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Press Release

Twenty-First Annual Meeting
Reykjavik, Iceland
June 7 - 11, 2004

**At 20 Years
Leading Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
Looks To The Challenges Of Its Future**

“To conserve the King of Fish, NASCO is taking a key step to remain at the forefront of fisheries management, reflecting contemporary developments in the best science, management practices and international cooperation.”

- Jacque Robichaud, President of NASCO

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), an intergovernmental organization formed to promote the conservation, restoration, enhancement, and rational management of salmon stocks in the North Atlantic Ocean, met from 7 to 11 June 2004, in Reykjavik, Iceland. Its members are Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America.

On the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Organization, NASCO committed itself to the development of a dynamic and new vision. Building on its successes to-date and recognizing the urgent need to take action, NASCO will review its capability of addressing the major challenges facing the Organization in the future management and conservation of the wild Atlantic salmon. NASCO's work must reflect contemporary developments in science, management practices and international

cooperation. This fundamental review will include wide consultation with accredited NGOs and other stakeholders. To ensure a comprehensive and inclusive process, a major consultative meeting is planned for early 2005. The review will ensure that NASCO remains at the forefront of international fisheries management and is fully responsive to the needs of the wild salmon and to the interests of all stakeholders.

Despite significant and constructive international cooperation and improvements in salmon fisheries management, the abundance of stocks of salmon in the last two decades has declined markedly, to critical levels in some areas. Wild Atlantic salmon face a wide range of threats in the course of their epic migrations from the rivers to the seas and back again. There is a clear need to ensure that NASCO, as an organization, is fully equipped to address the many challenges these threats pose to the future of wild salmon.

In the area of fisheries management, NASCO remains a leader among international fisheries organizations in its commitment to the Precautionary Approach, a responsible risk-averse strategy for resource management. NASCO Parties have now completed the process of drafting all the implementing guidelines for the Precautionary Approach in respect to the management of wild Atlantic salmon. To this end, they have initiated the process of reporting on the progress on the implementation of the key guidelines. As part of the completion of this process, in 2004, NASCO examined the application of the Precautionary Approach in relation to socio-economic factors in salmon management.

The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (IASRB) had been established to direct and coordinate a programme of research to identify and explain the causes of marine mortality. The Board has updated its inventory of research; it has estimated the cost of ongoing essential research at some £4.3 million. NASCO Parties have contributed or pledged an additional £180,000. The IASRB continues to seek additional contributions from private companies, governments, organizations and individuals with an interest in wild Atlantic salmon conservation.

NASCO Parties recognized the continuing sacrifices made by Greenland fishermen in agreeing to halt commercial fisheries at West Greenland for 2004. There is an ongoing requirement to meet subsistence needs and this is also recognised. With respect to the Faroe Islands fishery, NASCO acknowledged the restraint demonstrated by the Faroe Islands in not having had a commercial salmon fishery for a number of years. However, it was not possible to agree on specific management measures as per the Convention to control the fishery in 2005. Nevertheless, in the event of a fishery, the Faroe Islands have agreed to take internal management decisions on the basis of current ICES advice. France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon), the only party catching Atlantic salmon although not a member of NASCO, has recently committed to enhancing its cooperation with the Organization by continuing its research programme on the St. Pierre and Miquelon fishery.

There were representatives from 12 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attending the meeting. Two new NGOs were accredited to the Organization in 2004. The NGOs continued to participate in the work of the NASCO in a positive and active manner.

Dr Ken Whelan from the European Union was elected as President of NASCO for a period of two years. Mr Arni Isaksson from Iceland was elected as Vice-President. Mr Jacque Robichaud from Canada stood down as President after four years but has been asked to remain with the Organization as a Special Advisor to NASCO and Chairman of the IASRB. The Council unanimously expressed its great gratitude to Mr Robichaud for his outstanding work for the Organization.

The next Annual Meeting of NASCO will be held from 6 to 10 June 2005 in Vichy, France.

The report of the NASCO Annual Meeting, including the annexed documents, as well as other essential information on the Organization, can be accessed at the NASCO website: www.nasco.int.

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