

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization



**Report of the NAFO Standing Committee on International Control (STACTIC)
Intersessional Meeting**

09-12 May 2022
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

NAFO
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
2022

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09-12 May 2022

1. Opening of the meeting

The Chair of STACTIC, Kaire Märtin (European Union) opened the meeting at 12:00 UTC on 09 May 2022. She welcomed the participants present in-person and virtually via WebEx (Annex 1). She acknowledged that this meeting would pose unique challenges as this is the first time NAFO has had an in-person meeting since COVID-19. She also expressed confidence that with the continued cooperation of the delegations, this meeting would be productive despite the ambitious agenda.

Fred Kingston (Executive Secretary) also welcomed the participants. He remarked that this occasion is the first NAFO in-person meeting at the new office located in downtown Halifax and thanked Canada, the NAFO host country, for providing the modernized space.

A minute of silence was held to respect the crew members who lost their lives in the tragic sinking of *Villa de Pitango* in the NAFO Regulatory Area in February 2022.

Opening statements of the delegations are presented in Annex 3. The Russian Federation disagrees with opening statements being annexed as the issues raised in the opening statements are not covered by the NAFO Convention and therefore not within the mandate of the NAFO Commission and its bodies. The Russian Federation called on Contracting Parties to work productively on the agenda as adopted and refrain from discussing and expressing opinions on issues not included in the mandate of STACTIC.

2. Appointment of Rapporteur

The NAFO Secretariat (Ricardo Federizon and Mikaela Soroka) was appointed as rapporteur.

3. Adoption of Agenda

The provisional agenda, as previously circulated, was adopted without changes (Annex 2).

In accordance with the interim procedure established in 2019, Contracting Parties were asked to identify agenda items they deemed to be of a sensitive nature and, in their opinion, were more appropriate to be discussed in an *in-camera* session.

Recognizing the need for a productive meeting, Contracting Parties agreed that all working papers and agenda items would be discussed in an open session, with the exception of agenda item 5 (2021 Annual Compliance Review), agenda item 6 (Review of Article 30, STACTIC WP 22-05 Rev. 2), agenda item 10 (NAFO MCS Website), and agenda item 23 (Impacts of COVID). Following the protocols adopted at the 2019 Annual Meeting, these agenda items would be discussed in an *in-camera* session restricted to government officials and NAFO Commissioners from each delegation.

To better facilitate and manage the schedule, the Chair proposed, and the Contracting Parties agreed, that the *in-camera* agenda items would be addressed together. The *in-camera* agenda items were addressed on the first day of the meeting.

4. STACTIC Participation

Pending the resolution of the issue of participation of the various stakeholders in STACTIC meetings, this meeting followed the interim procedure that was agreed in 2019:

Contracting Parties agreed to follow the procedure established at the 2019 Annual Meeting as an interim solution for this meeting without prejudice to any other future possible decisions about the issue of participation, which was that Contracting Parties identify agenda items and/or working papers which they deemed to be of a sensitive

nature and discussed in an in-camera (closed) session. The in-camera (closed) sessions would be restricted to government officials and NAFO Commissioners from each delegation. Following the in-camera (closed) discussions, the Chair would report out the results or recommendations in open session.

The Secretariat presented STACTIC WP 22-01 which chronicles the efforts in resolving the issue of STACTIC participation since 2018. At the 2021 Annual Meeting it was agreed that Canada, the European Union, Japan, and the United States of America as well as other interested Contracting Parties would continue working on the draft proposal for an updated Rules of Procedure for STACTIC Participation for presentation at this meeting.

The United States of America reported there have been no significant developments since the Annual Meeting. Given the need to advance this important issue and given its impact on other subgroups, the United States of America requested this matter be addressed at the Commission level, so that the Commission can interpret the NAFO Convention and provide guidance to resolve fundamental issues related to the composition of STACTIC delegations and the dissemination of confidential/sensitive information.

The United States of America maintains its position that under the NAFO Convention, Contracting Parties are free to select experts and advisors as members of their delegation, and, therefore, such advisors may attend STACTIC meetings. Each Contracting Party can then develop the necessary safeguards and confidentiality requirements to protect the dissemination of information, pursuant to NAFO CEM Annex II.B – *Rules on Confidentiality*. Any objectionable restriction on this right impinges on a Contracting Party's sovereignty.

According to the United States of America, this issue could easily be resolved if individual Contracting Parties managed their delegation in a manner that addressed their individual disclosure or sharing concerns. But, in order to ensure the spirit and intent of the Convention are upheld, and Contracting Parties' sovereignties are not encroached, the United States of America requested that this matter be raised to the Commission to outline Rules of Procedure for attendance within STACTIC and other relevant NAFO working groups.

The European Union explained that Canada, the United States of America, Japan and the European Union had been working before the 2021 Annual Meeting on draft Rules of Procedures for STACTIC participation and that the main discrepancy at stake is about the participation of commissioners (potentially including non-governmental officials) in closed sessions. The European Union considers that there are related issues such as access to confidential commercial and personal data (including information on criminal investigations) in working papers; namely information extracted from the MCS Website to which only members of the administrations of the Parties can get access. Discussions on participation of commissioners in closed sessions but with restricted access to confidential information are pending. If the participation in closed sessions is unrestricted, the European Union view is that there would be no difference between closed and open sessions. This might change STACTIC dynamics in terms of general participation of non-governmental officials within delegations of the Parties, richness of the discussions and the need to ensure data confidentiality through aggregation and anonymization. The European Union's view is that these topics remain to be discussed by STACTIC, but it will not block a request to the NAFO Commission if the request mentions these issues. The European Union informed STACTIC that it has asked the NAFO Executive Secretary to ensure that the European Union data extracted from the MCS Website remains undisclosed to non-governmental officials.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **STACTIC sends a written request to the Commission prior to the 2022 Annual Meeting requesting assistance of the Commission to come to a resolution regarding participants, other than government officials, in STACTIC Meetings.**

5. Annual Compliance Review, 2021

The Secretariat presented three working papers:

- STACTIC WP 22-02 (Rev.) – *DRAFT Compilation of Fisheries Reports 2021*

This working paper is the compilation of the data/information of the 2021 fishing activities in the NAFO Regulatory Area, by fishing trip, as defined in NAFO CEM Article 1.7. Information sources are the vessel monitoring system (VMS), hail messages delivered by the vessels (Vessel Transmitted Information – VTI), fishing logbook (haul by haul) data, Port Inspection Reports, At-sea Inspection Reports and Reports on Dispositions of Infringements provided by the Contracting Parties as per Article 40 of the NAFO CEM, and Trip Observer Reports sent to the Secretariat.

- STACTIC WP 22-04 (Rev.) – *Summary of Inspection Information for 2021*

This working paper summaries the inspection information for 2021. It consists of the summary of inspections at sea and infringements issued as reported by Contracting Parties with inspection presence, port inspections and infringements issued by port State authorities, disposition of infringements, and hours flown by surveillance aircraft.

- STACTIC WP 22-03 – *DRAFT Annual Fisheries and Compliance Review 2022 (Compliance Report for Fishing Year 2021)*

This working paper is the first draft of the Annual Fisheries and Compliance Review that must be finalized by STACTIC at the 2022 Annual Meeting. Compliance information contained in this working paper are derived from the two working papers mentioned above.

Discussions on these working papers centered on the process of the development of the Annual Fisheries and Compliance Review. The *NAFO Rules of Procedure: Commission 5.1(a)–(e)* was recalled. The general process is that the Secretariat makes a comprehensive provisional compilation of the relevant reports submitted by Contracting Parties. The *Annual Compliance Report* shall be based on this compilation.

Contracting Parties examined STACTIC WP 22-02 (Rev.) and STACTIC WP 22-04 (Rev.) for accuracy and completeness. Deficiencies in the submission of data/information by Contracting Parties were identified. Some Contracting Parties provided comments and observations on the two working papers. Contracting Parties were urged to review further the relevant portions of the compilation and forward the missing information to the Secretariat by 15 June 2022. The Secretariat reminded STACTIC that the compilation will be transmitted to all Contracting Parties (with vessels anonymized) in accordance with Commission Rules of Procedure 5.1(e), i.e., by 20 June 2022 which is 90 days prior to the 2022 Annual Meeting. Also, preliminary comments were given in STACTIC WP 22-03.

Contracting Parties also provided verbal reports on the impact of COVID-19 in their compliance to the NAFO CEM in 2021. It was decided that as in the previous year, the impacts will be included as an annex to the *2022 Annual Compliance Review of 2021 Fishing Activities in the NAFO Regulatory Area*.

STACTIC agreed that:

- Contracting Parties forward missing information and comments, if any, on STACTIC WP 22-02 (Rev.) to the Secretariat by 15 June 2022 for inclusion in the compilation of the 2021 fishing reports.
- Contracting Parties report on the impact of COVID-19 on their compliance to the NAFO CEM using the reporting template outlined in STACTIC WP 21-12 and forward them to the Secretariat by 15 August 2022 for inclusion in the *Annual Fisheries and Compliance Review 2022 (Compliance Report for Fishing Year 2021)*.

- **Contracting Parties forward comments on STACTIC WP 22-03 to the Secretariat by 15 August 2022 for incorporation to the *Annual Fisheries and Compliance Review 2022 (Compliance Report for Fishing Year 2021)*.**

6. Review of Article 30 of the NAFO CEM

The Secretariat presented two working papers: STACTIC WP 22-05 (Rev. 2) – *Summary of Observer Information for 2021* and STACTIC WP 22-26 – *NAFO CEM Article 30 Trend on Enforcement and Regulations*.

STACTIC WP 22-05 (Rev. 2) compiles the Contracting Party submissions on compliance to the observer scheme in accordance with Articles 30.10(d) and 30.6(e). It was noted that the submissions did not come in a standardized format. Some reports were in a tabulated format, some were free text format, and some included both. Seven Contracting Parties submitted their reports – Canada, Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Japan, Norway and the United States of America. The submission of one Contracting Party is missing.

STACTIC WP 22-26 is a tabulation of the observer scheme compliance reports for Contracting Parties from 2019-2021. The tabulation was prepared by the Secretariat to facilitate the discussions on the review of the Observer Program (Article 30) that is required to be conducted in 2022 pursuant to Article 30.19 of the NAFO CEM. Given the impacts of COVID, limited progress had been made on the review, and there was some concern about the feasibility of completing the exercise in 2022.

STACTIC realized that the scope of the review must be agreed first and that the review cannot be accomplished at this meeting. STACTIC agreed to create a small working group whose mandate is to carry out the review. The Terms of Reference will be developed after the STACTIC meeting via correspondence. The working group agreed to have a meeting prior to the 2022 Annual Meeting as it is expected to report to STACTIC in September. Initial consideration was made to include, among others, the following elements in the review: standard reporting template to comply with Article 30.10(d) and 30.6(e), use of cameras by observers, potential use of the Observers Application, simplification of notifications, collection of (Greenland) shark data and Best Practices as recommended by the Joint Catch Estimation Strategy Advisory Group (CESAG). These elements should be considered in the development of the Terms of Reference for the dedicated working group and Canada offered to host this meeting either virtually or in person.

It was agreed that:

- **To create a dedicated working group whose mandate is to carry out the review of Article 30 of the NAFO CEM “Observer Program”. This working group will meet prior to the 2022 Annual Meeting.**
- **In consultation with other Contracting Parties, Canada draft a proposal of the Terms of Reference intersessionally for the dedicated working group to review Article 30 of the NAFO CEM “Observer Program”. The proposal of the Terms of Reference will be reviewed by correspondence and the dedicated working group will report at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**
- **The following elements should be considered in the proposal of the Terms of Reference for the dedicated working group to review Article 30 of the NAFO CEM “Observer Program” – standard reporting template to comply with Article 30.10(d) and 30.6(e), use of cameras by observers, potential use of the Observers Application, simplification of notifications, collection of (Greenland) shark data and Best Practices as recommended by the Joint Catch Estimation Strategy Advisory Group (CESAG).**

7. New and pending proposals on enforcement measures: Possible revisions of the NAFO CEM

Three (3) pending proposals, which were deferred from the 2021 Annual Meeting, were discussed:

1. STACTIC WP 21-51 (Rev. 3) – *Measures to Improve Data Collection of Bycatch of Sea Turtles, Sea Birds, and Marine Mammal (United States)*

To ensure data on bycatch of sea turtles, sea birds, and marine mammals are consistently being collected and reported in NAFO regulatory waters, the United States of America expressed that NAFO CEM Article 30.14 explicitly require observers to collect this data as part of their regular data collection procedures. Some Contracting Parties supported this proposal. One Contracting Party indicated its concerns about singling out these categories of species given that they are covered by the FAO 3-Alpha Species Codes (ASFIS) list and are already expected to be reported by masters and observers. The improvement on data collection would be more a matter of implementation of the observer programme (e.g., training).

STACTIC agreed that:

- **STACTIC WP 21-51 (Rev. 3) will be discussed further at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

2. STACTIC WP 22-21 – *Proposal for Additional Trip Tow Opportunity*

The United States of America submitted a revised proposal STACTIC WP 22-21 that sought two one-hour trial tows upon a vessel's first entrance into the Division. The United States of America suggested that this approach would provide vessels with added flexibility to determine catch composition and that the limited fishing time would assist in mitigating bycatch. Contracting Parties thanked the United States of America for its proposal. Some Contracting Parties expressed concern that one-hour tow times would not be sufficient to gauge catch composition. Additionally, many Contracting Parties were concerned that it would create some internal inconsistency with the existing 3-hour trial tow in Article 6 of the NAFO CEM. The United States of America thanked the Contracting Parties for their feedback.

3. STACTIC WP 21-56 – *Proposal for Trial Tow and Squid Fishery*

Japan re-introduced STACTIC WP 21-56 stating that no real changes or updates were made to their proposal.

As both STACTIC WP 21-56 and STACTIC WP 22-21 are proposals for trial tows, it was suggested by a Contracting Party that the working papers be merged into one proposal. Japan and the United States of America merged STACTIC WP 22-21 and STACTIC WP 21-56 to table a joint proposal outlined in STACTIC WP 22-29 – *Proposal for additional trial tow opportunities*. Some Contracting Parties indicated that they need more time to reflect on this proposal.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **STACTIC WP 22-29 will be discussed further at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

Three (3) new proposals were tabled and discussed:

1. STACTIC WP 22-23 – *Research vessels (NAFO CEM: Article 4)*

This proposal from the European Union pertains to control measures on research vessels. Canada wondered whether this proposal, in its current form, is outside the purview of STACTIC because of its reference to the Scientific Council. Canada and the United States of America indicated that minor modifications may be needed to the proposal, and it is willing to work intersessionally with the European Union to find a way forward. Norway indicated that the Scientific Council's opinion on the proposal should be sought. Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that they have no mandate to undertake the proposal as it stands. The European Union agreed to revise the proposal based on the comments from other Contracting Parties so that this can advance at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **STACTIC, through a letter from the Chair, will forward the draft proposal (STACTIC WP 22-23) to the Scientific Council for comments before the 2022 Annual Meeting, noting that it has not been endorsed by STACTIC yet.**
- **The European Union revise the draft proposal (STACTIC WP 22-23) based on the comments from other Contracting Parties so that this can advance at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

2. STACTIC WP 22-24 – *Streamlining the Notification Process for Observer Deployments: (NAFO CEM Article 30 and Annex II.F2)*

This proposal from Canada intends to relieve the administrative burden of Contracting Parties. Norway and Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that the proposed addition of the field ON (name of observer) in the Catch on Entry report could pose some difficulties due to the scheduling of the deployment of observers. Norway remarked that the name of the observer is already indicated in the observer reports. Canada indicated that it would work intersessionally with other Contracting Parties to modify the proposal.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **Canada would work intersessionally with other Contracting Parties and bring forward a modified proposal of STACTIC WP 22-24 at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

3. STACTIC WP 22-25 – *Addition of Date of Capture to Product Labelling Requirements (NAFO CEM Article 27.34)*

Canada noted that the requirement of “date of capture” already exists for shrimp, and it should be extended to other stocks. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that nearly all labelling is now done electronically and in real time, so this proposal is a challenge. The European Union indicated that it would need more time to look at the possible impacts on current practices on board and scenarios. Canada expressed its willingness to compromise, perhaps for it to be applied only to selected stocks. Canada indicated that it would work intersessionally with other Contracting Parties to modify the proposal.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **Canada would work intersessionally with other Contracting Parties and bring forward a modified proposal of STACTIC WP 22-25 at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

8. Practical application of Port State Measures in NAFO

Canada reported that it has no major concern with the port State Measures but is concerned with the delays on the correspondence and the 3-day prior entry to allow the necessary movement of documents. Masters may need further education on the process regarding the movement of documents.

Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that it noticed that control authorities have different ways of calculating percentages on PSC3s with respect to over and under reporting on the PSC3. It agreed to present a working paper at the 2022 Annual Meeting on this matter.

The European Union reported about the implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and the FAO Global Information Exchange System (GIES) including its ongoing testing in cooperation with certain RFMOs. The European Union suggested that the Secretariat should engage with FAO on this matter. The European Union considers that the PSC platforms should be compatible and able to electronically exchange the PSC information in standardised formats.

Norway suggested that the Secretariat reach out to NEAFC as it has in place a well functioning and efficient electronic system for port State control, which has been effective for several years, and that the NAFO and NEAFC requirements are quite similar. Norway further noted that there is ongoing work on the possibility of linking the NEAFC port State control system to GIES to avoid double reporting, and that this could be useful for NAFO as well.

Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that the NEAFC PSC system is implemented as a web-based system, and is very easy to use, and urged NAFO to implement the same system as NEAFC.

The Secretariat indicated that it has conducted a preliminary evaluation of the NEAFC system in the past. It can not be easily implemented in NAFO unless there is a major restructuring, due to different hardware and software technologies being used. The Secretariat also noted that perhaps a small service contract could assist in moving this forward.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **The Secretariat would reach out to NEAFC on their PSC system and the FAO on its Global Information Exchange System (GIES) to streamline the PSC process in NAFO and provide an update at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**
- **Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) to present a working paper at the 2022 Annual Meeting on calculating percentages in PSC3s with respect to over and under reporting in PSC3.**

9. Marking of gears

At the 2021 Annual Meeting, it was agreed to continue discussions on the marking of gears at this meeting, specifically on the possible insertion of a reference to the *FAO Guidelines on the Marking of Gears* under Article 13.10 of the NAFO CEM. The Secretariat will compile the information on the marking requirement in Article 13.10 using FAO Guidelines and Contracting Parties' feedback for presentation at the 2022 Annual Meeting. Canada suggested a template be used for this compilation.

Japan remarked that STACTIC should consider the amendment, taking into account the necessity and likelihood of risk that each fishing gear type may pose. Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that only Iceland marks longlines electronically and perhaps the marking can be extended. The European Union indicated that FAO Guidelines are a tool for policymakers to establish a marking system, but they do not contain marking rules like those in the *Convention on Conduct of Fishing Operations in the North Atlantic*, so they are not equivalent references, and one cannot replace the other.

The Chair noted that the following Contracting Parties have already submitted documents related to domestic practices of marking: Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Iceland, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

As suggested by the Chair, it was agreed that the Secretariat conducts a comparative analysis of the two documents (*Convention on Conduct of Fishing Operations in the North Atlantic* and the *FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear*) as well as marking practices of the Contracting Parties to be presented at the next meeting. Canada suggested a template of alignment be used to conduct the analysis.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **The Secretariat will develop a template to compile the information on the marking requirement in Article 13.10 using FAO Guidelines and Contracting Parties' feedback for presentation at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**
- **Contracting Parties will submit any outstanding domestic information on the marking of gears using the template provided by the Secretariat.**

- **The Secretariat conducts a comparative analysis of the two documents (Convention on Conduct of Fishing Operations in the North Atlantic and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear) as well as the marking practices of the Contracting Parties to be presented at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

10. NAFO MCS website and application development

The Secretariat presented an overview of some of the latest enhancements to the MCS Website requested by the European Union. A project status update was also provided for the Observer and electronic Port State Control applications. Contracting Parties thanked the Secretariat for the presentation. Canada mentioned their continued support for the Observer application. The European Union thanked the useful improvements done by the Secretariat and noted that other elements can be added with regard to the Others Quota uptake. Contracting Parties supported the Secretariat to continue work on the MCS Website enhancements and the Observer application.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **The Secretariat continues the work on the enhancements to the MCS Website and the Observer application.**

11. Report and recommendations of the Editorial Drafting Group (EDG)

The Chair of the EDG, Patrick Moran (United States) reported the outcomes from the last meeting that was held in November 2021 (STACTIC WP 21-57). The EDG made some minor editorial changes for clarity and consistency throughout the 2022 NAFO CEM.

In STACTIC WP 21-57, the EDG forwarded to STACTIC two editing items for further review and consideration:

1. Suggested edits in Article 13.10(a) and
2. Insertion of Subarea 6 in the caption of Annex I.A in consideration of the inclusion of alfonsinos in Subarea 6 in the quota table.

In regards to the first item, the STACTIC discussion is reflected in agenda item 9. In regards to the second item, STACTIC agreed that STACTIC WP 22-07, regarding the insertion of Subarea 6 in the caption of Annex I.A of the NAFO CEM, will be sent to the Commission for adoption at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

At the EDG meeting, the Secretariat was requested to provide a list of NAFO CEM articles where “fly its flag” occurs in the NAFO CEM. The list is presented in STACTIC EDG WP 21-04. The EDG will work on the list with the goal of bringing a proposal for article revisions at the 2022 Annual Meeting. This exercise is being undertaken in response to Recommendation 21 of the 2018 NAFO Performance Review.

Another issue that was brought to the attention of STACTIC is regarding the lost gear map. The EDG noted that the STACTIC decision to post the lost gear map to the NAFO public website contradicts the text in Article 13.15 of the NAFO CEM (STACTIC WP 22-08 Rev.).

Discussions on the lost gear map continued at this meeting. The United States of America expressed concern with sharing vessel or Contracting Party-specific data on the public map. An option is to prepare two versions, one for the public website and one for the secured website. Canada expressed also that longline gear types could be consolidated, and that lost gear positions should be limited to those in the NAFO Regulatory Area. STACTIC WP 22-08 (Rev.) attempts to address the issue. The United States of America agreed to draft a proposal to modify Article 13 for the 2022 Annual Meeting.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **STACTIC WP 22-07, regarding the insertion of Subarea 6 in the caption of Annex I.A of the NAFO CEM, will be sent to the Commission for adoption at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**
- **The EDG will work intersessionally on the list of NAFO CEM articles where “fly its flag” occurs in the NAFO CEM (STACTIC EDG WP 21-04) with the goal of bringing a proposal for article revisions at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**
- **STACTIC continue discussions on the lost gear map (STACTIC WP 22-08 Rev.) and the United States of America will draft a proposal to modify Article 13 of the NAFO CEM for presentation at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

12. Half-year review of the implementation of new NAFO CEM measures

No substantive issue was discussed on this agenda item.

13. Review and evaluation of Practices and Procedures

This is a standing agenda item with the intention of providing Contracting Parties with the opportunity to share their practices and procedures. Contracting Parties can submit relevant documents to the Secretariat to augment the ones on the NAFO members pages.

Contracting Parties reviewed the list of shared documents that are available on the NAFO Members' pages. Some Contracting Parties submitted new documents to share and advised the Secretariat to remove obsolete ones. It was decided that some documents can be made public while others need to remain on the secure section of the website. In this regard, Contracting Parties identified these documents, and they are listed in STACTIC WP 22-09 (Rev. 4).

Any Contracting Party can request to have their own material on the Practices and Procedures page posted to the NAFO public website going forward.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **The Secretariat would use STACTIC WP 22-09 (Rev. 4) to determine which information may be posted to the public website, and which information should be retained on the NAFO Members' pages for presentation at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**
- **The review and evaluation of practices and procedures remain a standing item on the agenda for future meetings.**

14. Review of current IUU list pursuant to NAFO CEM, Article 53

The Secretariat presented STACTIC WP 22-10 highlighting both the current NAFO IUU and Provisional lists. It was pointed out that the vessel *Eros Dos* was removed from the NAFO IUU list, as it was removed by NEAFC from its list due to evidence that it was scrapped.

STACTIC WP 22-22 a proposal on the “*Inclusion of vessels from IUU lists of other RFMOs into the NAFO IUU list*” by Norway, the European Union and the United States of America was presented by Norway. Contracting Parties agreed in principle with the suggested edits to the NAFO CEM but wanted more time to reflect.

The Secretariat presented STACTIC WP 22-20 (Rev.) as an information paper on a project by the International MCS Network on advancing the utility of RFMO IUU Vessel lists. Contracting Parties thanked the Secretariat for the update and expressed support for this project. The Secretariat agreed to share the upcoming draft report as well as provide an update to STACTIC at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **STACTIC WP 22-10 would remain open for further discussion at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**
- **Contracting Parties would review the text and send comments on STACTIC WP 22-22 to Norway, the European Union and the United States of America in advance of the 2022 Annual Meeting.**
- **The Secretariat would provide an update and draft report from the International MCS Network project on advancing the utility of RFMO IUU Vessel lists at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

15. Bycatch and Discards

Discussions under this agenda item focused on landing obligations and, specifically, on the request from the Commission with regard to what control elements would be necessary for NAFO to consider a landing obligation policy.

The European Union reported that although considerable progress had been made up to the 2021 Annual Meeting, there has been limited developments since the creation of STACTIC WP 21-53. There are still some pending contributions concerning domestic practices on landing policy.

It was acknowledged that this topic is quite technical, and a second dedicated meeting is needed in order to make progress. The United States of America remarked that this document is a good starting point, as it highlights not only the enforcement considerations of a potential discard ban, but also the need to fully consider the associated management issues in tandem and encouraged that these issues be discussed in the Commission and Scientific Council.

To facilitate the ongoing dialogue of a discard policy, STACTIC agreed to the creation of a dedicated working group which may be held back-to-back with the working group on the Observer Program Review. The terms of reference would be developed after the STACTIC meeting by correspondence.

Canada commented that there remain divergent views among Contracting Parties on discards. Several Contracting Parties expressed support and willingness to participate in the dedicated working group meeting.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **In consultation with other Contracting Parties, the European Union draft a proposal of the Terms of Reference intersessionally for the dedicated working group to advance the discussions on the landing obligations policies as outlined in STACTIC WP 21-53. The proposal of the Terms of Reference will be reviewed by correspondence and the dedicated working group will report at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**
- **The dedicated working group meeting will be held in advance of the Annual Meeting and may be held back-to-back with the working group meeting on the Observer Program Review.**

16. Discussion of data classification and access rights

The Secretariat presented STACTIC WP 22-13 detailing an update on the work of the *Ad Hoc* virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification.

The *Ad Hoc* virtual Working Group met 12 April 2022 via WebEx. The focus of its meeting was to develop a policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentation, and thereby enhance the transparency of the Organization. In this regard, the *Ad hoc* Virtual Working Group will present a hybrid meeting documentation policy as a possible viable solution, which could ensure transparency without impeding efficiency, to STACFAD for consideration and adoption at the 2022 Annual Meeting of NAFO.

It was noted that the proposed *Ad hoc* Virtual Working Group recommendation will have limited potential impact to STACTIC. Its basis is similar to the recommendation of STACTIC adopted at the 2019 Annual Meeting of NAFO “*Any Contracting Party can request to have their own STACTIC working papers posted to the NAFO public website going forward.*”

The United States of America enquired whether the *Ad hoc* Virtual Working Group had discussed how the recommendation could be applied to working papers prepared by the Secretariat. The Secretariat replied that this issue had not been addressed by the working group but added that it will be raised at the next meeting of the *Ad hoc* working Group.

Regarding the posting of research vessel information to the public website (STACTIC WP 21-46), Contracting Parties were in favor of posting future research vessel information publicly, provided it would not apply retroactively. The EDG was requested to review the NAFO CEM to ensure that no amendments are required for adoption of STACTIC WP 21-46 to ensure and report back to STACTIC at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **The Secretariat would use STACTIC WP 22-09 (Rev. 4) to determine, on the basis of the Contracting Party feedback, which information may be posted to the public website, and which information should be retained on the NAFO Members’ pages.**
- **Any Contracting Party can request to have their own material on the Practices and Procedures page posted to the NAFO public website going forward.**
- **The EDG to review the NAFO CEM to ensure that no amendments are required for adoption of STACTIC WP 21-46 and report back to STACTIC at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**
- **The Ad Hoc virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification would discuss at its next meeting how the NAFO Meeting Documentation Policy would apply to working papers prepared by the Secretariat.**

17. Report and advice of the Joint Advisory Group on Data Management (JAGDM)

The vice-Chair of JAGDM (Natasha Barbour, Canada) presented an update from the JAGDM meeting held on 26 Oct 2021 (COM Doc. 21-22). Two items that STACTIC asked JAGDM to provide on the technical implications were discussed, specifically – any possible technical issues with a definition change for the RA field in the Catch On Exit (COX) message outlined in STACTIC WP 21-36, and the analysis on the consistency of the COX message for NEAFC and NAFO, including NEAFC’s FLUX Area Exit message. Both items required more research. Concerning the COX’s RA field definition, the European Union proposed to JAGDM also consider that a CAT message should be used for the vessel’s last catch if the RA field is different than the division of the vessel’s final catch of the trip. The in-person JAGDM meetings were postponed until the Fall of 2022. Before the 2022 NAFO Annual meeting, the two items will be discussed via email correspondence to reach a conclusion. If technical advice cannot be concluded via email, a web conference will be arranged to discuss these two items. The outcome of the JAGDM meeting will be reported to STACTIC at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

Concerning the COX’s RA field definition, the European Union proposed to ask JAGDM also about a potential alternative approach: the IT implications of restricting the possibility by NAFO masters to use the COX message to report the last CAT information (using a CAT message instead) if the catching and exit area differ.

Concerning the vacant Chair for JAGDM, it was agreed to be a rotating Chair on a strict 2-year cycle (defaulting to a 1-year rotation if no candidate could be found otherwise). The order of the Chair would be alphabetical; Iceland and Canada were considered recent Chairs; therefore, other Contracting Parties were asked to start the cycle of chairing.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **A modified request including a question on potential IT implications of restricting the possibility by NAFO masters to use the COX message to report the last CAT information (using a CAT message instead) if the catching and exit area differ be forwarded to JAGDM, and hopefully will be discussed in JAGDM prior to the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

18. Recommendations from NAFO Working Groups

Two working papers were discussed under this agenda item: STACTIC WP 22-14 and STACTIC WP 22-15.

In STACTIC WP 22-14, the Joint Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management (WG-EAFFM) recommends inserting a footnote in Annex II.N (Fishing logbook) of the NAFO CEM to clarify and match the definition of Start and End of fishing in Annex II.M. At the 2021 Annual Meeting, input from Contracting Parties was sought regarding their domestic definition of Start and End of fishing operations for towed gears. From the input and the subsequent discussion, it was realized that Contracting Parties apply varying understandings with regard to what the masters are expected to report, notably from the initial deployment until the full retrieval of the net versus from the moment the net reaches the fishing depth until the beginning of the retrieval. The European Union expressed concerns on the controllability of the activity within VMEs if operators were able to claim that there was not fishing activity because the gear was not fully deployed, or the retrieval had already started. Several Contracting Parties expressed the possibility to request observers to collect both reference periods. It will be difficult to implement and enforce a standard definition since it must be reported by the fishing masters.

The United States of America remarked that the concepts of tow time and fishing time are important, and information should be uniformly collected, as there are scientific implications. The United States of America volunteered to draft a proposal for review at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

The Chair requested the Secretariat to compile the domestic definitions of start and end times of fishing operations, particularly on trawl and longline gears, to forward to the WG-EAFFM.

In STACTIC WP 22-15, there are two CESAG recommendations: 1) on practicality of adding codend mesh size or hook size to Annex II.N template, and 2) on review of current measures relating to reporting catch by NAFO Division.

STACTIC considers it practical to add codend mesh size to the reporting requirements. However, there is no universal standard of measurement for hook size even if these data are to be collected by observers and it is relevant information for fisheries management. Several Contracting Parties indicated that they require masters to report hook sizes even if not covered by the NAFO CEM, while others would need more time to check this. It was suggested that the trade name of the hook can be indicated instead. In regards to the measures relating to reporting catch by NAFO Division, the newly created working group on the Review of Article 30 "*Observer Program*" might consider discussing this as part of the scope of the review.

STACTIC agreed to:

- **Transmit to CESAG the view that mesh size could be added to Annex II.N template and that it would be necessary, and of added value, to have a standard definition of hook size to be used by observers and so it can be considered to be included in Annex II.N template as a reporting requirement for masters. CESAG is invited to propose a definition of the hook size.**
- **The Secretariat compile the domestic definitions of start and end times of fishing operations, particularly on trawl and longline gears, to forward to the WG-EAFFM.**
- **The United States of America to draft a proposal on the collection of tow and fishing times for presentation at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

19. Discussion on garbage disposal onboard vessels

At the 2021 Annual Meeting, the European Union, the United States of America and Norway agreed to continue work on a joint proposal relating to marine pollution provisions in NAFO in advance of this meeting.

The European Union reported that there is no progress since the 2021 Annual Meeting. In moving further, a possibility would be to map existing marine pollution from fishing vessels within STACTIC. In order to do so, STACTIC should enquire from other NAFO bodies whether they have information on this matter. Afterwards, STACTIC could consider concrete measures in the NAFO CEM, including a general reference to MARPOL Annex V, or other approaches. There were also discussions on the difficulties for fisheries inspectors to enforce MARPOL provisions, unless they are part of the NAFO CEM. The European Union offered to produce a first draft of the STACTIC request to the Commission, for the consideration of STACTIC members.

Norway asked for further clarification regarding challenges related to MARPOL Annex V and inspections at sea. Furthermore, Norway recalled that, on several occasions, it has expressed its view that NAFO should include text in the CEM that flag Contracting Parties shall prohibit their fishing vessels from discharging garbage into the sea, in accordance with MARPOL Annex V. It further expressed concern that a different text from MARPOL could weaken or create ambiguity regarding which requirements would apply.

Norway could go along with the proposal to ask other NAFO bodies for information in regard to problems relating to marine pollution in the NAFO Regulatory Area but emphasized that Norway has not changed its view.

There was some agreement in aligning NAFO measures related to ocean garbage/pollution with those recently adopted in NEAFC, but diverging views on whether other provisions, such as reporting requirements, could also be considered.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **A request be made to the Commission on the possibility that other NAFO specialized bodies, notably the Scientific Council, provide information on the impact of garbage disposal in the NAFO Regulatory Area. The text of the request will be drafted by the European Union and coordinated by STACTIC members by correspondence to support further discussion on possible NAFO CEM amendments, prior to the 2022 Annual Meeting.**
- **STACTIC continues discussion on garbage disposal at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

20. Discussion on labour conditions onboard vessels

The Secretariat presented a working paper noting that not all Contracting Parties have provided their Single Point of Contact (SPOC) (STACTIC WP 22-16 Rev. 2). The Chair reminded Contracting Parties to send their SPOC to the Secretariat. Russia agreed to provide the information at a later time.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **Contracting Parties submit outstanding SPOC information to the Secretariat.**

21. Discussion of the reporting of shark catches in the NAFO Regulatory Area

Natasha Barbour (Canada) presented STACTIC WP 21-49 (Rev. 3) – *Review of Greenland shark Data Collection and Methodologies*. This document was produced by a small group with the goal of identifying a single methodology for observers to collect information as required by Article 30.14(j) and Annex II.M.

With the original mandate of the dedicated group now fulfilled, STACTIC should now consider new measures for the NAFO CEM in this regard. It was noted that STACTIC WP 21-49 (Rev. 3) contained information on guidelines in handling sharks. Contracting Parties were invited to include, in the Practices and Procedures page of the website, their best practices on handling and discards of sharks.

It was agreed that this topic be included in the Terms of Reference of the working group on the Review of Article 30 “Observer Program” and may be extended to other shark species. The requirement for future assistance from the dedicated shark working group will be determined following STACTIC’s review of the information in STACTIC WP 21.49 (Rev. 3).

STACTIC agreed that:

- **Shark data collection and methodologies be included in the Terms of Reference for the working group on the Review of Article 30 “Observer Program”, and maybe extended to other shark species.**

22. Implementation of the Performance Review Recommendations

The Secretariat presented an update on the implementation of the 2018 Performance Review Recommendations 5, 7, 15-22, and 24, which are relevant to STACTIC (STACTIC WP 22-17). There was no change in the draft update except for Recommendation 19 which should now have status “Complete” with the creation of STACTIC WP 21-35.

In addition, STACTIC provided comments and observations on the following recommendations:

- **Recommendation 16** – STACTIC WP 22-19 indicates that there is considerable improvement in recording encounters with VMEs. This coincides with the enhancement of the observer scheme made in 2019. The Secretariat was requested to conduct further analysis on the observers’ data and report to STACTIC at the 2022 Annual Meeting. The results of the analysis may be forwarded to the WG-EAFFM.
- **Recommendation 19** – STACTIC WP 21-35 – *Contracting Party Reporting Deadlines* can be uploaded to the Practices and Procedures Member’s page.
- **Recommendation 20** – STACTIC will re-iterate its request to the Commission at the 2022 Annual Meeting for further guidance in STACTIC discussions of the *FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance*.
- **Recommendation 21** – EDG is working on it (See agenda item 11).
- **Recommendation 24** – STACTIC will reflect further on this at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

With regard to Recommendation 20, Norway re-iterated that in their view, the recommendation from the Performance Review Panel that the NAFO Contracting Parties conduct a flag State evaluation and submit this to STACTIC, would be a very useful exercise, as flag State performance is key the successful implementation of the NAFO CEM. Norway also noted that the *FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance* were agreed through a technical consultation in which NAFO Contracting Parties played an active role, and which was founded by four NAFO Contracting Parties: Canada, the United States of America, the European Union and Norway, in addition to New Zealand.

The European Union expressed concerns about the flag State evaluation in view of lack of progress in other RFMOs, the need for a dedicated evaluation for the NAFO framework and the limited added value of self-evaluations which do not describe the details of the domestic legal framework applying the FAO Guidelines, but only general positive assessments. The European Union expressed the view that the recommendation consists in reviewing the Guidelines’ criteria at NAFO level and that any step further requires a clear commitment by Parties to do a meaningful exercise.

STACTIC agreed that:

- **In regard to the implementation of the 2018 Performance Review: Recommendation 16, the Secretariat would conduct further analysis on the observers’ data and report to STACTIC at the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

- In regard to the implementation of the 2018 Performance Review: Recommendation 19, STACTIC WP 21-35 can be uploaded to the Practices and Procedures Member's page.
- In regard to the implementation of the 2018 Performance Review: Recommendation 20, STACTIC will re-iterate its request to the Commission at the 2022 Annual Meeting for further guidance in STACTIC discussions of the *FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance*.
- In regard to the implementation of the 2018 Performance Review: Recommendation 24, STACTIC will reflect further on this at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

23. Issues relating to the impacts of COVID-19

Contracting Parties gave oral reports concerning COVID-19 impacts in the compliance of the NAFO CEM so far in 2022. The reports centered on the impacts on at-sea inspections, port inspections, and the implementation of the observer scheme. The general sentiment is that they are returning to "normalcy" as in the pre-COVID-19 times. Wearing masks and social distancing are practiced during inspections. Monitoring of the COVID-19 situation continues through vigilance and alertness.

STACTIC agreed that:

- Contracting Parties continue to report on the impact of COVID-19 for 2022. The Secretariat will compile the reports and the compilation will be included as an annex in the next cycle of the Annual Fisheries and Compliance Review.

24. Visma VMS contract renewal

The Secretariat presented STACTIC WP 22-18 (Rev. 2), an update to the VMS contract renewal including that a two-year bridge contract has been agreed with VISMA as well as an estimated timeline if a call for tender is put out. It was agreed that the two-year bridge contract with VISMA is necessary and can go ahead.

The European Union expressed the view that STACFAD is relevant body to advice the NAFO Commission on financial decisions, without prejudice to the input from STACTIC.

After further discussion, the Secretariat agreed to compile further information in advance of the 2022 Annual Meeting. The European Union suggested sending all relevant information to STACFAD in advance of the 2022 Annual Meeting so they can give their own advice to the NAFO Commission. This agenda item will also be continued at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

STACTIC agreed that:

- In advance of the 2022 Annual Meeting, the Secretariat will compile further information on historic contracts, NEAFC's current VMS details as well as what other software providers may have to offer.
- The Secretariat would forward all relevant information to STACFAD in advance of the 2022 Annual Meeting so they could consider in tandem with STACTIC whether to renew the contract with VISMA for 2025 forward or to put out a call for tender.
- This agenda item will be discussed further at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

25. Other business

a. UN FAO Survey of RFB Secretariats on Safety and Decent Working Conditions on Fishing Vessels, November 2021

The Secretariat presented STACTIC WP 22-11 for information. This is an FAO initiative which aims to: 1) increase and build capacity for implementation of safety at sea and working improvements in fishing operations managed by RFMO/As, and 2) to work towards increased global and regional cooperation on addressing safety at-sea and decent working conditions in fishing operations.

b. FAO Workshop - Use of cameras to record deepwater shark and VME indicator catches by scientific observers, August 2021

A demonstration of the Observer app which is currently in the testing phase was presented by the Secretariat at the workshop (STACTIC WP 22-12). It was noted that this activity was done as part of the GEF project “*Deep-sea Fisheries under the Ecosystem Approach*” of which NAFO is a partner. FAO manages this project.

c. The International MCS (IMCS) Network “7th Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop”

This workshop initially scheduled to take place in August 2022 in Halifax, Nova Scotia was postponed to 2023.

26. Time and place of next meeting

The next STACTIC meeting will be held in Porto, Portugal from 19-23 September 2022.

27. Adoption of Report

The meeting report was adopted by correspondence.

28. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 UTC on 12 May 2022.

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Annex 2. Agenda

1. Opening by the Chair, Kaire Märtin (European Union)
2. Appointment of Rapporteur
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. STACTIC Participation
5. Annual Compliance Review, 2021
6. Review of Article 30 of the NAFO CEM
7. New and pending proposals on enforcement measures: Possible revisions of the NAFO CEM
8. Practical application of Port State Measures in NAFO
9. Marking of gears
10. NAFO MCS website and application development
11. Report and Recommendations of the Editorial Drafting Group (EDG)
12. Half-year review of the implementation of new NAFO CEM measures
13. Review and evaluation of Practices and Procedures
14. Review of current IUU list pursuant to NAFO CEM, Article 53
15. Bycatch and discards
16. Discussion of data classification and access rights
17. Report and advice of the Joint Advisory Group on Data Management (JAGDM)
18. Recommendations from NAFO Working Groups
19. Discussion on garbage disposal onboard vessels
20. Discussion on labour conditions onboard vessels
21. Discussion of the reporting of shark catches in the NAFO Regulatory Area
22. Implementation of the Performance Review Recommendations
23. Issues relating to the impacts of COVID-19
24. Visma VMS contract renewal
25. Other business
 - a. UN FAO Survey of RFB Secretariats on Safety and Decent Working Conditions on Fishing Vessels, November 2021
 - b. FAO Workshop - Use of cameras to record deepwater shark and VME indicator catches by scientific observers, August 2021
 - c. The International MCS (IMCS) Network “7th Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop”
26. Time and place of next meeting
27. Adoption of report
28. Adjournment

Annex 3. Opening Remarks

CANADA

The Russian Federation's attendance at our meeting this week serves as a reminder of President Putin's unjustifiable and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

In launching the largest military invasion of any European country since World War II, Russia seeks to undermine the principle of territorial integrity, to destroy the freedom of the Ukrainian people, to overthrow the democratically elected government of a sovereign nation and to undermine the rules-based international order. This assault has led to the senseless deaths of countless innocent people and ever-mounting humanitarian consequences. It is a clear violation of Russia's obligations under international law, including the United Nations Charter.

Canada condemns President Putin's unlawful invasion, because Russia's actions cannot and must not be normalized. We call on the Russian leadership to abandon this path of war, and return to good-faith diplomacy.

NAFO is based on a multilateral commitment to common goals, to be achieved through discussion, good-faith negotiation, and compromise. We look forward to working in that spirit over the next four days, and beyond, as members of STACTIC focus their efforts on the many important items we're tasked with this week. However, as we do so, we will continue to be mindful of the ongoing, blatant attack on these principles currently being waged by Russia on Ukraine and its people.

DENMARK (IN RESPECT OF FAROE ISLANDS AND GREENLAND)

The Government of the Faroe Islands and the Government of Greenland condemn by the firmest possible terms the Russian armed attack on Ukraine. Our participation at this meeting shall by no means be conceived as the situation being normal.

EUROPEAN UNION

Madam Chair, Mister Vice-Chair, colleagues from the Executive Secretary, delegates:

We look forward to having fruitful and constructive discussions one more time, so that we can make progress on the long agenda ahead of us. The European Union considers fisheries control an essential pillar to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainability of NAFO fisheries. We would like to thank the NAFO Secretariat, Chair and Vice-Chair for all the preparations to organise this meeting in these challenging conditions, in a hybrid mode and with some restriction deriving from the pandemic still in place.

On 12 February 2022, we were shocked by the news of the tragic sinking of the Spanish flagged vessel VILLA DE PITANXO. On behalf of the European Union, I wish to express our sincerest condolences and sympathy to the families and relatives of the crewmembers. I would also like to transmit our deepest appreciation for those involved in the rescue efforts.

Let me express also the European Union and its Member States' full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

The EU condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked and unjustified act of aggression against Ukraine, which grossly violates international law and the United Nations Charter, and undermines international security and stability.

The EU demands that Russia immediately cease its military actions, withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its

internationally recognised borders and abide by UN General Assembly resolution titled “Aggression against Ukraine” supported by 141 states at the 11th emergency special session.

The EU resolutely supports Ukraine’s inherent right of self-defence and the Ukrainian armed forces’ efforts to defend Ukraine’s territorial integrity and population in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

At all times Russia must respect its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, including with respect to the protection of civilians, women and children.

Russia also needs to stop its disinformation campaign and cyber-attacks.

JAPAN

We are pleased to participate in STACTIC intersessional meeting and would like to express our gratitude to NAFO Secretariat for preparing this meeting in the hybrid format. We are looking forward to continuing working together with colleagues from Contracting Parties for constructive discussion and progress in important issues which STACTIC has dealt with.

Japan takes this opportunity to make the statement in relation to the war in Ukraine as follows;

Japan is extremely concerned about the violations of sovereignty and territorial integrity of a NAFO member, as well as the violations of international law.

Russia’s aggression against Ukraine is absolutely unacceptable and Japan strongly condemns it.

Thank you very much.

NORWAY

Russia’s attack on Ukraine is an unprovoked and illegal attack on a peaceful neighbour. It is a clear and unacceptable violation of international law. It is a flagrant breach of the most fundamental rules of international relations and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of UN member states. It shows complete disrespect for the UN Charter and international law, and poses a threat to the international order that was established after 1945.

Norway condemns Russia’s attack on Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. Russia’s aggressive actions are a clear violation of Ukraine’s independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

UNITED KINGDOM

The United Kingdom would like to thank the NAFO secretariat for organising this meeting of STACTIC, noting the particular challenges of hosting a meeting where not all delegates, including the UK are able to attend in person due to the current circumstances. I am sure any technical issues will once again be overcome and we are looking forward to discussing with representatives of Contracting Parties in attendance the important subjects on what is another packed agenda and hope that the discussions will be both constructive and productive.

In respect of the Russian assault on Ukraine:

Russia’s assault on Ukraine is an unprovoked, premeditated attack against a sovereign democratic state. The UK and our international partners stand united in condemning the Russian government’s reprehensible actions, which are an egregious violation of international law and the UN Charter.

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As a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, Russia has a particular responsibility to uphold international peace and security. Instead, it is violating the borders of another country and its actions are causing widespread suffering.

The Russian Government has shown that it was never serious about engaging in diplomacy – it has deliberately worked to mislead the world, in order to mask its carefully planned aggression.

As the UN Secretary-General has said, such unilateral measures conflict directly with the United Nations Charter - the use of force by one country against another is the repudiation of the principles that every country has committed to uphold.

Russia must urgently de-escalate and withdraw its troops. It must be held accountable and stop undermining democracy, global stability, and international law.

Thank you

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

What an honor it is to be here today. The United States would like to express its deep appreciation to the Secretariat for hosting and facilitating our first hybrid meeting of STACTIC. We recognize and appreciate all of your hard work in organizing this important meeting. We are very much looking forward to reconnecting with our NAFO partners who are here in Halifax and abroad this week.

As we begin our meeting today, Chair, we note the Russian Federation's (remote) participation in this meeting. The U.S. Delegation is compelled, therefore, to make the following statement reflecting the current U.S. position regarding Russian aggression in Ukraine:

- Russia's initial invasion and ongoing war against Ukraine is unprovoked and unjustified. President Putin has waged a brutal war that has rendered catastrophic loss of life and human suffering in Ukraine, as well as extensive environmental damage and destruction that will extend far beyond Ukraine's borders. Russia alone is responsible for the death and destruction that this invasion continues to bring, and the world must hold Russia accountable.
- Russia's actions constitute a clear violation of Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, which states that all member States shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.
- The U.S. Delegation stands in solidarity with its like-minded allies and partners in NAFO and the international community more generally to condemn Russia's actions in the strongest possible terms.
- We also join our partners in urgently calling on Russia to immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine, refrain from any further unlawful threat or use of force against any UN member State, and immediately withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

While Russia's actions in Ukraine are reprehensible, we cannot and should not allow this heinous situation to impede the important work of this body. We have a full agenda ahead of us, including important discussions on STACTIC participation, landing obligations, IUU vessel listings, and many more. We are optimistic that the opportunity to meet both in person and virtually will facilitate communication and help us find solutions to these significant topics. We look forward to cooperative and productive discussions over the course of this week

Thank you.