

CNL(16)59

Summary of discussions during the Special Session on the evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2013 - 2018 Implementation Plans

Dr Hanna í Horni (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)): thanked the Review Group for its important work and noted that while there have been developments and progress, it is clear from the evaluations that challenges remain. She indicated that although the Faroe Islands and Greenland have refrained from fishing for salmon or greatly reduced their fisheries, there has been no improvement in the status of stocks and the other Parties need to step up their actions in rivers and coastal waters to conserve and restore stocks. There is a need for full transparency in reporting on the actions taken.

Mr Dan Morris (United States): noted that much information had been provided through the Annual Progress Reports (APRs) and he thanked the Review Group for their work in evaluating this. He noted that the West Greenland Commission had agreed a process to apply the ‘Six Tenets for Effective Management of an Atlantic Salmon Fishery’ to all salmon fisheries conducted by West Greenland Commission Members. He hoped this would be brought forward for consideration by the Council for possible application by all NASCO Parties. He raised a question as to whether more time might be made available for consideration of this matter at the 2017 Annual Meeting.

Mr Ted Potter (European Union – UK (England and Wales), Review Group Chairman): indicated that the role of the Review Group is to evaluate the APRs against the actions in the Implementation Plans. The Group had, however, considered this issue and supported the inclusion of the six tenets into the next cycle of APRs. The Group suggested that the evaluation of fisheries against the six tenets should proceed as planned in the West Greenland Commission and then the outcome could be considered by the Council so that it could resolve if the six tenets should be incorporated into the next cycle of IPs for all Parties due to commence in 2018/19.

Ms Francesca Arena (European Union): thanked the Review Group for its detailed report and its suggestions for further improvement to the reporting process. She noted that not all EU jurisdictions had provided the same level of detail but responses had been provided to the Review Group’s questions and these are contained in document CNL(16)20. She indicated that she would follow up with those jurisdictions where shortcomings had been highlighted by the Review Group and also with regard to the IPs and APRs for France and Portugal.

Mr Steinar Hermansen (President of NASCO): asked the Review Group if the answers provided by the Parties/jurisdictions to its questions, as contained in document CNL(16)20, had been helpful.

Mr Ted Potter (European Union – UK (England and Wales), Review Group Chairman): indicated that the answers were helpful but the Review Group did not evaluate the extent to which the concerns raised had been addressed. While the Parties had put effort into clarifying the information provided it will be important to ensure that this additional information is included in next year’s APRs.

Mr Dan Morris (United States): noted the comment from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) regarding transparency. He recognised that in the past, little

quantitative information had been provided to demonstrate progress in implementing NASCO agreements but the current cycle of reporting through APRs was more complete, comprehensive and transparent.

Ms Sue Scott (Atlantic Salmon Federation/NGO Co-Chair): commended the Faroe Islands for the quantitative data provided at the Theme-based Special Session in order to demonstrate progress towards the international goals for sea lice and escapes. She asked Canada if more detailed information on sea lice could be provided in 2017 and if the more detailed information on escapes, provided at the Theme-based Special Session, could be provided in future APRs.

Ms Sylvie Lapointe (Canada): responded that a new regulation was coming into force that has improved reporting requirements for sea lice and that she would look at the information provided at the Theme-based Special Session with a view to ensuring the same level of detail is provided in the APRs.

Mr Andrew Graham-Stewart (Salmon and Trout Conservation Scotland): congratulated Scotland on the decision to close coastal mixed-stock fisheries for three years from 2016 and noted that this measure deserved recognition and credit. He noted NASCO's role in facilitating this. He highlighted the fact that the Review Group's questions included a request to provide quantitative data to demonstrate progress towards the international goals for sea lice and escapes. While the response provided by Scotland gave a link to the SSPO website, which contains a considerable amount of information, the response did not provide a clear summary of progress. He had carefully analysed the data and the percentage of farms above the threshold for treatment for sea lice under the industry's Code of Good Practice has shown an increasing trend. By March 2016, 66% of farms were above the threshold. He indicated that a graph showing this upward trend would have been helpful.

Mr Willie Cowan (European Union - UK (Scotland)): accepted the point made and reiterated that the ambition remains to have sea lice at the lowest possible level on all marine farms. He agreed to look into the comments made for next year's APR.

Mr Dan Morris (United States): commended Scotland for the closure of its coastal mixed-stock fishery and noted the comment made about the role of NASCO in this decision, including the discussions at the 2014 Theme-based Special Session. He indicated that this type of action is a tribute to the time and effort devoted to the IP and APR process and he appreciated the statement from the European Union that it would be working with all jurisdictions to further improve the APRs in 2017.

Mr Siegfried Darschnik (Der Atlantische Lachs): referred to the information provided in the APR for EU - Germany in which one state (North Rhine Westphalia) failed to refer to bird predation while another (Baden-Württemberg) indicated that 'competing protection concepts' prevent effective measures being introduced for Atlantic salmon. He asked the following questions:

- with regard to the returns in 2015 that are stated as being the highest during the last five years, the number (265) is almost the same as in 2002 (242), so can this be considered to represent progress over the last fifteen years?
- what monitoring investigations are undertaken of downstream migrating smolts referred to in reports of the ICPR and are the results published? If so, how do these compare to those in 2008 and 2009 that showed that only 22% and 19% of the tagged smolts, respectively,

reached the sea in these years and are these percentages the natural mortality rates that would be expected?

- could this high level of in-stream mortality be the reason for the failure to establish a self-sustaining population?
- given the predation by cormorants, should it be made clear that there is no alternative to a sound management programme for cormorants designed to reduce their number to a level that will permit self-sustaining fish populations because, if not, re-introduction efforts for salmon in central Europe will be a waste of money and effort?
- as a first step, will proposals be made to transport smolts downstream in vessels to protect them from predation to demonstrate the extent of the predation issue in fresh water?

Ms Francesca Arena (European Union): indicated that Germany had responded to a question relating to predation in 2015 but it would be challenging to respond to the very detailed questions raised by Der Atlantische Lachs at this meeting. She offered to provide written responses to these questions, to ensure full transparency, after the Annual Meeting.

Dr Craig MacIntyre (Association of Salmon Fishery Boards): indicated that he had just received a report that a major salmon farming company in North West Scotland had lost 300,000 salmon through an escape incident and he asked what actions would be taken to prevent further introgression of farmed salmon genes into wild salmon populations.

Mr Willie Cowan (European Union - UK (Scotland)): indicated that he had also just become aware of this escape incident. He advised that as with all such incidents, the Fish Health Inspectorate would investigate what had happened and take enforcement and remedial action. It is too early to anticipate what those actions will be.

Mr Noel Carr (Federation of Irish Salmon and Sea Trout Anglers): highlighted a number of issues relating to the reporting on aquaculture in the APR for Ireland, but as the relevant Ministry is not present he would not raise these. He indicated that after the Irish election he hoped there would be better consideration of recreational fisheries by the new government. These fisheries generate Euro836 million to the Irish economy compared to Euro50 million from aquaculture. He looked forward to a new era of wild fish management, noting that an application for a 150,000 tonne megafarm had been withdrawn.

Dr Hanna í Horni (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)): thanked the NGOs and the United States for their comments. She indicated that in the Faroe Islands, sea lice counts are made by independent authorities and that estimates of losses allow mortality and escapes to be determined.

Mr Steinar Hermansen (President of NASCO): thanked the Review Group for its work in evaluating the APRs and for its recommendations for improvements to future reporting. He thanked all those who had asked questions and closed the Special Session.