

## WGCIS(16)7

### ***Report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (Updated 9 June 2016)***

***Steigenberger Hotel, Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, Germany***

***5 June 2016***

#### **1. Opening of the Meeting**

- 1.1 The Chairman of the West Greenland Commission (WGC), Mr Ted Potter (European Union), opened the meeting and welcomed participants. He noted that the principal purpose of this Inter-Sessional Meeting was to review the regulatory measure adopted in 2015 including the events in the 2015 fishery and progress in implementing the monitoring and control measures since last year and those planned for the 2016 fishery. He referred to the significant commitment made by Greenland to improve the monitoring and control of its salmon fishery that has involved a considerable amount of work over the last year to improve catch accountability for the salmon fishery in Greenland. He commended Greenland for these efforts, those that are planned for the coming fishing season and for the transparent way in which the Commission had been kept advised over the past 12 months. He noted that the Commission would also need to consider the recommendations from the *Ad hoc* Working Group on the Application of the Six Tenets for Effective Management of an Atlantic Salmon Fishery and decide on how these tenets, which had previously been used to evaluate the Greenland salmon fishery, could be applied to the salmon fisheries conducted by the other Members of the Commission. He noted that the discussions were taking place against a background of continuing low abundance of salmon stocks but he anticipated that the spirit of cooperation that has been built in NASCO over the years would stand the Commission in good stead.
- 1.2 The representative of the United States expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with its partners during this important Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission to review progress in implementing the regulatory measure adopted in 2015. He noted that the work at the Inter-Sessional Meeting would benefit Parties when the Commission meets again during the NASCO Annual Meeting. He recognised that the preparations for the meeting had been considerable and the United States was pleased with the amount of information that had been provided to facilitate the Commission's work. There was no doubt that the process for sharing information on the West Greenland salmon fishery had been robust, and the United States wished to thank Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) for its transparency and openness in providing timely updates on the steps it had taken, and intended to take, to improve monitoring and control of its mixed-stock fishery. He noted that the correspondence received to-date had also provided an appreciation for some of the domestic pressures that the Greenlandic delegation faces in working to improve the

conservation of Atlantic salmon. He stated that nobody ever said fisheries management was easy, and he expressed appreciation for Greenland's hard work. He indicated that the United States sincerely hoped that, in the usual spirit of cooperation, ways could be explored to improve management control and catch accountability in the West Greenland salmon fishery and enhance Atlantic salmon conservation. He advised the Commission that the United States looked forward to the discussions at the meeting and to continuing to collaborate with all West Greenland Commission partners on the important and complex issues to be addressed during the NASCO Annual Meeting.

1.3 The representative of NASCO's accredited NGOs indicated that while the NGOs did not wish to make an Opening Statement, they did wish to commend Greenland for the progress made in relation to monitoring and control of the salmon fishery and plans for further improvements in the future.

1.4 A list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

## **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

2.1 The Commission adopted its Agenda, WGCIS(16)6 (Annex 2).

## **3. Nomination of a Rapporteur**

3.1 Dr Michael Millane (European Union) was appointed Rapporteur for the meeting.

## **4. Review of the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Salmon at West Greenland for 2015, 2016 and 2017, WGC(15)21**

In 2015, the Commission adopted a Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Salmon at West Greenland for 2015, 2016 and 2017, WGC(15)21, (Annex 3). Last year, the Commission agreed to convene an Inter-Sessional Meeting at which it would review implementation of that measure. Details of the proposed management measures for the 2015 fishery were issued to all Members of the Commission on 12 August 2015 and, in a subsequent communication dated 14 October 2015, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that factory landings had been authorised. The report on the fishery contained in WGCIS(16)4 was provided in a communication dated 18 March 2016.

The Chairman informed the Commission that following distribution of document WGCIS(16)4, a short list of questions from the Parties had been sent to Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland). These questions were as follows:

- page 2, paras 4-6: The total catches reported in document WGCIS(16)4 and those used by ICES do not match exactly. Could Greenland clarify the reasons of this difference and indicate which of these value will be used?
- page 2, para 3: The Greenland report refers to some catch reports being 'double counts'. Could Greenland clarify how these were identified?

- page 3, para 2, bullet 2: The report indicates that a number of measures and initiatives will be implemented in the spring of 2016, one of them being the implementation of a unilateral catch limit, adjusted based on the 2015 overharvest. Can you clarify whether or not such a decision will be taken prior to the NASCO Annual Meeting and if so whether there will be scope for any possible revision of this decision based on the discussions in the West Greenland Commission (e.g. considering the different quantity of landings used by ICES);
- page 3, para 2, bullet 3: The report refers to the ‘Implementation of better possibilities to report’. Could you provide further explanation of what this will involve?
- page 4, para 2, bullet 4: The document says that ‘Reports of all catches, including zero catch reports, will be required within one month of the end of the salmon fishing season...’ Could you clarify whether all fishers can report one month after the fishery or if only zero catches can be reported one month after the fishery. If the former, how will you ensure accurate in-season reporting/management?
- it would be helpful if you could clarify what the catch reporting requirements will be in the 2016 and 2017 fishing seasons and whether this will include any new measures to avoid any overharvest (e.g. more frequent reporting from municipalities);
- will statistics be kept on the number of fishermen who are refused licence renewals if they did not submit catch returns in the preceding year?
- could you clarify whether there have been any new enforcement measures or sanctions associated with the new management regime?
- other NASCO parties have expressed a willingness to assist Greenland to further improve management so as to avoid the quota being exceeded. Can you suggest any ways in which they may be able to help?

#### 4.1 **Report on the West Greenland salmon fishery in 2015 (*paragraphs 1 and 2 of WGC(15)21*)**

- 4.1.1 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) provided a brief overview of the Greenland salmon fishery in 2015 based on WGCIS(16)4. He indicated that information had also been provided to the ICES Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS).
- 4.1.2 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that, after agreement of the regulatory measure in 2015, changes were made to the reporting regime with catch reporting required on a daily basis or when the nets were mended. All reported catches during the season were deducted from the 45t quota. When the fishery commenced, factory landings were initially not allowed but, following an amendment of the Executive Order, factory landings were allowed to commence later in the season.

- 4.1.3 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that a licensing system for all fishermen has not been implemented but would be implemented for the 2016 fishery. He noted that when reported catches showed that the 45t quota was fulfilled, the fishery was closed on the 23 October 2015. However, a delay in receiving catch reports from one municipality in the south of Greenland resulted in a post-season revision of the reported nominal catch to 56.3t. He reported that a phone survey was conducted among licenced fishermen who had not reported catches, resulting in a further increase in the reported catch by 2.1t to 58.4t.
- 4.1.4 He also indicated that for 2016, further measures would be implemented and there would be a corresponding revision of the relevant Executive Order. Pursuant to the regulatory measure, the Government of Greenland has already approved a 13t reduction to its unilaterally declared quota of 45t and has now set a quota of 32t for the 2016 salmon fishery in response to the 2015 quota being exceeded.
- 4.1.5 The catches from Greenland's report and from ICES were then compared. The Chairman indicated that the ICES figure did not include the 0.9t catch at East Greenland as ICES only uses harvests from West Greenland for assessment purposes. ICES also included an estimate of the catch by fishermen who could not be contacted during the telephone survey as provided by the Greenlandic representative to ICES. The representative of the United States stated that it was important to distinguish, in the terminology used, which elements of the catch were adjusted. The Chairman responded that a catch of just over 2t was reported by the fishermen who could be contacted during the telephone survey. ICES approved of the proration completed by Greenland which also estimated the catch of 2.94t, weighted by location, made by fishermen who could not be contacted during the telephone survey, making a total of 5t. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Island and Greenland) provided further clarification in a statement as follows:

*In most years there are minor differences between the total catches used by ICES for the assessment and official numbers calculated by the Greenland Authorities (GFLK). The difference relates to the fact that sometimes the international observers register higher catches than are reported to the authorities, although this was not the case in 2015. In 2015, a phone survey among the 197 licence holders that had not reported catches revealed an additional 2.06t from the 105 fishermen interviewed (included in the official statistics). However, the phone survey was unsuccessful in reaching 92 of the 197 fishermen and based on the phone survey data the ICES WGNAS further estimated 2.94t (estimated catches are rarely included in the official statistics).*

*Double counts have in most years been related to the fact that for salmon, the vendor (the fisherman) and the buyer (the factory) are by law required to report salmon landings. Since both fishermen and factories report the same landings this leads to double reporting of the same landing events. In this case, the double reporting is not complete, since the fishermen knows that the factory will also report the salmon landings as they do for all species purchased. Furthermore, since in-season reporting was mandatory in 2015, both markets (at least in Nuuk), hunting officers and fishermen sent/collected catch reports, leading to reports being received by the authorities in multiple copies (copy*

*machine used on the reports). When going back through the original paper catch reports it was confirmed that the double reports were indeed identical.*

*Since the same fishing event is occasionally reported through several channels (either via the factory or identical copies) it was necessary to remove the duplicate catch reports from the statistics. As in previous years, duplicate catch reports were identified when the same fisherman, on the same date, occurred several times in the statistics. It seems highly unlikely that a fisherman would empty his nets twice a day and have the same catch.*

- 4.1.6 The representative of the United States stated that he understood the differences in the catch figures, but enquired as to which figure should be used under the regulatory measure, indicating that a total catch of 61.8t might be more appropriate. The representative of the European Union asked Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) whether any further effort had been made to account for unreported catches from fishermen who could not be contacted during the telephone survey, in a similar way to the efforts deployed to remove the duplicate catch reports from the statistics. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Island and Greenland) indicated that he would seek further clarification on this matter from the relevant contact in Greenland.
- 4.1.7 In response to a question from the representative of Canada, the representative of ICES provided further clarification on the corrections used in the ICES assessment of total catch. These included the adjustment made from telephone surveys and the effect of the rounding of decimals from the individual components of catch, the latter of which may account for other minor discrepancies in reported catch. In response to a question from the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Island and Greenland), the representative of ICES stated that the figure of 10t for unreported catch has been employed for at least three years in the run-reconstruction of PFA. The representative of the United States stated that Greenland had reported a catch of 58.4t to NASCO following the phone survey and including the catch at East Greenland. ICES had used a catch of 60.9t for the purposes of assessment but did not include the catch at East Greenland (0.9t) which would result in a catch of 61.8t in total.
- 4.1.8 The Chairman asked the Parties if there was any objection to using the official reported catch (58.4t) as a basis to assess the quota to be set in 2016. There was discussion of this but no decision was taken pending further clarification from Greenland on several questions posed.
- 4.1.9 The Chairman further raised the issue of how duplicate counting of reported catch was resolved by Greenland. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that this principally related to both fishermen and factories, and occasionally markets reporting the same landing events. A review of the catch reports facilitated the detection and subsequent removal of duplicate counts. These were easily identified as it was highly unlikely that the same fisherman would land the same amount of catch on the same day.

- 4.1.10 The representative of the European Union enquired as to whether there has already been a decision by the Greenlandic Government to adjust the quota for the 2016 fishery season to account for the 45t quota being exceeded in 2015; if so, she asked if this was based on the 58.4t catch reported in 2015 and what the quota would be for 2016. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) confirmed that this was the case and the quota for the 2016 fishery has already been set at 32t. In response, the representative of the European Union enquired as to why a reduction 13t rather than 13.4t was applied. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that the 13t reduction in the quota has already been passed by Executive Order and this will be the figure applied.
- 4.1.11 The representative of the European Union sought clarification as to whether a revision of the Executive Order to licence unlicensed fishermen for the 2016 fishery could also facilitate any further revision of the quota already set by Greenland. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) responded that issuing licenses to currently unlicensed fishermen will be contained in a further Executive Order. He reconfirmed that the decision to reduce the quota in 2016 by 13t has already been taken and that this will be the figure applied. He further informed the Commission that the total catch figure used in any adjustment to the quota must be based on official figures (including official reports, landings calculated with conversion factors and additional reports from phone surveys), and therefore it would not be possible to include unreported catch estimates as this would necessitate a change in established fisheries legislation.

#### **4.2 Progress in implementing the Updated Plan for Implementation of Monitoring and Control Measures in the Salmon Fishery at West Greenland (*paragraph 5 of WGC(15)21*)**

- 4.2.1 The Commission reviewed progress in implementing the Updated Plan for Implementation of Monitoring and Control Measures in the Salmon Fishery at West Greenland, WGC(15)20 (Annex 4). The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) informed the Commission that a licensing system for all fishermen has not been implemented to date but this would be implemented for the 2016 fishery.
- 4.2.2 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) confirmed that fish factories are only permitted to accept landings of salmon where they have been authorised to do so, and fishermen are advised that the landing of salmon at non-authorised factories is not permitted. This measure has already been in place since 2015.
- 4.2.3 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) confirmed that fish factories will report landings by weight and also, where possible, by number no less frequently than on a weekly basis. In 2015 this was reported on a daily basis. The representative of the United States asked if the issue of late reporting with the one municipality was related to factory landings. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) responded that fishermen who could not report by e-mail had reported their catches to the municipality in question, but the information had

not been forwarded on as occurred with all other municipalities but held until after the close of the season; these landings were not related to factories.

- 4.2.4 The representative of the United States sought clarification as to how catches are regularly monitored to facilitate in-season monitoring of the catch limit. He asked if there was a single point of contact in communities or are reports received by central government from individual fishermen. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) responded that fishermen with access to email and telephone can report directly, however, other fishermen report to their respective municipality and in turn the municipality reports to the centralised fisheries control unit.
- 4.2.5 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) confirmed that in 2016 all licensed salmon fishermen will be required to provide a seasonal catch report, including zero catch reports, within one month of the end of the salmon fishing season. He also confirmed that it had not yet been possible to implement the measure under which a failure to report catches would result in no license being issued for the following year even in the case of zero catch. This is a sensitive issue and a number of potential difficulties had been raised, including claims related to human rights. However, the government is engaged in discussions on this issue.
- 4.2.6 The representative of the NGOs enquired as to which municipality had reported late. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) confirmed that this was the Kommune Kujalleq municipality based in the south of Greenland. In follow up, the representative of the NGOs asked if the catch in this area is particularly large. The representative of the United States added that the additional catch represented 30% of the quota and queried whether this instance accounted for the entire amount of catch over quota. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) responded that there are no available figures to answer this as such analysis has not been conducted. However, he will enquire about this with the fisheries control unit and further noted that other reports of landings were received from fishermen in this area during 2015. In addition, he reiterated that the instance of late reporting by the municipality was exceptional and it was not expected to occur again in future. The representative of the United States indicated he was pleased to hear about improved reporting and sought details on the amount of the late report. The Chairman added that catches in NAFO region 1F are quite variable with high catches in some years and low in others.
- 4.2.7 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) confirmed that information had been provided to fishermen and supervisors at open air markets explaining the rationale for the sampling programme and the findings of the programme to date through the members' magazine of the Fishermen and Hunters Organization (KNAPK) and press releases. The coordinator of international sampling programme confirmed that no issues arose with samplers being denied access to landings in 2015.
- 4.2.8 The representative of the European Union asked how many licenses will be granted in 2016. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)

expects 300-400 licences to be issued. The representative of Canada asked what challenges are foreseen in regard to implementing the reduced quota for the 2016 fishery and what measures are proposed to address this. In response, the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated they are considering not allowing any factory landings as this would simplify monitoring of the catch against the quota and as a result the quota uptake would be slower. He added that they are also considering delaying the fishery season. Furthermore, only the decision on the total quota has been taken in this regard to date and all other relevant control matters will be decided in July or before the fishery commences on the 15 August. The representative of the United States raised queries on enforcement capability and approach in regard to the expansion of permitting requirements to all salmon fisheries in Greenland to ensure all fishermen have the required permits. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that the same level of existing resources in place in 2015 will be employed in 2016. The representative of the United States asked what measures will be undertaken to withhold permits for fishermen who do not report landings in the preceding year, understanding that this is a sensitive issue in Greenland. Furthermore, he asked what incentives are in place to encourage reporting. In response, the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that it was premature to open discussion on these matters before an internal consultation is undertaken in Greenland.

- 4.2.9 In response to a question from the Chairman, the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that there is currently no intention to review the Updated Plan for Implementation of Monitoring and Control Measures in the Salmon Fishery at West Greenland or recommend any changes to it. The representative of the United States indicated that additional consideration could be given to assessing the effectiveness of the Plan and proposing solutions to any problematic issues where appropriate.
- 4.2.10 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that currently there were no plans to implement any additional measures to improve the opportunities to report catches other than exploring the application of smart phone technology. The representative of the United States indicated support for the use of electronic media to facilitate more timely reporting of catch and offered Greenland assistance in this regard. He noted that the United States had offered such support, including through the Fishackathon forum, for such initiatives and that he would be delighted to forward any relevant queries. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) further advised that Greenland is currently working to revise an Executive Order on fisheries reporting mechanisms, however, at this time, it is uncertain what elements or improvements will be included therein. The representative of the United States noted the communication issue that resulted in one municipality reporting catches later than expected and suggested that ideas such as management buffers would be useful to improve the monitoring of in-season catches to ensure better protection from the risk of exceeding the quota set. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) reiterated that this was an exceptional and unexpected event and the further implementation of daily reporting would mitigate for

this. In addition, he emphasised the intensity of associated awareness-raising initiatives (e.g. a total of 2 hours of radio spots before the news each day) which created a strong public awareness of the reporting requirements.

4.2.11 The Chairman noted that as a result of concerns already raised, it would be premature to discuss the issue of whether statistics would be kept on the number of non-reporting fishermen whose licences were refused in the following year.

4.2.12 In response to a query by the Chairman, the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that no consideration has been given to updating or amending existing enforcement procedures.

4.2.13 In conclusion, the Chairman noted the willingness of other Parties to support Greenland in improving monitoring and control, and the representative of the United States noted that the discussion around these matters was very productive, that Greenland's contributions were very much appreciated and that it would be useful that some of the issues raised would be revisited to inform the discussion of the six tenets.

#### 4.3 **Report of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on the Application of the Six Tenets for Effective Management of an Atlantic Salmon Fishery (paragraph 6 of WGC(15)21)**

4.3.1 The *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Monitoring and Control that had met in Nuuk, Greenland in October 2014 had developed a matrix for applying six tenets for effective management of an Atlantic salmon fishery and used this to evaluate the monitoring and control of the salmon fishery at West Greenland. This evaluation resulted in the agreement of enhancements in the form of the Updated Plan for Implementation of Monitoring and Control Measures in the Salmon Fishery at West Greenland, WGC(15)20. The Working Group had recommended that the six tenets be applied by all Members of the West Greenland Commission and had recognised that the evaluation of these fisheries should be consistent with that undertaken for the salmon fishery at West Greenland.

4.3.2 At its Thirty-Second Annual Meeting, the West Greenland Commission agreed Terms of Reference for an *Ad hoc* Working Group on the Application of the Six Tenets for Effective Management of an Atlantic Salmon Fishery, WGC(15)23. The *Ad hoc* Working Group was asked to develop an approach and suggested timeline for the application of the six tenets process to all Atlantic salmon fisheries conducted by Members of the West Greenland Commission. As a first step, Parties/jurisdictions were requested to provide a self-assessment for their fisheries (excluding jurisdictions from the northern NEAC stock complex) according to the procedures outlined in document WGC(14)2. The *Ad hoc* Working Group held its meeting in Dublin, Ireland, during 16 and 17 February 2016 and the Chairman, Dr Ciaran Byrne (European Union), presented its report, WGCIS(16)3 (Annex 5).

4.3.3 He indicated that the Working Group had considered that there was a need for some clarification of the text used in describing the six tenets as outlined in document WGC(14)2 and, furthermore, it was agreed to develop guidance on each tenet to

support the assessment process. The Working Group had also discussed possible additional tenets, but decided that the existing six tenets, with some clarification and guidance on the basis for the assessment, would be sufficient to evaluate all salmon fisheries conducted by Members of the Commission. The Working Group developed a revised matrix but recognised that due to the number of jurisdictions involved in the broader application of the six tenets, it would be a substantial task for a group to conduct the assessments. The Working Group recommended, therefore, that self-assessments be undertaken by 31 December 2016 using the revised matrix, and proposed that it would be more consistent with the review of the Greenland salmon fishery if these self-assessments were then subject to review. The self-assessments could then be reviewed in 2017 either by:

1. a further Working Group established by the West Greenland Commission;
2. the West Greenland Commission itself at an Inter-Sessional Meeting; or
3. the Implementation Plan/Annual Progress Report (IP/APR) Review Group.

4.3.4 The Working Group recommended that the review be undertaken within the Commission, ideally by a Working Group (option 1 above) comprising representatives of the Members of the West Greenland Commission and the accredited NGOs, which would report to the Commission's 2017 Annual Meeting or, alternatively during an Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Commission (option 2).

4.3.5 The representative of the United States noted that tenet 2 referred to measures to effectively limit catch and/or harvest and that these should be determined by evaluating risk of not meeting agreed management objectives under various levels of catch and/or harvest. The representative of the United States asked for clarification as to the changes made to the six tenets. The Chairman of the Working Group indicated that tenet 2 had been changed from 'Effectively limiting catch' to 'Effectively limiting catch and/or harvest' to reflect the existence of catch and release fisheries, and tenet 6 had been changed from 'Fishery sampling' to 'Scientific fishery sampling' to focus the tenet on the scientific assessment process'.

4.3.6 The representative of the United States also asked if there was an expectation that Parties would compare their self-assessments against events in the fishery e.g. whether quotas were exceeded. He also asked if the Working Group had considered the next step after applying the self-assessments in terms of whether it would be expected that, where a tenet was not being met or was only partially met, the Party concerned would be expected to implement improvements. The Chairman of the Working Group indicated that the assessment should be compared to events in the fishery. This might also arise during the review of the measure, and to be consistent with the review of the Greenland fishery which had led to measures to improve monitoring and control, other Parties would also be expected to take action to improve their monitoring and control measures.

4.3.7 The representative of Canada asked if any consideration had been given specifically to incorporating traditional knowledge into the six tenets assessment. The Chairman of the Working Group indicated that the intention was to keep the six tenets general and

applicable to all fisheries so no specific reference had been included but it was recognised that such information can be valuable.

- 4.3.8 The Commission agreed the revised matrix for the application of the six tenets for effective management of an Atlantic salmon fishery, WGCST(16)16 as contained in Annex 4 of the *Ad hoc* Working Group's report. It was agreed that self-assessments should be conducted by each Party/jurisdiction of the West Greenland Commission (excluding Finland and Sweden) and submitted to the Secretariat no later than 31 December 2016. These self-assessments would be compiled by the Secretariat and issued to Members of the Commission and the NGOs. The Commission noted that the application of the six tenets is part of the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure, WGC(16)21, and that it would be appropriate to review the self-assessments as part of that process during an Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Commission to be held immediately prior to the 2017 Annual Meeting. These meetings are open to NASCO Parties and its accredited observers. In order to assist with preparations for that meeting, the Secretariat would request that any questions on the self-assessments be provided in advance of the meeting, no later than 1 March 2017 and that Parties would be asked to provide written responses by 1 May 2017.
- 4.3.9 The Commission noted that the Implementation Plan/Annual Progress Report Review Group had suggested that if the six tenets were to be applied more widely to include all NASCO Parties/jurisdictions, consideration might be given to including the monitoring and control elements covered by the six tenets in the new Implementation Plans for 2018/19 (see CNL(16)13). The Commission noted that any consideration of the wider application of the six tenets should not delay their application by Members of the West Greenland Commission.

#### 4.4 **Other elements of the Regulatory Measure (paragraphs 4 and 8 of WGC(15)21)**

- 4.4.1 Sub-paragraph 4 of the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure states that efforts will be made to identify and implement temporal or spatial harvest restrictions that would provide increased protection for weaker stocks taking into account information provided by ICES. In 2015, ICES was asked to advise on changes to temporal and/or spatial fishery patterns that may provide increased protection for weaker stocks. The representative of ICES indicated that the analyses presented in the ACOM advice, CNL(16)9, did not provide clear evidence of temporal and/or spatial management options for the fishery at West Greenland that would provide increased protection for weaker stocks. Although sample sizes may not be optimal, the best available information suggests that the contributing North American and European stocks sufficiently mix along the coast of West Greenland and across the fishing season. The contributions to the harvest by the regional stock groupings closely mirrors the modelled estimates of MSW stock abundance, further supporting the suggestion that the stocks are well mixed within the fished complex. Although some weak relationships were identified (e.g. a higher contribution of North American river-age 1 fish in week 31, a greater number of European river-age 1 fish in the north), these relationships remain preliminary and further analysis of these data, increased genetic sampling of the fishery, and further refinement in the genetic baselines

used for regional assignments may be needed to investigate these patterns further.

4.4.2 Last year ICES had also been asked to provide advice as follows:

- compare contemporary indices of abundance of salmon in the West Greenland fishery to historical estimates and to suggest options for improving future estimates (see 4.4.3 below); and
- estimate the effects of modifying the timing of the West Greenland salmon fishery, including altering the start date, with regard to harvest and exploitation of contributing stocks (see 4.4.4 below).

4.4.3 The representative of ICES indicated that the previous conclusion that CPUE during the harvest period adequately reflects the overall PFA level appears to remain valid when updated with data for 2012 to 2015. The recent CPUE values are low compared to historical estimates; this supports the previous conclusions from ICES that stock abundance is low at West Greenland. Anecdotal reports of high abundance of salmon at Greenland may be the result of localised concentrations of abundance, localised catch success, or shifting baseline of perception. It was noted that there is scope to explore alternative fishery-independent methods to estimate stock abundance at Greenland.

4.4.4 The representative of ICES reported that based on characteristics of the fish in the fishery, the estimated changes in weights over the period of sampling (weeks 31 to 44), and the assumed natural mortality rate of salmon, there would be some small gains in escapement (2.5% for NAC) which could be realised from delaying the opening of the fishery season to at least mid-September (week 38). However, the number of fish harvested would be reduced by almost 15% from the base scenario, which would result in a lower exploitation rate on the stock overall, and could favour protection of weaker stocks assuming equal availability to the fishery.

4.4.5 The representative of the European Union asked if it would be possible that, in future ACOM reports, all the recommendations developed by the ICES WGNAS are included. The representative of ICES agreed that this should be possible. In response to a question from the representative for Canada concerning the time spent by southern and northern North American origin salmon at Greenland, the representative of ICES indicated it was not possible to say whether different groups of stocks remained at West Greenland for different lengths of time.

4.4.6 Sub-paragraph 8 of the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure states that States of origin will explore opportunities to share experiences with Greenland on monitoring, management control and surveillance in the salmon fishery, including on carcass tagging, through knowledge-sharing exchange programmes. The Chairman referred to the reference made by the United States to provide information on the Fishackathon. The representative of the European Union reiterated an earlier offer to share with Greenland on the experience of EU Member States/jurisdictions on carcass tagging.

## **5. Other Business**

- 5.1 The Chairman noted that the Commission would need to appoint a representative to the Standing Scientific Committee (SSC). The SSC comprises a manager and a scientist from each Commission and the West Greenland Commission would need to appoint a replacement for Ms Katrine Kaergaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)). The Commission appointed Mr Esben Ehlers (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)) to serve on the Standing Scientific Committee.
- 5.2 The representative of the United States referred to the fact that the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had kindly agreed to seek additional information about the discrepancy in catches reported to NASCO and those in the ICES report and on the exceedance of the quota. He requested that this information be made available in advance of the Commission's Annual Meeting if possible.

## **6. Report of the Meeting**

- 6.1 The Commission agreed a report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting.

## **7. Close of the Meeting**

- 7.1 The Chairman thanked the participants for their contributions to the Inter-Sessional Meeting and closed the meeting.