1).
- 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 2).
- 1.3 An Opening Statement was made by the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Committee (EIFAAC) (Annex 3).
- 1.4 An Opening Statement was made by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) (Annex 4).
- 1.5 An Opening Statement was made on behalf of all the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) attending the Annual Meeting (Annex 5).
- 1.6 The President expressed appreciation for these statements and closed the Opening Session.
- 1.7 A list of participants is given in Annex 6.

2. Adoption of Agenda

- 2.1 The Council adopted its agenda, CNL(12)XX (Annex 7).

3. Election of Officers

- 3.1 [The Council re-elected Ms Mary Colligan (US) to serve a second two-year term as President, and Mr Steinar Hermansen (Norway) as Vice-President.]

4. Financial and Administrative Issues

4.1 Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

In the absence of the Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, the Vice-Chairman, Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway), presented the report of the Committee, CNL(12)5. On the recommendation of the Committee, the Council took the following decisions:

- (i) to accept the audited 2011 annual financial statement, FAC(12)2;
- (ii) to adopt a budget for 2013 and to note a forecast budget for 2014, CNL(12)XX (Annex 8);
- (iii) to ask the Secretary to obtain quotes for a minimum of three years work from auditing firms and to liaise with the Finance and Administration Committee on the appointment for the 2012 and subsequent audits;
- (iv) to amend the Staff Fund Rules, CNL(12)17 (Annex 9);
- (v) to adopt the report of the Finance and Administration Committee.

5. Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information

5.1 Secretary's Report

The Secretary made a report to the Council on the status of ratifications of, and accessions to, the Convention and membership of the regional Commissions.

In accordance with Financial Rule 5.5, the Secretary reported on the receipt of contributions for 2012. All contributions had been received and there were no arrears.

He reported on fishing for salmon in international waters by non-NASCO Parties. There had been no sightings during the year since 1 April 2011. While the number of surveillance flights over the area of international waters where sightings had been made in the late 1980s and early 1990s had increased in 2011/2012 it is still limited to the summer months.

The Secretary reported, (CNL(12)6), that since the last Annual Meeting of the Council, no new applications for observer status had been received. In total, NASCO currently has 35 accredited NGOs. He referred to the recommendation in the External Performance Review Panel's report that the reason for the suspension of one NGO should be explained on the website.

5.2 Report on the Activities of the Organization in 2011

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 2011, CNL(12)7.

5.3 Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize

The President announced that the winner of the \$2,500 Grand Prize was Mr Andreas Mårtenson, Flyinge, Sweden. The winning tag was of Norwegian origin. It had been applied to a 5kg female salmon at the inlet of the Trondheimsfjord, Norway on 7 July 2011. It was recaptured by angling on the Gaula River six days later. The Council offered its congratulations to the winner.

5.4 Scientific Advice from ICES

The representative of ICES presented the report of the Advisory Committee (ACOM) to the Council, CNL(12)8 (Annex 10). In response to a question from the representative of the NGOs concerning the Kolarctic salmon project, the representative of the Russian Federation indicated that the project had commenced in 2011 and would be completed in 2013. The project involves three countries (Finland, Norway and Russia). Some preliminary results have already been obtained but have not yet been published.

5.5 Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area

The Secretary reported to the Council that there had been no applications to conduct scientific research fishing in the Convention area during 2012.

5.6 Report on the NASCO/ICES ‘Salmon Summit’

An international symposium or ‘Salmon Summit’ convened by NASCO and ICES on the topic of ‘Salmon at Sea: Scientific Advances and their Implications for Management’ was held during 11 - 13 October, 2011 at L’Aquarium, La Rochelle, France. It was attended by 128 scientists and managers from around the North Atlantic, the North Pacific and Baltic regions. Sponsorship had been received from the Total Foundation with additional support from Onema. Two reports will be prepared of the meeting. A report by the Convenors (Lars Petter Hansen, Dave Reddin and Malcolm Windsor) and the Guest Editor of the ICES Journal of Marine Science (Peter Hutchinson) had already been published and was distributed during the Annual Meeting.

The Secretary indicated that the main conclusion from the ‘Salmon Summit’ was the need to redouble efforts to address factors impacting on productivity to ensure that the 2,500 salmon rivers that flow into the North Atlantic produce the maximum number of healthy wild salmon smolts. That will entail further sacrifices in harvests, more emphasis on habitat protection, restoration and enhancement and further progress in addressing impacts of salmon farming. New information, ideas and tools that can assist managers are emerging. There will be a need to plan ahead for these changes and to work cooperatively with those with similar aims and for more outreach to politicians and the public and to those industries that are impacting salmon habitat. The large and diverse community of non-government organizations supporting the species can play a major role.

A number of the scientific papers will, following peer review, be published in a symposium issue of the ICES Journal of Marine Science.

5.7 Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board

The report of the meeting of the Board, CNL(12)9 (Annex 11), was presented by its Chairman, Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway).

5.8 Report of the Standing Scientific Committee

The Chairman of the Standing Scientific Committee, Dr Peter Hutchinson, 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(12)10 (Annex 12).

The representative of the NGOs suggested that ICES be requested to provide information on the numbers of salmon escaping from salmon farms, both the reported numbers and estimated numbers that are unreported. The Council agreed that it would be useful to have such information and discussed whether it could best be obtained through ICES or by direct reporting to NASCO. The Council agreed that the Parties should be requested to provide this information in their annual returns under the Implementation Plans in 2013 and that the Council would revisit this issue next year in the light of the returns. It was noted that the statistics on escapes are only part of the picture and that data on the incidence of escaped farmed salmon in fisheries and rivers are also important. The representative of the NGOs requested that in future the NGOs should be represented on the Standing Scientific Committee. The Council agreed to consider this matter further at its 2013 Annual Meeting

6. Report of the External Performance Review Panel

6.1 At its 2011 Annual Meeting the Council had adopted Terms of Reference for the external performance review, CNL(11)44, made budgetary provision to cover the costs of the review and appointed Mr Michael Shewchuk (nominated by UN DOALOS), Ms Judith Swan (nominated by FAO) and Mr Kjartan Hoydal (former Secretary of NEAFC). The Council had agreed that:

- the criteria attached to the TORs are to be used by the Review Panel as it determines appropriate;
- the review should examine the past, present and future of NASCO and the fitness of the organization given the current challenges facing the salmon;
- the Review Panel should produce a report which critically evaluates the performance of NASCO and makes recommendations for change and improvements;
- the Review Panel should decide how best to carry out its work including the need to hold a second meeting;
- the President and Secretary should provide logistical support to the Panel including background material and points of contact.

6.2 The report of the External Performance Review Panel, CNL(12)11, was presented in a Special Session of the Council by Mr Kjartan Hoydal. The report has been made available on the NASCO website www.nasco.int. There was an extensive discussion of this report and the Council welcomed the Panel's findings and its endorsement of NASCO's work including the changes introduced under the 'Next Steps' process and the support to move forward with this in a second cycle of Implementation Plans.

7. Progress with the ‘Next Steps for NASCO’ Process

7.1 Report of the Working Group on Future Reporting under Implementation Plans and Evaluation of these Reports

Last year the Council had considered a report from its ‘Next Steps for NASCO’ Review Group. The Group had reviewed progress in implementing the Strategic Approach under each of the seven challenges it identifies. The Group recognised that NASCO had moved quickly in implementing the measures in the Strategic Approach but for the next cycle of reporting, it had suggested some streamlining in reporting and that there should be greater emphasis placed on the activities and actions each jurisdiction plans to take over a period of five years and on monitoring and evaluation of activities with clearly described identifiable, measurable outcomes and timescales. The Group had further 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 Council had, therefore, established a Working Group to develop a framework for future reporting and evaluation to report back to the 2012 Annual Meeting.

The Chairman of the Working Group on Future Reporting under Implementation Plans and Evaluation of these Reports, Mr Ted Potter (European Union) presented the Group’s report, CNL(12)12 (Annex 13). He informed the Council that the Working Group considers that Implementation Plans are the key documents and the success of the next cycle of reporting will depend on these plans specifying clearly the actions each jurisdiction plans to take over a five-year period, the expected outcomes and the approach to monitoring, including enforcement. The Group recommends that these plans should be reviewed and that Annual Progress Reports would identify the status of actions within the Implementation Plans with evaluation to assess if the commitments in the plans have been fulfilled and whether progress is being made towards achievement of the objectives.

To assist jurisdictions in developing their Implementation Plans and Annual Progress Reports, templates had been developed by the Group together with guidance on the format and content of Plans and Reports and on their evaluation. A schedule for submission, review and distribution of these plans and reports had been proposed. The Group also recommended a new cycle of Special Session Reports (to replace Focus Area Reports), developed around specific themes in order to encourage an exchange of information and in-depth consideration of approaches being used to address a particular threat to salmon stocks or challenge to management. A number of possible topics for Special Session reports had been proposed.

7.2 Progress in Implementing a Public Relations Strategy

The Assistant Secretary reported on progress with the further development of the NASCO website, including the completion of the rivers database, which is now available to the public on the website.

8. Decisions by the Council in the light of the External Performance Review and the Review of the ‘Next Steps’ process

- 8.1 [In order to take forward the recommendations of the external performance review, the Council decided to hold a meeting of the Parties and agreed Terms of Reference for this meeting, CNL(12) xx (Annex 14).]
- 8.2 The Council discussed the Group’s welcomed the recommendations for streamlining future reporting developed by the Working Group on Future Reporting under Implementation Plans and Evaluation of these Reports. The Council adopted the template on NASCO Implementation Plans for the period 2103-18, CNL(12)xx (Annex 15) and the template for Annual Progress Reports on Actions taken under Implementation Plans, CNL(12)xx (Annex 16). The Council welcomed the Group’s Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress but decided to delay the deadline for submission of Implementation Plans from 31 October 2012 until 1 February 2013 and to amend the schedule accordingly so as to allow for additional time for the jurisdictions to consult with stakeholders in the preparation of Plans. The Guidelines were modified to reflect this change and were adopted by the Council, CNL(12)xx (Annex 17).

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

9.1 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. A summary of these returns was presented, CNL(12)16. The returns themselves are contained in documents CNL(12)21 to CNL(12)36.

The representative of the NGOs sought clarification from the European Union on the reasons for the increase in catches in coastal fisheries in England and Wales and Sweden in 2011. A response to this question was provided in the North-East Atlantic Commission.

9.2 Liaison with the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry

At the last meeting of the Liaison Group in 2011 a proposal from Canada on the reconstitution of the Liaison Group had been discussed. A number of options were considered and ISFA had indicated after the meeting that it would prefer to engage directly with the Parties through a seat at the NASCO Annual Meeting, consistent with that afforded to the NGOs. An initial discussion document on this topic had been tabled by Norway, CNL(11)20, in which it was suggested that, as an alternative to the Liaison Group, ISFA could be invited to participate as observer in Council meetings so as to present its views when the subject of aquaculture is on the agenda before and after the discussions between the Parties.

The Council had decided that, in view of the ongoing 'Next Steps' process and the external performance review, it would consider the most appropriate approach to continuing its liaison with the salmon farming industry, which it greatly valued, at its 2012 meeting. The Council had agreed that the Liaison Group did not need to meet prior to the 2012 Annual Meeting.

The President noted that it would not be possible to respond to the industry at the Annual Meeting and that the priority for engagement over the next twelve months is within jurisdictions in relation to the development of Implementation Plans. The Council encouraged each jurisdiction to engage with the industry in the development of its Implementation Plan.

9.3 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(12)8. The representative of the NGOs referred to the increasing concern among NGOs across Europe at the increase in hydro-electric installations and the impact these may have on salmon.

9.4 Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Salmon Management

In 2008, the Council had reviewed a report from its Socio-Economics Working Group. This Group had commenced work in collating social and economic information relating to the Atlantic salmon but it was recognised that further work was needed and a Sub-Group had been established for this purpose. Progress reports on the work of the Socio-Economic Sub-Group were presented in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Last year it was reported that the Sub-Group had further developed web pages relating to socio-economic values and a proposal for a Special Session on socio-economics. The objective of the Special Session is to provide an opportunity for a more detailed exchange of information on how jurisdictions are incorporating socio-economic factors in decisions relating to: management of salmon fisheries; habitat protection and restoration; and aquaculture and related activities, allow for feedback from the Parties on the usefulness of the NASCO Guidelines, and consider the future role of NASCO in relation to the social and economic aspects of salmon management.

The Council had decided that because of time constraints at the 2012 Annual Meeting, the Special Session would be held in 2013 and had asked the Sub-Group to proceed and develop the programme. The Council had suggested that the Sub-Group might wish to consult EIFAAC with a view to its involvement in the Special Session. The Sub-Group was asked to develop its recommendations well in advance of the 2013 Annual Meeting.

The Council recognised that it will have a heavy schedule of work at its 2013 Annual Meeting and asked that the Secretariat look at the schedule of meetings to see if this Special Session could be accommodated.

9.5 Managing and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) introduced document CNL(12)14 (Annex 18) containing information on management of the fishery, details of catches and of the number of licenses issued and the sampling programme in 2010. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) had reiterated that it wishes to retain its observer status to NASCO and to develop scientific cooperation with NASCO given that salmon fishing is a traditional, seasonal activity for the inhabitants of the islands. The representative of Canada thanked the representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) for the report and welcomed the progress on the scientific work. He requested that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) become an active member of NASCO so as to further enhance the cooperation. The US agreed with these sentiments and in the light of the external performance review recommendation suggested that the Secretary write to the French authorities inviting them to become a member of NASCO. A similar letter had already been sent recently to Iceland. The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) indicated that while the fishery is an interception fishery it is small and catches low compared to elsewhere in the North Atlantic it is important for socio-economic reasons. The representative of the NGOs indicated that while catches may be low they include harvests of salmon from endangered stocks.

9.6 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.

10. Other Business

- 10.1 The Council agreed a procedure for the recruitment of a new Secretary from 1 January 2014, CNL(12)18.

11. Date and Place of Next Meeting

- 11.1 The Council accepted an invitation from [] to hold its Thirtieth Annual Meeting during 4 - 7 June 2013.
- 11.2 The Council agreed to hold its Thirty-First Annual Meeting during 3 - 6 June 2014 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(12)XX (Annex 19).]

14. Close of the Meeting

- 14.1 [The President referred to the retirement of the current Secretary on 31 August 2012. On behalf of the Council, she thanked Dr Windsor for his exceptional work for the Organization and wished him a long and healthy retirement. The Secretary then made a statement (Annex 20).]