



Agenda item 2
For information

Council

CNL(15)3

Explanatory Memorandum on the Agenda

Notes:

- **Under the conditions for attendance by observers, the President may recognise requests from the floor by the accredited NGO Chairperson and/or designee on all agenda items other than items 2 and 3.**
- **A summary of all the decisions before the Council will be presented in document CNL(15)17.**

CNL(15)3

Explanatory Memorandum on the Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting

Following a welcoming address by our hosts, the Acting-President will make a statement on behalf of the Organization and wishes to encourage each Party, Inter-Governmental Organization and the accredited Non-Government Organizations to make Opening Statements. These statements will be annexed to the report of the meeting.

2. Adoption of Agenda

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, and following consultation with the President, a Provisional Agenda (CNL(15)1) was issued on 14 January 2015. The Parties had the opportunity to propose supplementary items by informing the Secretary. None were proposed so a Draft Agenda (CNL(15)2) is issued herewith. The Council will be asked to adopt its Agenda. A Draft Schedule of Meetings (CNL(15)4) was also issued with the Provisional Agenda.

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), will present the report of the Committee's meeting to the Council, CNL(15)5. The Council will be asked to:

- adopt the 2016 budget;
- accept the audited accounts for 2014;
- appoint auditors for the 2015 accounts;
- decide on the future of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme;
- take such other actions as it may consider appropriate;
- adopt the report of the Finance and Administration Committee.

4. Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information

4.1 Secretary's Report

The Secretary will report to the Council on a number of procedural, administrative, financial and other matters, including details of any new applications for NGO observer status to NASCO and any applications to conduct scientific research fishing, CNL(15)6.

4.2 Report on the Activities of the Organization in 2014

The Council will be asked to adopt, under Article 5, paragraph 6 of the Convention, a report on its activities in 2014, CNL(15)7. This report is not intended for publication.

4.3 Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize

The President will announce the winner of the Grand Prize of \$2,500. The winners of the Commission prizes of \$1,500 will be announced in each of the Commissions by their Chairman. The Finance and Administration Committee will be reviewing the future of the scheme and its recommendations will be provided to the Council under agenda item 3.

4.4 Scientific Advice from ICES

The Report of the ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM), CNL(15)8, will be circulated by ICES prior to the Annual Meeting and will be briefly introduced at the meeting by a representative of ICES. The detailed advice will be considered by the Commissions separately at their meetings. ICES has been requested to make the report of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon available to NASCO delegates on the ICES website.

4.5 Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board

Last year, the Board had endorsed the need for an international acoustic tracking programme and had adopted a Resolution encouraging telemetry studies so as to build on the success and identity of the SALSEA Programme. As a first step, the Board had agreed to host a Telemetry Workshop. The Board recognised the role it could play in coordinating efforts and fund-raising initiatives in support of telemetry projects in the future. In the light of the Workshop, the Board will consider what steps it wishes to take to support international collaborative projects in this field. The Chairman of the Board, Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway), will present the report of the Board's meeting, CNL(15)9.

4.6 Report of the Working Group on Stock Classification

The Council had previously decided that it should consider revisions to the stock categories used in the rivers database that better reflect status of stocks relative to attainment of conservation limits so that the information could be used to prepare an overview of the status of stocks around the North Atlantic and the threats to the resource. Last year, ICES had developed a preliminary, tentative example of a classification system but indicated that approaches would need to be developed to enable compliance with the classification criteria to be averaged over time periods and thus avoid the need for updating of the rivers database on an annual basis. The Council recognised that it would be important to have a consistent and uniform approach to presenting information on stock status and agreed Terms of Reference, CNL(14)56, for a Working Group on Stock Classification under the Chairmanship of Steve Gephard (USA). The TORs request that the Working Group recommends a classification system to be used by jurisdictions to indicate stock status relative to conservation limits (or other reference points) taking into account other relevant information to describe stock status (e.g. biodiversity). The report of the Working Group will be presented, CNL(15)10.

4.7 **Report of the Standing Scientific Committee**

The recommendations of the Standing Scientific Committee concerning the request to ICES for scientific advice will be presented, CNL(15)11. The Council will be asked to adopt a request to ICES for scientific advice and to provide any feedback to ICES on the responses provided to any new questions addressed in the advice presented in 2015.

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

5.1 **Special Session: Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2013 - 2018 Implementation Plans**

The report of the Implementation Plan/Annual Progress Report Review Group, CNL(15)12, will be presented including its evaluations of any Implementation Plans (IPs) from jurisdictions who had not previously submitted a Plan and of the second Annual Progress Reports (APRs) under the 2013 – 2018 IPs. Last year, the Council agreed some changes to the APR reporting template and the revised template was issued to Parties and jurisdictions with a request that it be returned no later than 1 April. The primary purpose of the APRs is to provide details of:

- any changes to the management regime for salmon and consequent changes to the IPs;
- actions that have been taken under the IPs in the previous year;
- significant changes to the status of stocks and a report on catches; and
- actions taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

The APRs will be critically evaluated by the Review Group to ensure that Parties and jurisdictions have provided a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating the actions detailed in their IPs along with the information required under the Convention. The Review Group's report, including its assessments, will be presented at a Special Session of the Council. Where shortcomings are identified, the Group will develop a list of questions to be sent to the Parties and jurisdictions who will be asked to respond to these questions in writing prior to the Annual Meeting. There will be an opportunity for questions to be raised during the Special Session. The APRs will be issued and made available on the NASCO website (www.nasco.int/implementation_plans_cycle2.html).

The Secretariat will prepare a summary of the sections of the APRs concerning changes to the IPs, stock status and catches and additional information required under the Convention, CNL(15)13.

5.2 **Theme-Based Special Session: Maintaining and improving river connectivity with particular focus on impacts of hydropower**

Last year the Council decided to hold the first Theme-based Special Session (TBSS) on 'Management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on stocks below their conservation limits'. In view of the very valuable exchanges at this session the Council decided to hold a further TBSS during the Thirty-Second Annual Meeting.

However, as there will be consultations on new regulatory measures in both the West Greenland and North-East Atlantic Commissions, the Council decided to allocate only half a day to the 2015 TBSS. The APR Review Group was asked to identify a topic and develop a Programme for the TBSS in conjunction with the Secretariat. This session will be held on the afternoon of Wednesday 3 June on the topic of ‘Maintaining and improving river connectivity with particular focus on impacts of hydropower’. The Programme for the session is contained in document CNL(15)14. The objectives of the TBSS are to review and share best practice on the approaches taken by NASCO Parties and jurisdictions to: balance the pressures to refurbish existing and install new obstructions against the potential impacts on river connectivity, with particular reference to hydropower developments; mitigate the impacts of existing obstructions, including hydropower schemes, on salmon populations; and evaluate the benefits and costs of removing dams and other obstructions. Presentations for the Theme-based Special Session will be distributed. There will be an opportunity for Parties and observer organisations to display posters relevant to the theme of the session, i.e. improving and restoring river connectivity.

5.3 Progress in implementing the ‘Action Plan for Taking Forward the Recommendations of the External Performance Review and the Review of the ‘Next Steps’ for NASCO’

A report, CNL(15)15, will be presented on progress in implementing the measures contained in the ‘Action Plan for taking forward the Recommendations of the External Performance Review and the Review of the ‘Next Steps’ for NASCO’, CNL(13)38, which was adopted at the Thirtieth Annual Meeting in Drogheda.

5.4 Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry

In 2013, the Council agreed that the regular meetings of the ISFA/NASCO Liaison Group would not continue but that if a specific need arose, consideration would be given to convening a joint *ad hoc* group. The Council decided to retain an item on its Agenda during which a representative of ISFA could be invited to participate in an exchange of information on issues concerning impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon. Accordingly, a representative of ISFA has been invited to attend the Thirty-Second Annual Meeting.

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

This Agenda item was included for the first time in 2006, in accordance with the Strategic Approach for NASCO’s ‘Next Steps’ (CNL(05)49). There will be an opportunity for any relevant information to be presented by the Parties and NGOs. ICES has also been asked to report on any significant new or emerging threats to, or opportunities for, salmon conservation and management.

5.6 Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Salmon Management

In 2013, the Socio-Economic Sub-Group reported on its work in further developing web pages relating to the socio-economic aspects of the wild Atlantic salmon. The Council agreed that this aspect of the Sub-Group's work had been completed with the exception of any updating required to these web pages as new information becomes available. The Sub-Group had previously prepared tables of socio-economic information on rod and line and net and trap fisheries. Since this information was mainly more than five years old and was incomplete, the Sub-Group had recommended that these tables should not be included on the NASCO website. The Sub-Group had, however, recommended that the Parties/jurisdictions advise the Secretariat of any new studies relating to the socio-economic values of the wild Atlantic salmon. The Council agreed that any new studies reported to the Secretariat will be detailed in the Secretary's Report, CNL(15)6. The Theme-based Special Session should allow for consideration of socio-economic factors in relation to decisions relating to river connectivity. For example, the Review Group has asked that presentations indicate how, where hydropower developments are approved on the basis of overriding socio-economic factors, any losses of productive capacity are minimised and compensation or mitigation measures agreed so that there is no net loss of productive capacity

5.7 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, have increased 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 2012, the Council had agreed that the President should write to the French authorities inviting them to become a member of NASCO and this letter was sent on 26 February 2013. A follow up letter was sent by the Secretary on 17 February 2015. Any new information in relation to the management and sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery will be presented, CNL(15)16. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) has been invited to attend the Thirty-Second Annual Meeting.

5.8 Reports on the Conservation Work of the Three Regional Commissions

The President will ask the Chairman of each of the regional Commissions of NASCO to report to the Council on the work of their Commission.

6. Other Business

6.1 Any other business may be raised.

7. Date and Place of Next Meeting

7.1 The Council had previously accepted an invitation from the European Union to hold its Thirty-Third Annual Meeting in Germany during 7 – 10 June 2016. The meeting venue will be confirmed.

7.2 The Thirty-Fourth Annual Meeting may be held during 6 - 9 June 2017 either in Edinburgh or elsewhere at the invitation of a Party.

8. Report of the Meeting

8.1 A draft report of the meeting will be circulated for the approval of the Council.

9. Press Release

9.1 A draft Press Release will be prepared for consideration by the Council.

Secretary
Edinburgh
10 April 2015