

**36TH ANNUAL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 2014****Catch Validation – A Collaborative Approach**

Reminded that an objective of the NAFO convention is to ensure that complete and accurate data concerning fishing activities within the Regulatory area are collected and shared among Contracting Parties in a timely manner (NAFO/GC Doc. 08/3);

Mindful that the availability of accurate catch data is critical for scientific assessment and the sustainable management of NAFO stocks;

Concerned that the reliability of catch data continues to be one of the most significant issues facing NAFO;

Recognizing the importance of communication between the Fisheries Commission and the Scientific Council and recent efforts to enhance this dialogue and information exchange through the establishment of joint working groups;

Recalling that the Peer-Review Expert Panel highlighted the need for a more coordinated analysis of data (GC Doc 13/4);

Noting the positive steps taken by NAFO to improve data accuracy and data-sharing including sharing daily catch reports with the Scientific Council, as well as the establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Catch Reporting

Further noting the positive steps taken by the Ad hoc Working Group on Catch Reporting during its initial meeting in February 2014, in particular, its review and evaluation of NAFO data sources which may be of utility for the validation of catch data;

Convinced of the need for a collaborative approach (FC and SC) to validate STATLANT data and where necessary generate catch estimates for use in assessments and overall management of NAFO stocks.

Recognizing that the NAFO Secretariat can play an active support role in the provision of data and analyses

It is recommended that:

1. The Ad hoc Working Group on Catch Reporting remain in place for 2015, and report to the Scientific Council in June 2015;
2. The Ad hoc Working Group on Catch Reporting provide advice to Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council at the 2015 Annual Meeting by developing a framework for the validation of NAFO catch data and generation of catch estimates - ensuring the best available science is used for management decisions. The elements in such an approach should consider, inter alia:
 - i. Data Confidentiality Requirements(e.g. use of aggregate and/ or anonymized data);
 - ii. Transparency, in particular, the need to be able to subject decisions to external/ peer review;
 - iii. Participation, including the roles and responsibilities of Contracting Parties, Fisheries Commission, Scientific Council, and the Secretariat;
 - iv. Governance, including reporting and mechanisms for decision making; and,
 - v. Data requirements.