



Agenda item 6.12
For information

Council

CNL(02)28

Report on Initiatives within FAO of Relevance to NASCO

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1. FAO Conference on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem

1.1 A Conference on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem, jointly organised by the Government of Iceland and the FAO and co-sponsored by FAO, Iceland and Norway, was held in Reykjavik, Iceland, during 1-4 October 2001. The objectives of the conference were to gather and review the best available knowledge on marine ecosystem issues, to establish how ecosystem considerations could be included in capture fisheries management and to identify future strategies and challenges. National representatives from 60 countries, together with representatives from 21 inter-governmental organizations and 11 non-government organizations, attended the conference, which included a scientific symposium.

1.2 A Declaration on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem was developed ("the Reykjavik Declaration") which recognised, *inter alia*, the following:

- the need to continue effective implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct;
- the need to introduce effective management plans with incentives that encourage responsible fisheries and sustainable use of marine ecosystems, including mechanisms for reducing excessive fishing effort to sustainable levels;
- the importance of strengthening, improving and, where appropriate, establishing regional and international fisheries management organizations and incorporating ecosystem considerations in their work. The importance of improving cooperation between these bodies and regional bodies in charge of managing and conserving the marine environment was also recognised;
- the need to prevent adverse effects of non-fisheries activities on the marine ecosystems and fisheries;
- the need to take immediate action to address urgent problems on the basis of the Precautionary Approach while advancing the scientific basis for incorporating ecosystem considerations;
- the need to monitor the interaction between aquaculture development in the marine environment and capture fisheries through relevant institutional and regulatory arrangements;
- the need to support developing countries in incorporating ecosystem considerations into fisheries management through strengthened international cooperation;
- the need to encourage technology transfer.

- 1.3 In short, it seemed to be a useful meeting but not one that broke new ground. Perhaps it is the first step in changing thinking on this matter. So far as NASCO is concerned I believe that we are already implementing the main proposals. Indeed, our work on habitat protection and restoration in fresh water seems to be well ahead of FAO's actions in relation to marine ecosystems. Copies of the conference documents and Declaration are available at www.refisheries2001.org.

2. **Committee on Fisheries (COFI) Sub-Committee on Aquaculture**

- 2.1 At its meeting in 2001, the FAO Committee on Fisheries established a Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, the Terms of Reference for which included, *inter alia*:

- to provide a forum for consultation and discussion on aquaculture;
- to advise COFI on technical and policy matters relating to aquaculture and on the work to be performed by the Organization in the field of aquaculture;
- to identify and discuss major issues and trends in global aquaculture development;
- to determine issues and trends of international importance requiring action to increase the sustainable contribution of aquaculture to food security, economic development and poverty alleviation;
- to recommend international action to address aquaculture development needs.

- 2.2 This Committee's focus is very much on aquaculture development and it is unlikely to devote much of its work to Atlantic salmon. However, the establishment of a new inter-governmental forum on aquaculture is of interest to NASCO, particularly in relation to FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, which includes provisions on aquaculture development. Last year the Council had agreed that the Committee should be informed of NASCO's work in relation to salmon aquaculture. The first session of the Sub-Committee was held in Beijing, China, during 18-22 April 2002. We did not participate but a report of NASCO's work was submitted to the Sub-Committee's Secretariat. However, while this was made available to the Sub-Committee it was not an official document for the meeting and it was not distributed to participants. A report of the meeting is not yet available but a press release entitled "Towards Sustainable Fish Farming - How to Prevent Environmental Problems and Assure Product Safety and Fair Access to Markets", which is available on the FAO web site, www.fao.org, summarises the findings of the meeting. The main points emerging seem to be as follows:

- 90% of total aquaculture production comes from developing countries, particularly in Asia;
- a good environment and consumer health are key factors that need to be addressed to develop a sustainable aquaculture industry;

- the need to carry out a series of environmental, social and economic risk assessment studies to obtain reliable information on the risks that apply to aquaculture operations;
- acknowledgment that aquaculture can make an important contribution to poverty alleviation and food security and the increasing importance of international trade in aquaculture products;
- since fish supply from marine capture fisheries in most countries is expected to remain constant or even decline, aquaculture will play a major role in meeting the predicted growing demand for fish. [It should be noted, however, that while this statement may be true for some species of herbivorous or planktivorous organisms, Atlantic salmon require a high proportion of fish meal in their diet];
- a suggestion that FAO could develop guidelines for an elaboration of transparent and non-discriminatory "certification of best practices" procedures;
- an urgent need for capacity building, training, technology transfer and information exchange.

The next meeting of the Sub-Committee will be held in Norway in August 2003. As previously requested, we will continue to follow the Sub-Committee's progress and report back to the Council.

3. International Plan of Action (IPOA) on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

- 3.1 The IPOA on IUU fishing was adopted by consensus at the Twenty-Fourth Session of COFI and endorsed by the FAO Council on 23 June 2001. A report on this IPOA was presented to the Council of NASCO at its last Annual Meeting (CNL(01)20) and the Council recognised that NASCO was already taking actions consistent with the IPOA. It was agreed that document CNL(01)20, following minor amendments, should be sent to FAO so that it was aware of NASCO's actions. In accordance with this decision the document was sent to FAO on 2 July 2001.

4. Second Meeting of FAO and Non-FAO Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) or Arrangements

- 4.1 The Second Meeting of RFBs was held in Rome during 20-21 February 2001. NASCO was not represented. A report on the meeting is available in the FAO Fisheries Report Series (No. 645). The meeting discussed a number of issues including a review of some external factors affecting the work of RFBs, indicators of performance of RFBs, cooperation in global trends and status reporting, the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) criteria for listing commercially exploited aquatic resources, ecosystem-based management of fisheries, and the IPOA on IUU fishing.

- 4.2 Support was expressed for the IPOA on IUU fishing which, it was thought, would contribute to a reduction in, and eventual elimination of, IUU fishing. The meeting also emphasised the need for inclusion of appropriate scientific evaluations in decisions to list and de-list species in the CITES. The meeting also noted that there is a need for closer collaboration between RFBs and Regional Seas Convention bodies (RSCs). Further discussion on external factors impacting on management of fisheries and on indicators to assess the performance of RFBs will be deferred to the Third Meeting scheduled for after the Twenty-Fifth Session of COFI in 2003. In this regard, the meeting of North Atlantic Regional Fishery Management Organizations held in London on 10-11 December 2001 expressed concern that they should be seen as independent regional organizations not necessarily linked to FAO's decision-making process, although they are willing to assist FAO bodies to develop their expertise and share experience (see document CNL(02)6).
5. **Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas ("the Compliance Agreement")**
- 5.1 The Compliance Agreement was adopted by the FAO in November 1993 and forms an integral part of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The Agreement will enter into force following the receipt by the Director General of FAO of 25 instruments of acceptance. To date, 22 Parties have deposited instruments of acceptance including Canada, the European Community, Norway, Sweden and the United States of America. The Agreement is open for acceptance by members and associated members of FAO and to non-member States that are members of the United Nations. The Agreement was developed in response to concerns that flagging or re-flagging of vessels was being used as a means to avoid compliance with international conservation and management measures for living marine resources and was, therefore, undermining the effectiveness of such measures.
- 5.2 Under this Agreement each Party is required to take measures to ensure that fishing vessels entitled to fly its flag do not engage in any activity that undermines the effectiveness of international conservation and management measures. In particular, any fishing vessel to be used for fishing on the high seas entitled to fly the flag of a Party to the Agreement must be authorised by the appropriate authority and must fish in accordance with the conditions of authorisation. Furthermore, fishing vessels that have undermined the effectiveness of international conservation and management measures while registered in the territory of a Party to the Agreement shall not be authorised to fish on the high seas by another Party to the Agreement unless certain conditions are satisfied. The Agreement requires the Parties to exchange information on vessels authorised by them to fish on the high seas and obliges FAO to facilitate this exchange of information.
- 5.3 The Compliance Agreement, when adopted, may be a useful initiative complementing those taken by NASCO to address the problem of fishing for salmon by non-Contracting Parties in international waters (see document CNL(02)6).

Secretary
Edinburgh
3 May, 2002