

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization



Report of the General Council and its Subsidiary Body (STACFAD)

37th Annual Meeting of NAFO
21-25 September 2015
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

NAFO
Dartmouth, N.S., Canada
2015

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PART I.
Report of the General Council

37th Annual Meeting of NAFO, 21-25 September 2015
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I. Opening Procedure

1. Opening by the Chair, Veronika Veits (EU)

The 37th Annual Meeting of NAFO was convened on 21 September 2015 at 1000 hrs at the Westin Nova Scotian hotel in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, with 152 delegates present from 12 NAFO Contracting Parties (Annex 1). The NAFO President and General Council Chair, Veronika Veits (EU) welcomed all delegates to the Meeting (Annex 3).

The Deputy Mayor of Halifax, Ms. Lorelei Nicoll, also welcomed delegates to the City of Halifax.

Opening statements were deferred at the opening session, but were provided in writing for inclusion in the report by Canada, Cuba, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), European Union, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, and the United States of America (USA). (Annexes 4-11).

2. Appointment of Rapporteur

Fred Kingston, the Executive Secretary, was appointed the rapporteur.

3. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as circulated (Annex 2). It was noted that agenda item 8, "*Transparency in NAFO Proceedings*" had been added at the request of Norway and that a recommendation by the joint FC-SC WG on EAFFM should be discussed under agenda item 14 "*International Relations*".

4. Admission of Observers

In accordance with the Rules for Observers and in advance of the meeting, the Executive Secretary had formally invited the following intergovernmental organizations to attend: Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS), Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES), International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (IMCS) Network, North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO), North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC), North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), Sargasso Sea Commission, Southeast Atlantic Fisheries Organization (SEAFO), South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) and Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC).

During the 37th Annual Meeting, CCAMLR was represented by Norway and NEAFC was represented by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland). Representatives from FAO, NPAFC and Sargasso Sea Commission were also present.

The following NGOs, which had been granted accredited observer status, were also present: Dalhousie University - Environment Information: Use & Influence (EIUI), Ecology Action Centre (EAC) and the Sierra Club of Canada. Not in attendance were the International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA), Dalhousie University - Marine & Environmental Law (MELAW), Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

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Opening statements were provided in writing for inclusion in the report from Dalhousie University - Environment Information: Use & Influence (EIUI), North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) and a joint statement from the Ecology Action Centre (EAC) and the World Wildlife Fund - Canada (WWF). (Annexes 12-14).

5. Publicity

The meeting agreed that no public statements would be made until after the conclusion of the meeting when a press release would be prepared by the Executive Secretary in collaboration with the Chairs of the General Council, Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council.

6. Guidance to STACFAD necessary for them to complete their work (Monday)

With regard to STACFAD, certain issues raised under agenda item 8 "*Transparency in NAFO Proceedings*" were forwarded to the Committee for further consideration and guidance. The Chair of STACFAD was invited to prepare a report for the closing session.

II. Supervision and Coordination of the Organizational, Administrative and Other Internal Affairs

7. Review of Membership of the General Council and Fisheries Commission

The membership of the General Council and Fisheries Commission has not changed since the 2014 Annual Meeting and is currently comprised of twelve (12) Contracting Parties: Canada, Cuba, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), European Union (EU), France (in respect of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon), Iceland, Japan, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Ukraine and United States of America (USA).

8. Transparency in NAFO Proceedings

Norway raised a number of concerns related to NAFO's transparency, including:

- NAFO meeting reports may not reflect adequately the views of all Contracting Parties. In particular minority views could be better represented in the main body of these reports;
- Too many of NAFO's substantive discussions, particularly those related to management issues, take place in closed Heads of Delegation meetings. The discussion of these issues should be done in open sessions as much as possible and NAFO should reduce the number of such closed meetings; and
- Contracting Parties should have the opportunity to provide input into any redesign of NAFO's website. Norway mentioned, in particular, problems in accessing documents in NAFO Members' Pages and illegible tables and graphs in some of the meeting reports.

The need for improving NAFO's transparency was generally supported by many Contracting Parties and the Chair. Some Contracting Parties noted that NAFO's transparency has improved in recent years, but there is still room for more improvement. Issues related to the website will be discussed by STACFAD. Many Contracting Parties also stated that issues related to NAFO's transparency should be addressed by NAFO's next Performance Review and be included in its Terms of Reference. The Chair referred to a recommendation in NAFO's Performance Review (Recommendation 7.5.2) that stated that NAFO meeting reports should be "*as succinct as possible*" and "*as far as possible represent a distillation of collective views*". She invited rapporteurs to reflect in a balanced way the views expressed.

9. Status of ratification process resulting from the adoption of the amended Convention and presentation of progress reports

To-date, seven Contracting Parties have ratified the amended Convention, namely Canada, Cuba, Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland), European Union, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation.

Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) announced that it had notified Canada (the Depository of the NAFO Convention) that it had ratified the amended Convention the week before the Annual Meeting. Other Contracting Parties updated the status of their ratification process. Contracting Parties were strongly encouraged to continue their efforts to ratify the amended Convention.

10. Status of NAFO Headquarters Agreement

Canada said it was ready to proceed with finalizing a Headquarters Agreement on the basis of the draft text reviewed at the 31st Annual Meeting in 2009. The draft text was recirculated to all Contracting Parties last year for comments and none were provided. However, there has been a delay due to a legal proceeding that is still before the courts, which Canada is hopeful will be resolved shortly. A draft text of an alternate instrument (Memorandum of Understanding) to address issues related to the provision of the premises and security by the host country is being reviewed by STACFAD.

11. Status of Implementation of Recommendations of the NAFO Performance Review Panel relevant to GC

As part of General Council's regular annual review on the status of the recommendations of the 2011 NAFO Performance Review, the Executive Secretary presented GC WP 15/05. The working paper is almost the same as the one presented at the previous year's Annual Meeting, since almost all of these recommendations have already been addressed or are being addressed by ongoing actions. The only change is that, at this meeting, STACFAD addressed its remaining outstanding recommendation concerning certain provisions of the NAFO Staff Rules pertaining to dismissal or termination of appointment.

Since the UN General Assembly has called for regular performance reviews of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) such as NAFO, Contracting Parties agreed that they should take the first steps to prepare NAFO's next Performance Review. In this context, Contracting Parties adopted the Terms of Reference for a NAFO Performance Review Working Group (GC WP 15/10, Annex 15). This Working Group will develop the scope, timeline and draft terms of reference to conduct NAFO's second Performance Review. The Working Group will present its recommendations to the General Council at the 2016 NAFO Annual Meeting, which will decide on the launching of the next Performance Review, if appropriate. Many Contracting Parties said that NAFO's second Performance Review, if launched, should build on the experience gained in the first Performance Review.

12. Administrative Report

The Administrative Report was presented to STACFAD (GC Doc. 15/02).

III. Coordination of External Affairs

13. Report of Executive Secretary on external meetings

The Executive Secretary highlighted a few of the external meetings he participated in since the last Annual Meeting, including: International Fisheries Commission Pension Society (IFCPS) (April 2015), the Workshop on Linking Global and Regional Levels in the Management of Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (February 2015) and a meeting with Dr. Peter Hutchinson, Secretary of North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) (May 2015) to discuss issues related to the implementation of NASCO's Performance Review related to NAFO. The Executive Secretary has also continued to try to strengthen NAFO's relationship with the local academic community. Additionally, the Executive Secretary has agreed to be the liaison for NAFO for the ABNJ Project's Community of Practice on Fisheries, Biodiversity and Climate Change.

Other members of the Secretariat actively participated in the Western Central Atlantic Fisheries (WECAFC) Technical Workshop on Bottom Fisheries on the High Seas of the Western Central Atlantic (October 2014), the FAO Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (February 2015), the FAO FIRMS Steering

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Committee (February 2015), and the FAO ABNJ Project—Workshop on VME Process and Practices (March 2015).

An overview of these meetings is available in the Administrative Report (GC Doc. 15/02).

14. International Relations

a) Appointment of NAFO Members as Observers to External Meetings

At the last Annual Meeting in September 2014, it was agreed that the following NAFO Contracting Parties would observe at meetings of the following organizations during 2014/2015: Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) would represent NAFO at the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). European Union would represent NAFO at meetings of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). Norway would represent NAFO at meetings of the in the South East Atlantic Fishery Organisation (SEAFO) and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO). The United States of America would represent NAFO at the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO). The reports by these Observers were presented.

It was agreed that NAFO Contracting Parties would observe at the following meetings of 2015-2016: Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) at NEAFC; EU at ICCAT; Norway at SEAFO and NAAMCO; and the USA at CCAMLR, NPAFC and NASCO.

b) ABNJ Deep-Seas Project

In 2013, NAFO was invited to be a partner in the FAO-GEF Project “*Sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation of deep-sea living marine resources and ecosystems in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)*”. NAFO’s participation will be guided by the activities table which was jointly prepared by FAO and the NAFO Secretariat and which may be modified as the project progresses. The NAFO support to the project would be an estimated in-kind contribution over the period of 2014-2018. This in-kind contribution represents staff time for activities and meeting expenses for work on deep sea fisheries, as well as administrative expenses for NAFO’s current core activities and operations which are of direct relevance to deep sea fisheries. Almost all of the costs that are being implemented or planned are part of the regular work of NAFO.

FAO (Chris O’Brien, ABNJ Deep Seas Coordinator) gave its annual update to General Council (GC WP 15/02, Annex 16) on all current and future activities with the project. Upcoming project activities planned include the first Project Steering Committee meeting since the Project Coordinator has recently taken up his position,

c) Relations with other International Organizations

The Joint FC-SC Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management met 15-17 July 2015 in Halifax, Nova Scotia and agreed on the following recommendation:

In relation to activities other than fishing:

- **that Fisheries Commission request the General Council to identify other international organizations (e.g. International Maritime Organization, International Seabed Authority) with areas of mutual interest and instruct the Secretariat to explore the establishment of mechanisms for dialogue and engagement;**

Based on the comments of Contracting Parties the Executive Secretary was asked to prepare a list of appropriate bodies with which NAFO could engage in cooperation and to start already exploring cooperation with the International Seabed Authority and the International Maritime Organisation as suggested by the WG and to report on these efforts at the next Annual Meeting.

15. Oil and Gas Activities in the NAFO Regulatory Area – Information Exchange Arrangement

At the 2014 Annual Meeting, the General Council gave the Executive Secretary the mandate to work with Canada to explore and implement a means for the appropriate and timely exchange of information necessary to avoid overlapping activities and mitigate potential conflicts between fisheries and hydrocarbons activities. The mandate also stated that the Executive Secretary should report on this issue at the next NAFO Annual Meeting. In this context, the Executive Secretary presented GC WP 15/04, which outlined the major developments on the issue since the last Annual meeting.

In particular, the Executive Secretary highlighted the means of communication that Canada identified and had circulated to Contracting Parties to support this mandate. Written comments from one Contracting Party, the EU, on the Canadian process were summarized. The Executive Secretary also mentioned Canada's "interim process" that it implemented immediately following the 2014 Annual Meeting, and through which it sent information about petroleum-related activities on Canada's continental shelf in the NAFO Regulatory Area to the NAFO Secretariat for onward transmission to NAFO Contracting Parties.

Canada said that it took note of the EU comments and that it would continue to engage with the Executive Secretary to consider possible refinements to the information exchange. Canada added that there has been good cooperation at sea between fishing vessels and oil and gas exploration vessels in the NAFO Regulatory Area so far this year, with the exception of one incident, which it previously brought to the attention of NAFO Contracting Parties. Canada also emphasized the importance of reciprocal information exchange to improve the effectiveness of the Canadian process and expressed its desire that Contracting Parties would cooperate in this regard.

A number of Contracting Parties found the Canadian approach reasonable and some considered it a useful model also for other RFMOs and in other contexts. Some stressed the importance of early, proactive and detailed communication, particularly with regard to exploratory activities. Concern was expressed by some Contracting Parties on the potential impact of petroleum exploratory activities on NAFO's conservation efforts, in particular in relation to the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems.

IV. Finance

16. Report of STACFAD at the Annual Meeting

The report of STACFAD was presented by the Chair, Deirdre Warner-Kramer (USA). The report contained recommendations for the adoption of the budget for 2016, the Auditor's Report for 2014, financial matters, personnel matters, and an update on the NAFO Secretariat classification scheme review.

17. Adoption of the Budget and STACFAD recommendations for 2016

STACFAD recommended that:

- **the 2014 Auditors' Report be adopted.**
- **an *Ad hoc* virtual Working Group be established, of self-identified interested participants, to assist in the re-design process of the NAFO website namely:**
 - **to provide feedback during the development, testing and implementation stages; and**
 - **in consultation with the Chairs of STACTIC and STACFAD, to develop standards and guidelines of access to documentation contained on the site including which documentation requires password protection.**
- **that the amount maintained in the accumulated surplus account be set at \$285,000 of which \$200,000 would be sufficient to finance operations during the first three months of 2016, and of**

which \$85,000 would be a contingency fund available to be used for unforeseen and extraordinary expenses.

- **In regards to the report of the NAFO Secretariat classification scheme that:**
 - **Contracting Parties, the NAFO Secretariat and staff members provide comments NAFO Secretariat classification scheme to the NAFO Secretariat on the report by 30 October 2015.**
 - **The NAFO Secretariat compile these comments to be forwarded to the consultant, with a copy to STACFAD members, and used for a revision of the NAFO Secretariat classification scheme review to be received by the end of 2015.**
 - **The revised review of the NAFO Secretariat classification scheme to be circulated to STACFAD Members in early 2016.**
 - **Using the revised report of the NAFO Secretariat classification scheme as a basis, the NAFO Secretariat develop and circulate recommendations for STACFAD's consideration in advance of the 2016 Annual Meeting of NAFO, 19-23 September 2016.**
- **the Secretariat continue to pursue alternate and additional methods to recruit prospective interns to its internship program particularly to nationals of NAFO that have not yet participated, including a review of the stipend amount.**
- **the budget for 2016 of \$1,997,000 be adopted.**
- **General Council appoint the three Staff Committee nominees for September 2015–September 2016.**
- **the dates of the 2018 Annual Meeting (to be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, unless an invitation to host is extended by a Contracting Party and accepted by the Organization) to be as follows:**
 - **17-21 September 2018**
- **Contracting Parties strive, whenever possible, to provide more than 12 months' notice of the intention to extend an invitation to host a NAFO Annual Meeting.**
- **In the occasion that the Secretariat has committed to a meeting venue, and a subsequent invitation to host is accepted by the Organization, any cancellation penalties incurred may be financed by the contingency fund.**
- **Contracting Parties review the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (STACFAD WP 15/09) and provide comments to the Secretariat by 30 November 2015 to be compiled and sent to the Government of Canada.**

All of STACFAD's recommendations were adopted by General Council and the work and report by STACFAD and the Secretariat commended. The budget was adopted with an increase of less than 1%.

V. Closing Procedure

18. Election of President and Chair

The present Vice-Chair, Mr. Stéphane Artano from France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon), was elected as NAFO President and Chair for the next two years.

Ms. Sylvie Lapointe (Canada) was elected as the Vice-Chair for a two-year term.

It was understood that a new election would be held should the amended NAFO Convention become in force during their terms.

19. Time and Place of Next Annual Meeting

An invitation to host the next Annual Meeting was extended by Cuba and accepted by the Organization. The 38th Annual Meeting will be in Varadero, Cuba during the dates of 19-23 September 2016.

20. Other Business

- At the STACTIC session of this Annual Meeting, it was **agreed:**
To advise the Fisheries Commission to recommend to the General Council, in accordance with Article 53, that Ghana be removed as the current flag State for the vessel Trinity (IMO 7321374) on the NAFO IUU list, and replace the current flag State with “Unknown”.

The Fisheries Commission agreed with this recommendation, which was then adopted by the General Council.

- The President noted that Neil Campbell has resigned as SC Coordinator and expressed her appreciation for his dedication to the Organization.
- It was noted that this was Veronika Veits (EU) last Annual Meeting as NAFO President. The meeting expressed its great appreciation for the hard work and dedication to NAFO she has demonstrated throughout her four-year tenure.

21. Press Release

The Press Release of the meeting was developed by the Executive Secretary through consultations with the Chairs of General Council, Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council. The agreed Press Release (Annex 17) was circulated and posted to the NAFO website at the conclusion of the meeting on Friday, 25 September.

22. Adjournment

The Chair noted that NAFO has achieved much this year and should be proud of its achievements. She thanked the NAFO Secretariat for the excellent preparation of the meeting and support throughout the week. Delegates were thanked for their constructive work and were wished good travels.

The meeting was adjourned at 1000 hrs on Friday, 25 September 2015.

Annex 1. Participant List

NAFO President/Chair of General Council - Veits, Veronika (EU)

Chair of Fisheries Commission - Lapointe, Sylvie (Canada)

Chair of Scientific Council - Stansbury, Don (Canada)

Chair of STACFAD - Warner-Kramer, Deirdre (USA)

Chair of STACTIC - Martin, Gene (USA)

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Annex 2. Agenda

I. Opening Procedure

1. Opening by the Chair, Veronika Veits (EU)
2. Appointment of Rapporteur
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Admission of Observers
5. Publicity
6. Guidance to STACFAD necessary for them to complete their work

II. Supervision and Coordination of the Organizational, Administrative and other Internal Affairs

7. Review of Membership of the General Council and Fisheries Commission
8. Transparency in NAFO proceedings
9. Status of ratification process resulting from the adoption of the amended Convention and presentation of progress reports
10. Status of NAFO Headquarters Agreement
11. Performance Review: Status of implementation of Recommendations of the NAFO Performance Review and Preparation of the next Performance Review
12. Administrative Report

III. Coordination of External Affairs

13. Report of Executive Secretary on external meetings
14. International Relations
15. Appointment of NAFO Members as Observers to External Meetings
16. ABNJ Deep-Seas Project
17. Relations with other International Organizations
18. Oil and Gas Activities in the NAFO Regulatory Area – Information Exchange Arrangement

IV. Finance

19. Report of STACFAD at the Annual Meeting
20. Adoption of the Budget and STACFAD recommendations for 2016

V. Closing Procedure

21. Election of President and Chair
22. Time and Place of Next Annual Meeting
23. Other Business
24. Press Release
25. Adjournment

Annex 3. NAFO Opening Speech by the NAFO President/GC Chair

Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to extend a warm welcome to all of you here in Halifax and to open the 37th Annual Meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization. I am also very pleased to have the Deputy Mayor of Halifax, Lorelei Nicoll, here beside me. Ms. Nicoll is here to welcome you to Halifax.

Before I officially open this year's meeting, I would like to highlight that you have all agreed not to give oral opening statements to allow for more time for discussions on substance. However, there will be one exception, since I am still NAFO's President (at least until the end of this week!) I intend to assert my prerogative and make an exception to this rule for myself!

In addition, I would like to give the floor to the Deputy Mayor for her welcoming words.

Following the warm welcome by the Deputy Mayor let me proceed with my opening remarks.

First, let me note that this year is an important year for international fisheries governance since it marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, as well as the 20th Anniversary of the adoption of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. These are the milestones in the international community's efforts to ensure healthy marine living resources and eco-systems. And they are also cornerstones for sustainable fisheries management in Regional Fisheries Management Organisations such as NAFO. Next year will be an equally important year with the resumption of the Review of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement to which NAFO has already contributed through a questionnaire, as well as the review of UNGA's Bottom Fishing Resolution.

These reviews will also examine how RFMOs have been delivering. I would submit that NAFO is doing well. NAFO respects science for both stock conservation and the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems. It has been applying the precautionary approach and is developing an ecosystem approach to fisheries management that may become a model for others. It has in place a modern control and enforcement system with a high level of compliance. While some NAFO stocks are still at low levels, it seems clear that our efforts at conservation and the sustainable use of our fishery resources are bearing fruit, with evidence that stocks are rebounding, including some which have recently been reopened.

Having said that, it is almost eight years and counting and we still have not ratified the amended NAFO Convention. I was hoping to be able to celebrate the coming-into-force of this new Convention during my tenure as your President. Sadly I will have to leave this to my successor. I would, however, note that our Performance Review stated that, while our current Convention "*does not address several requirements established by more modern international fisheries instruments and initiatives*", the amendments "*significantly improved this situation*" in this respect. I would hope that, as we are entering into a discussion of NAFO's next Performance Review, we could see the entry into force of the Amended Convention as soon as possible!

Let me also stress that we have been very busy this past year! Since the last Annual Meeting in Vigo last September, we have met intersessionally 13 times! I believe some of my and your staff may have even spent more time in Halifax than at the office! Since the results of all these intersessional meetings ultimately end up at the Annual Meeting for decision, this means that we will also be very busy this week! These decisions will range from the traditional, such as the establishment of TACs, quotas and other management measures for the various NAFO-managed stocks, further strengthening of enforcement and control, notably through full alignment to the FAO Port State Measures Agreement, to the less traditional, such as the further development of the ecosystem approach, seamount fisheries and information and cooperation arrangements for co-existing activities in the NAFO Regulatory Area. Concluding on all issues in 5 days will be challenging! Nevertheless I remain confident that we will be able to work through our agenda by Friday noon!

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Secretariat for all their work throughout the year and the preparations in the run-up to this meeting. You are doing a great job!

Report of General Council, 21-25 Sept 2015

To conclude, and since this is my last Annual Meeting as your President let me stress that I have enjoyed very much working with all of you (and, of course, I will continue to enjoy working with you!). In particular, I should say that despite our different interests and occasional differences in approach to various issues, we always seem to tackle them in the spirit of cooperation, good will and common sense. I am very confident that this will continue throughout this week.

Thank you very much for your attention!



Annex 4. Opening Statement by Canada

On behalf of Canada, it is a great pleasure to offer everyone a warm Atlantic Canadian welcome to Halifax for the 37th Annual Meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO). The Secretariat is commended for the choice of venue and exceptional work to organize and host the Annual Meeting.

The Canadian delegation is looking forward to the contribution of all Contracting Parties in productive and meaningful discussions on the important issues before us this week.

The rich fishing history and culture of our communities and their traditional dependence on fishing in the North Atlantic places a duty on all of us to ensure our fisheries are managed sustainably. We believe NAFO has demonstrated its commitment to achieving this goal in recent years, based on mutual cooperation and hard work. We must remain vigilant and maintain this commitment to the principles that have supported our recent progress.

Canada believes the efforts of the Committees and Working Groups over the past year should be commended. All of these bodies have done important work that has enriched the discussion this week, enhanced by the cooperation between the Fisheries Commission and the Scientific Council.

These NAFO Working Groups are conducting ground-breaking work to protect and conserve our ocean resources, including through an ecosystem approach to risk-based fisheries management. Through these working groups, NAFO has made important progress on the development and application of the Precautionary Approach framework, the identification of priorities through the Ecosystem Roadmap and, the reassessment of bottom fishing activity impacts in the NAFO Regulatory Area (NRA).

Canada remains committed to management decisions based on scientific advice. This commitment to cooperation with science and sustainable fisheries management by all Contracting Parties is evidenced by recent success stories, including the reopening of groundfish stocks such as 3M cod, 3LN redfish and 3NO witch flounder.

However, Canada believes that in order to continue this progress, NAFO Contracting Parties must make improved catch reporting a priority. Reliability of catch data continues to be one of the most significant issues facing NAFO. Accurate catch data is critical for scientific assessment and gaps in this area are limiting Scientific Council's ability to provide advice on key priorities including the ability to test Harvest Control Rules. Accurate catch data is the foundation for reliable stock assessments and effective fisheries management. The ad hoc working group on Catch Reporting is developing a framework for the validation of NAFO catch data and generation of catch estimates. It is crucial to maintain this momentum and finalize the terms of reference and timelines for the catch data technical advisory group so this work will continue in the coming months.

The 37th annual meeting of NAFO provides an opportunity to build on the significant recent progress. A number of real challenges remain but Canada firmly believes that these are also opportunities to continue to grow NAFO's reputation as one of the most progressive and innovative regional fisheries management organizations in the world.

Annex 5. Opening Statement by Cuba

Good morning everybody.

Ms. President, distinguish delegates and observers.

On behalf of the Republic of Cuba and the Cuban delegation to this 37th Annual Meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, let us to express our gratitude for the opportunity to meet once again in this beautiful city of Halifax.

The Organization has made significant progress in ensuring that all together, compromise ourselves in addressing the conservation challenges before us, but still we have a lot of work ahead. This week, we will again face and discuss important matters, not only from the organizational point of view, but also the situation of stocks in the Convention area, the work and recommendations of the Scientific Council and the plans for the recovery of several stocks that are still under moratoria or rebuilding process and all this need the compromise of all parties to ensure that those stocks have chance to recover.

The Amendment to the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries constitutes the first formal step towards a reformed Convention for NAFO and we hope that it will be ratified by all Contracting Parties as a sign of their commitment with the Organization and the responsibility for the effects of fisheries on the marine ecosystems in the Convention area.

We look forward to work with all delegations present at this meeting and that the discussions and decisions to be taken at this 37th Annual Meeting, will be testimonies of NAFO's serious efforts in responding to the situation that the fish stocks are facing all over the world, and also a commitment to manage fisheries in a sustainable way.

Thank you very much.

Annex 6. Opening Statement by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)

Madame Chair, distinguished Delegates, Observers, ladies and gentlemen.

The Faroe Islands and Greenland would first of all like to thank our Canadian hosts for their hospitality and for the hard work put in the practical preparations of this Annual Meeting which is being held here in Halifax, Nova Scotia. We appreciate it.

The Faroe Islands and Greenland is committed to work constructively with our NAFO partners in order to facilitate the implementation of the Performance Review Report recommendations. Among these the continuing work to address the discrepancies between the STATLANT and the STACFIS catch estimations. This was deemed a matter of great urgency by the Performance Review Panel. It is in the interest of all Contracting Parties, that the work with the implementation is carried out as soon as possible as the outcome will entail a more up-to-date and effective NAFO in all aspects of the organization's operations and improve the scientific advice on different stocks.

For DFG it is important, that NAFO endeavor to work for transparency in the transmission of data. The data provided for STACTIC must be sound and transparent.

The biological advice on NAFO stocks for the next year and beyond is as usual a mixed advice of stocks to be maintained under moratoria, of stocks in decline and of stocks that are healthy and growing. We note with satisfaction that the cod stock in Division 3M continue to exhibit biomass improvements.

Madame Chair, our delegation would like to convey our sincere appreciation and warm thanks to the Secretariat for once again having prepared this annual meeting so well.

Finally Madame Chair, the Faroe Islands and Greenland can assure you that we are looking forward to work constructively with all delegations in the week ahead of us to bring the many issues on our agenda to successful conclusion.

Thank you.

Annex 7. Opening Statement by European Union

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the last Annual Meeting, we all – fisheries managers, scientists, control and enforcement experts, the NAFO Secretariat - have all been working very hard together with numerous intersessional meetings: four joint FC/SC working groups, the joint NAFO-NEAFC advisory group on data management, the Committee on Control (STACTIC) meetings and its sub-groups and last but not least the Scientific Council.

We expect that this intersessional work will allow NAFO to grow stronger in four key areas:

First, better science as basis for sound management, notably through more and better data and the continuation of a strong dialogue between fisheries managers and scientists. Better science is crucial for sound management decisions and thus the performance of NAFO.

Secondly, deepening the ecosystem approach in NAFO, notably with a better protection of seamounts, but also by tackling the need to reduce and preferably eliminate discards in NAFO fisheries; we would like to highlight in this context the EU's commitment to continue support for the NEREIDA seabed mapping project. Its outcomes will be crucial for the VME review in 2016.

Third, further moving towards risk based management plans with the continuation of existing plans and the development of new ones. Work on developing and revising reference points will be crucial to that end as well revising the precautionary framework to make it clearer and align it to practice in other fora.

And finally, an even stronger and more efficient control and enforcement system, in particular by culminating the process for bringing NAFO's port state control in line with the FAO Port State Measures Agreement and for reinforcing NAFO's observer system.

These are no small challenges.

Further to these key issues on our agenda, the determination of Total Allowable Catches, the TACs, will take centre stage. In line with the EU's Common Fisheries Policy adopted in 2013 the EU is firmly committed to follow scientific advice and hopes that NAFO will promote responsible decisions that also allow to balance environmental, economic and social considerations.

We will also promote again the introduction of a naturally-attached-fins policy in NAFO in line with the EU internal policy and global efforts to end the wasteful practice of shark finning.

As a last point, the EU would like to express its hope that the Amended Convention enters into force as soon as possible. An entry into force in 2016 seems within reach. The EU therefore calls on strengthened efforts from Contracting Parties concerned to accelerate their ratification process.

NAFO has proven to be a front-runner amongst RFMOs on several occasions. The development of Information Exchange Arrangement on Oil and Gas Activities in the NAFO Regulatory Area shows that NAFO as an organisation aims at responding to a changing environment. Facilitating legitimate co-existence of economic activities whilst keeping NAFO's marine ecosystems and living marine resources healthy will be guiding us in our discussions.

The EU delegation looks forward to working with all Parties around the table in order to achieve the best possible result for NAFO stocks and ecosystems and to make this Annual Meeting a joint success.

Annex 8. Opening Statement by Japan

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Japanese Delegation, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Government of Canada for hosting the 37th Annual meeting of NAFO in this beautiful city, Halifax, and also thank the NAFO Secretariat for excellent arrangements of this meeting.

NAFO has played an important role for fisheries management in the NAFO area. NAFO, as a responsible fisheries management organization, should develop conservation and management measures for sustainable use of fisheries resources and the measures should be based on scientific advice.

Madam Chair, I would like to pick up two concrete issues and express our thought on this occasion; exploratory bottom fishing and bycatch quota.

The Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management (WG-EAFFM) has recommended the Fisheries Commission to exclude the possibility of exploratory bottom fishing in seamount area. This issue should be carefully discussed at the Fisheries Commission. If the exploratory bottom fishing is totally prohibited, NAFO loses good opportunities to collect useful information about fisheries resources and surrounding environment in seamount areas. In accordance with Article 18 of current NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures, all proposals of exploratory bottom fishing activities shall be subject to a prior exploration in accordance with the exploratory protocol. So, NAFO already has review system for proposed exploratory bottom fishing. If there is a concern on a proposed exploratory fishery, the exploratory fishery is not authorized.

At the last year's annual meeting, NAFO adopted 3M redfish's TAC which includes 200 t for bycatch. As stated last year, Japan basically cannot support setting the bycatch quota. Setting a TAC exceeding the scientific advice and allowing such fishery products retention on board may create incentives to catch for the species after the quota for directed fishery is fully exhausted. Such bycatch quota also may create difficulty for proper management. Given that, Japan supports move-on-rule and retention prohibition to avoid unnecessary bycatch. If the move-on-rule does not work sufficiently for this purpose, introduction of highly selective fishing gears or deduction from next year's allocation should be considered. Japan believes that bycatch management is one of the important issues at this NAFO meeting. Ad hoc Working Group to Reflect on the Rules Governing Bycatches, Discards and Selectivity in the NAFO Regulatory Area has proposed the Action Plan to reduce bycatch and discards, and improve selectivity. Japan can support this Action Plan.

Madam Chair, the Japanese Delegation is ready to work closely and cooperatively with other delegations to find good solutions and sincerely hopes that this annual meeting will be successfully and fruitfully concluded.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Annex 9. Opening Statement by the Republic of Korea

Madam Chair,

Korea is pleased to be here in Halifax, Nova Scotia for the 37th NAFO Annual Meeting. We would like to thank the Government of Canada for hosting this meeting and the Secretariat for coordinating and arranging this meeting.

First, we would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Korea's position in the NAFO quota allocation system. Since Korea's accession to the Convention in 1994, Korea suspended all fishing activities due to the small amount of the quota allocated to Korea. The NAFO waters were considered an important fishing ground for Korea, however, fishing operations were unable to be continued because of the quota allocation as mentioned.

Madam Chair,

Korea notes that without proper conservation of fisheries resources in the convention areas, we will not be able to achieve the sufficient quota to resume our fishing activities. In this regard, Korea welcomes the Scientific Council's recommendation for fish stocks and would like to take part in the discussions giving top priority to rebuilding and conservation of each fish stock. Korea sincerely hopes that our commitment contributing to conservation and management of resources will bring actual increase of quota allocated to Korea in the future. Korea looks forward to having substantive and tangible outcomes at this meeting.

Thank you.

Annex 10. Opening Statement by the Russian Federation

Madame President, distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to represent the Russian Federation at the 37th NAFO Annual Meeting.

On behalf of the Russian Delegation, I would like to thank the Canadian authorities for hosting this Annual Meeting in the beautiful city of Halifax and for the excellent arrangements.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the NAFO Secretariat for the preparations made in advance of this meeting.

We would like to commend the excellent work performed by various NAFO bodies and Working Groups intersessionally.

It is good to see that the fruitful work of the Scientific Council resulted in advice to increase the Total Allowable Catch for such species as 3M cod and 3LN redfish. Along with the redfish in Divisions 3M and 3O as well as the Greenland Halibut in Divisions 3LMNO, these stocks represent an area of the greatest interest for the Russian fishing fleet.

Russia would also like to note the outstanding work of Scientific Council to assess the witch flounder stock in Divisions 3NO, which resulted in reopening of the fishery for this stock.

We are also impressed by the work undertaken within the Working Group on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management, including the ongoing work to assess the risk of the significant adverse impact. We believe that results of this research will add an entirely new dimension to the VME conservation allowing an assessment of the vulnerability of bottom ecosystems to be made not only qualitatively but also quantitatively. We hope that such a refined approach will allow NAFO to achieve a greater balance between the interests of fishermen and protection of bottom ecosystems.

During this week, we have a full agenda ahead of us. We are looking forward to the successful and productive work at this session.

Thank you for your attention.

Annex 11. Opening Statement by the United States of America

NAFO Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United States is pleased to be back in the beautiful city of Halifax once again to attend the 37th NAFO Annual Meeting. We would like to thank the Government of Canada and the City of Halifax for their long-standing hospitality and to recognize the outstanding efforts of the NAFO Secretariat in ensuring that our meetings are efficient and successful. We would also like to take this opportunity to highlight some key issues for our delegation at this year's annual meeting.

First and foremost, the United States will continue to insist on transparent, ecosystem-based and precautionary decision making that is consistent with the advice of the NAFO Scientific Council. Furthermore, the decision process relating to allocation of fishing opportunities in NAFO must be inclusive, taking into account the needs all NAFO Parties -- particularly those of coastal States. We are committed to these principles and they should be the foundation that NAFO uses to seek solutions to the many conservation and management challenges before us this year.

Of course, in order to create the basis for such effective decision making, NAFO scientists and managers must have access to reliable and accurate data, including on all bycatch and VMEs. These issues were highlighted in the last NAFO performance review, and NAFO has worked hard in STACTIC and in a number of Working Groups to address and improve our data collection deficiencies and to continue enhancement of risk-based management and decision making in NAFO. The United States was pleased with the work done this year intersessionally in this regard. However, much work remains to improve the NAFO observer scheme and the quality of data collection and it is our hope that we can continue to move these issues forward at this meeting. Similarly, while pleased with our progress thus far in the Working Group on Bycatches, Discards and Selectivity, we would urge continued work to evaluate the impacts of bycatch on NAFO fisheries and address discards in a way that is acceptable to all Parties. Further, the United States commends all Contracting Parties for their on-going work to align the NAFO CEM with the FAO Port State Measures Agreement. We are confident we can take the necessary steps at this meeting to ensure the CEM properly reflects these best practices.

The United States strongly supports measures to continue to reduce the impacts of NAFO fisheries on vulnerable marine ecosystems. We fully support the outcomes of the Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management and look forward to a productive discussion on these matters. We further look forward to participating in the preparations for a comprehensive NAFO reassessment of the impacts all of its fisheries on vulnerable marine ecosystems in the NAFO Regulatory Area. The United States continues to stress the importance of precautionary management measures for elasmobranchs. In particular, we are encouraged by growing interest in strengthening the NAFO ban on shark finning, and are hopeful for continued progress toward bringing the NAFO skate TAC in line with scientific advice.

Finally, we would note that we support preparations for a second NAFO performance review and look forward to participating both in the development of this process and in the review itself.

Thank you very much.

Annex 12. Opening Statement by the Environmental Information: Use and Influence (EIUI) Research Program – Dalhousie University

Distinguished President, Chair, Delegates, Fellow Observers

The Environmental Information: Use and Influence (EIUI) research program (www.eiui.ca), based in the Faculty of Management at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, is pleased to be present as an Observer at this 37th Annual Meeting of NAFO.

We thank NAFO for its participation, since 2010, in the EIUI research program which is advancing understanding of the complexities of information use in decision-making at the science-policy interface. Our research partnership with NAFO has generated considerable interest by graduate students who have attended NAFO Scientific Council meetings to observe how scientific advice is communicated within NAFO and how management advice and measures are developed.

As a research partner, NAFO facilitated recent doctoral research on the role of fisheries scientific information in decision- and policy-making within NAFO. The doctoral research gathered empirical evidence to describe the drivers for information production, and the enablers and barriers to its communication and use in decision-making in Canada, which is a Contracting Party to NAFO though representation by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). This research also included case studies of DFO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Notably, this study examined the inter-relationships of the three organizations and their interest in gaining an understanding of the uptake of their fisheries information in decision-making in policy contexts.

We are also pleased to announce our forthcoming book on information use at the science-policy interface to be published by CRC Press/Taylor & Francis in 2016. This book contains chapters contributed by leading researchers and practitioners globally in integrated coastal and ocean management, including participants in NAFO, such as DFO, FAO, and the Ecology Action Centre (EAC).

In collaboration with the NAFO Secretariat, EIUI will co-host the annual Editorial Advisory Board of Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA) meeting in Halifax on 5-9 October 2015.

We are pleased with the relationship that we have developed with NAFO. NAFO has demonstrated its commitment to promoting awareness, use, and influence of its scientific information in decision- and policy-making. We look forward to strengthening this collaboration with NAFO in encouraging transparency in decision-making for fisheries management.

Thank you.

The EIUI Research Team

Annex 13. Opening Statement by the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC)

Dear Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Brent Napier and I have been invited by the Executive Director of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), by virtue of my participation in both NAFO and the NPAFC, to deliver this address.

I am honoured to be here on behalf of the NPAFC as an Observer for the NAFO 37th Annual Meeting. I would like to extend the NPAFC's appreciation to members of the NAFO General Council and the Executive Secretary Dr. Fred Kingston for the invitation.

This particular NAFO meeting is an event of considerable interest for the NPAFC. Despite distinctions in areas of responsibility, there are several important areas, where NAFO and NPAFC work together at the inter-organizational level. More than five years have passed since the 2010 United Nations Review Conference described the modernizing of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) as a priority and noted that progress had been made in reviewing the performance of RFMOs against emerging standards. Following this direction, NPAFC and NAFO completed their performance reviews in 2010 and 2011. To date, NPAFC has implemented 52 of 54 Prioritized recommendations stemming from the review panel's advice and two others are still in progress. It will therefore be of interest to NPAFC to learn about the status of implementation of recommendations of the NAFO Performance Review, especially because NAFO is preparing its next performance review. The question of performance review periodicity is critically important for the long-term strategic planning of the NPAFC, and your experience in this matter will be very helpful to us.

The NPAFC is looking to continue our cooperation and information exchange in the field of sustainable organization development, including relationships with the correspondent authorities of the host country. We would be glad to hear about the approaches and results of an audit of the NAFO Secretariat staff classification scheme, news about the status of NAFO Headquarters Agreement, and other General Council agenda items related to supervision and coordination of organizational and administrative affairs.

Because the General Council will consider appointment of NAFO members as observers to external meetings, I would like to take this opportunity to say that NPAFC looks forward to seeing the NAFO representative at the NPAFC 24rd Annual Meeting in Busan, Republic of Korea, to participate in discussions of matters relevant to the conservation of fish stocks in ocean habitats.

The NPAFC has endorsed in principle the concept of the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) initiative. This initiative is conceived to be an intensive burst of internationally coordinated interdisciplinary scientific research focused on salmon and their relation to people as a valuable but variable source of food and economic sustenance. The IYS seeks to generate support from governments, academia, business, industry, and non-governmental organizations. We would be happy if our long-time partners will find common interests in the IYS initiative implementation and help us with it.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Annex 14. Joint Opening Statement by the Ecology Action Centre (EAC) and the World Wildlife Federation (WWF)

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Fellow Observers, on behalf of the Ecology Action Centre (EAC) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), both members of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC), we appreciate the opportunity to once again attend NAFO as official observers. The EAC regrets that our colleagues at WWF are unable to attend this year.

Our continued focus remains the protection of VME areas, protection of deep-sea fisheries and rebuilding of depleted fish stocks. This year, we hope to see continued progress in VME protection, as to date, there has not been agreement to respond positively to scientific advice on recommended VME closures, with areas 13 & 14 not agreed and continued fishing occurring on coral concentrations adjacent to the existing 30 coral closure. While we understand that there may be some "VME fatigue", we remind both NAFO and its Contracting Parties of the commitments made through the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Sustainable Fisheries Resolutions 61/105, 64/72 and 66/68 which outline measures to, and stress the urgency of, protecting VMEs and sustainably managing deep sea fisheries. In 2016, there will be a review workshop of the implementation of these measures, as well as the UN Fish Stocks Review conference. We urge NAFO to continue its good progress on addressing the commitments set out in the resolutions.

This year, NAFO through the agreement of its Contracting Parties, must:

- **Close all seamounts become a *de facto* closure** (with no exceptions allowed for exploratory fishery) for bottom trawl as well as mid-water trawl due to the known impacts caused on seamounts and associated benthic and deep-water species through a revision of article 17 of the NCEM.
- At a minimum, **all midwater trawl gear be modified** so that all bobbins and rollers are removed, and sensors and cameras are attached to the midwater trawl gear to ensure that the gear does not impact the seabed, otherwise the use of such gear on seamounts should not be authorized within the NRA.
- **Commit to resolving differences on recommended VME closures** and the use of habitat suitability models in VME identification.
- **Address the fact that the greatest impact on existing VME closures is the continued research trawl surveys** within VME areas, and at a minimum, agree to remove all sets where there have been known gear hang-ups, entanglements and VME catches. Further work should be completed, as a priority, to understand the removal of all sets within the VME areas from stock assessment for the various NAFO stocks.
- **Adopt the proposed bycatch action plan**, as an important first step in improved bycatch management. We urge NAFO to consider including all bycatch species in the data collection rather than the top three species, particularly given the long history of unregulated fisheries for many deep-sea species.

We welcome the recommendation that the NAFO Secretariat be given direction on developing a mechanism for data and information sharing for other governance organizations, as this is an important step in achieving integrated management of our high seas, as well as understanding the impacts of other activities on NAFO fisheries.

NAFO is leading the way of many RFMOs with its Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Roadmap and we commend the work of the Scientific Council on developing and communicating this new approach. We continue to stress the importance of considering climate change and ocean acidification on NAFO fisheries, and hope that the upcoming climate negotiations will result in a strong outcome requiring improved oceans management to address these issues.

NAFO has made considerable progress on transparency. We hope that this progress will be extended to the NAFO Performance Review process and that ENGOs will be allowed to attend panel discussions in the future.

Our detailed recommendations are available on the table for observer information. We look forward to this week's meeting and seeing further progress at NAFO.

Thank you

Respectfully, submitted by Susanna Fuller, on behalf of WWF and EAC

Annex 15. Terms of Reference for a NAFO Performance Review Working Group

(GC Working Paper 15/10 Rev. 2 now GC Doc. 15/03)

Explanatory memorandum

1. At its 31st Annual Meeting in 2009 NAFO decided to undertake a Performance Review of the organisation. This decision followed calls by the international community and by the 2006 UN General Assembly Resolution 61/105, which explicitly urged Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and arrangements with management and conservation responsibilities on fisheries and marine living resources to undertake a Performance Review.
2. A Performance Assessment Working Group (PAWG) was established in 2009, which developed Terms of Reference for the constitution of a NAFO Performance Review Panel and criteria for reviewing the performance of NAFO. It also made recommendations on administrative and budgetary considerations (GC Doc. 10/1).
3. A Performance Review Panel was appointed in 2010 and produced a Performance Assessment Review in 2011. At its 33rd Annual Meeting in 2011, NAFO reviewed the outcomes of the Performance Review and established a General Council Working Group on the future of NAFO on the development of Plans of Action necessary for the implementation of the Recommendations of the NAFO Performance Review Panel. The GC WG formulated recommendations in March 2012.
4. At its 34th Annual Meeting in 2012, the Scientific Council, Fisheries Commission, STACTIC and STACFAD reviewed and addressed the action table prepared by the "Working Group on the future of NAFO on the development of plans of action necessary for the implementation of the recommendations of the NAFO Performance Review Panel". Following this process, a revised Action Plan was agreed and adopted by the General Council.
5. At this point it was noted that significant progress had already been made by all groups in implementing actions. It was agreed that the Secretariat would compile all feedback into a single document for circulation to Contracting Parties. It was also agreed that a report on the progress in implementing the Plan of Action should become a regular agenda item on the General Council agenda.
6. Since 2006 UNGA Resolutions on sustainable fisheries regularly call for regular performance reviews of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and arrangements. Several other RFMOs have already initiated the next round of performance reviews. The EU considers that it is appropriate to consider taking the first steps to prepare for the next Performance Review of NAFO and to start discussions on the timing, scope and procedure for the next Performance Review, preferably by means of a virtual Working Group.
7. Such preparation should take into account the experience gained in the preparation and execution of the first performance review and build on its outcome.

Proposal

It is therefore **recommended** that:

- **The General Council agrees that it is appropriate to consider the preparation of the next Performance Review based on the outcomes of the 2011 Performance Review.**
- **For that purpose, the General Council decides on the establishment of a virtual Working Group. This virtual Working Group would meet electronically with the support of the NAFO Secretariat and would be entrusted with the following tasks:**
 - **To discuss the scope and timeline for a second performance review of NAFO.**
 - **To develop draft terms of reference and criteria to conduct the second performance review of NAFO. This includes the composition of the review panel, the scope of the review and the work schedule as well as the criteria for assessment of the performance of NAFO.**
 - **To present these documents at the 2016 NAFO Annual Meeting to allow the NAFO General Council to decide on the launching of the next Performance Review, if appropriate.**
- **Each Contracting Party interested in participating in the virtual Working Group designates a member of the virtual Working Group.**
- **The NAFO Secretariat circulates a paper presenting how the first performance review of 2011 was undertaken and makes a proposal on how to organize the work of the virtual Working group, including the possibility to create a SharePoint site on its website for that purpose.**

Annex 16. FAO Activities on Deep-sea Fisheries in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (GC Working Paper 15/02)

PROJECT UPDATE

Summary

FAO provided an update on the ABNJ Deep Seas Project to which NAFO is a partner. FAO described the new VME DataBase and the need for data inputs from NAFO. The SC was informed about the development of a range of tools designed to assist future data collection onboard vessels. FAO is also continuing to produce identification guides for vulnerable deep-sea species, and a manual on the collection of data on deep-sea species.

About the ABNJ Deep Sea Project

The “Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation of Deep Sea Living Resources in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction Project (ABNJ Deep Seas Project for short) is a five year project designed to enhance sustainability in the use of deep-sea living resources and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ through the systematic application of an ecosystem approach.

This project has four major components:

1. Strengthening policy and legal frameworks for sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ deep seas;
2. Reducing adverse impacts on VMEs and enhanced conservation and management of components of EBSAs;
3. Improving planning and adaptive management for deep sea fisheries in ABNJ; and
4. Development and testing of methods for area-based planning.

The ABNJ Deep Seas Project started in September 2014 and is one of four projects under the Common Oceans Programme. Components 1, 2, and 3 are led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and Component 4 is led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) through the World Conservation and Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

How NAFO is involved

NAFO is an important partner of the ABNJ Deep Seas Project. NAFO has been involved in the design and development of the Project and has agreed to contribute to activities that promote collaboration and sharing of experiences in deep-sea fisheries and associated biodiversity as well as specific activities on capacity building for developing countries. See the last page for more details.

NAFO activities associated with the ABNJ Deep Seas Project will contribute an estimated USD 2,100,000 of project co-financing.

About this report

This report includes information on the current status of the Project and upcoming activities that are relevant to NAFO.

Project activities to-date

- **New project staff:** The Project Coordinator (Mr Chris O’Brien) and the Area-based Planner (Ms Hannah Thomas) have recently taken up their positions with FAO and UNEP-WCMC, respectively.
- **A guide for the implementation of international legal and policy instruments related to deep-sea fisheries and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ.** The guide, intended for deep-sea stakeholders, will focus on the international obligations relating to deep-sea fisheries and biodiversity conservation. Work so far has included a review and analysis of current policy and legal instruments and will lead to the identification of the challenges in the implementation of current management requirements, and highlight the best practices currently applied around the world. The review and implementation guide is expected to be available in early 2016.

- **Review of current practices and processes for VMEs:** A regional review of current practices relating to VMEs is underway. Part of this work included an international workshop to review draft overviews of regional chapters (March 2015, Swakopmund, Namibia). The draft chapters are now being reviewed and will be published before the end of 2015.

The current practices for identification and management of VMEs publication will include a chapter on the Northwest Atlantic. NAFO participants were invited to the workshop and participated in the authoring of the Northwest Atlantic chapter.

- **Updating the VME Portal and DataBase:** The Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VME) Portal and DataBase were launched in December 2014 (www.fao.org/in-action/vulnerable-marine-ecosystems/en/). The VME Portal provides general information on VMEs, including sections for relevant publications and international instruments, links to VME-related tools and terminology, and the VME DataBase containing information on VME-related measures in ABNJ for each regional fisheries body, including NAFO. The database and website serve as information sharing platform as well as an awareness building tool.

NAFO will be asked to update the VME database content for the Northwest Atlantic after the Commission meeting each year. The update should include any new or modified measures on fishing with bottom contact gears (including fishing footprints, encounter protocols, new VME indicator species), VME areas, and new reports (from the Commission or Scientific Committee) with VME relevant information. Training and assistance is available through FAO.

- **Best practices in VME encounter protocols and impact assessments:** A workshop was held in May 2015, in collaboration with the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research (IMR), to facilitate the sharing of best practices and effective solutions on VME encounter protocols and impact assessments. Participants included managers, scientists, the fishing industry and NGO's. Key messages on the challenges faced by the stakeholders in practicing these methods and ways forward were identified, and a technical document containing these is being finalized.

Up-coming project activities

- **Industry meeting:** a planning meeting of interested deep-sea fisheries industry stakeholders will be held prior to the ICFA meeting in Vigo Spain on 6 October to discuss the content of a Global Deep-sea Industry Symposium that will be held in 2016. The symposium will provide a forum to discuss industry practices in deep-sea fisheries, common challenges and ways forward.
- **The first Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting** is planned for 15-16 December 2015 (to be confirmed).

A representative from NAFO will be invited to the ABNJ Deep Seas Project Steering Committee meeting.

- **2nd edition of the *Worldwide Review of Bottom Fisheries in the High Seas (WWR)*:** The *Worldwide Review of Bottom Fisheries in the High Seas* (FAO, 2009) will be updated and expanded in 2015 / 2016. The last review covered deep-sea fisheries for the period 2003-2006 using information acquired from a questionnaire circulated to some 40 countries and regional bodies. The updated review will address information gaps identified in the last review and will describe progress made on monitoring of data-poor deep-sea stocks, and benefits from updated stock assessment for key species.

The 2nd edition of the *Worldwide Review of Bottom Fisheries in the High Seas* will include a chapter on the Northeast Atlantic region.

- **Global reviews and best practices for the assessment and management of key deep-sea species:** Following on from the Alfonsino (*Beryx* spp.) Workshop in 2012 and global review, the Deep-seas Project will hold a similar review and assessment of orange roughy (*Hoplostethus atlanticus*). The reviews and identification of best practices for the assessment and management of orange roughy will commence with a workshop in early 2016.
- **Identification guides for vulnerable deep-sea species:** The Project will continue to support the development of identification guides and materials to assist in the implementation of fisheries management measures and reporting obligations (e.g. by-catch requirements, recording of catches, and to improve scientific assessments). To this end a range of user-friendly guides are being developed for use on board vessels by observers, scientists and non-scientific personnel. Following on from the first guides for deep-sea cartilaginous fishes of the Indian Ocean and the South East Atlantic, work will soon begin on the development of guides for deep-sea sharks in the South Pacific. Furthermore, a species list for deep-sea sponges in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean has been drafted in preparation for the development of identification materials. A similar process is underway for corals. Training workshops on the use of the deep-sea species guides will also be conducted.
- **A manual on collection of data on deep-sea species** is being produced and will be published by early 2016. This will supplement existing observer manuals and will be useful for those vessels operating in areas without RFMO technical support or without full observer coverage on data collection to meet new data collection requirements. The manual is written for a variety of users such as observers, scientists and non-scientists.
- **An electronic application for reporting onboard observations from deep-sea fisheries vessels** is currently being developed by FAO and an interested group of RFMOs. This application – SmartForms – will include an initial set of forms for VME reporting requirements. This will be tested by the RFMOs interested in deploying the application. SmartForms will include a variety of implementation options including: an iMarine integrated version; a version that forwards data directly to e.g. a RFMO backend bypassing iMarine; or a vessel operated offline system. Several components will be developed and can be used to customize the application. These include a forms designer for fisheries observations based on simple templates; and an application manager that manages your users and application settings. A reporting component will also be added.

NAFO is invited to participate in the SmartForm discussions. If there is interest from NAFO in using such a reporting tool, please inform FAO by 9 October 2015 to ensure participation in continuing discussions and development.

- **An electronic application for capturing voluntary information on biodiversity.** This application will be an optional application of the SmartForms and is intended to collect information on species of interest (e.g. marine mammals, seabirds, etc.) onboard fishing vessels to facilitate partnerships between industry and the global biodiversity community. FAO will facilitate partnerships with NGOs that compile global observations maps of species of interest to develop collaborative programs with the fishing industry.
- **International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas Challenges and Ways Forward.** FAO will be hosting a second meeting on the International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas - challenges and ways forward. The first meeting was held in Busan in 2010 and reviewed the issues encountered by RFMOs and States in implementing the guidelines. The second meeting will review the challenges five years on, and likely take place in 2016.

Other activities of interest

- **North Atlantic deep-sea sponges.** A project on deep-sea sponges in the north Atlantic has been submitted to the 7th Framework Programme (Horizon 2020) to be considered for funding. If this project is approved, FAO, along with several government and academic agencies aim to develop an integrated ecosystem-based concept for the management and conservation of deep-sea sponge ecosystems of the North Atlantic. Activities associated with this project will include: strengthening

the knowledge base, use of innovation technology, improving the ability to predict change, and providing decision support tools for management.

Find out more about the ABNJ Deep Seas Project

- Contact the ABNJ Deep Seas Project Coordinator (Mr Chris O'Brien) on chris.obrien@fao.org
- Visit the ABNJ Programme and the ABNJ Deep-seas Project website: www.commonoceans.org

ABNJ Deep Seas Project activities involving NAFO and its members and associated experts:

NAFO Activities – ABNJ Deep Seas Project	
Component 1.: Policy and legal frameworks for sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ deep seas	
Output 1.2.1.	
Activity 1.2.1.1.	Participation in the inception meeting. Review of implementation of FAO Deep Sea Guidelines. A Global Deep Seas Symposium.
Activity 1.2.1.2.	Ongoing commitment to electronic networks (e.g. VME Database and DSF). Regional network meetings that are back to back with existing conferences, to facilitate discussions on specific issues among deep sea RFMOs and in electronic forums (e.g. Deep Sea Fisheries discussion group).
Component 2.: Reducing adverse impacts on VMEs and enhancing conservation of components of EBSAs	
Output 2.1.1.	
Activity 2.1.1.1.	Ongoing work to digitize useful archived data and information that can be used for both VME and EBSA processes; and collation of information at a global level. Possible sourcing of additional information from diverse sources, including member countries, industry, publications, and other data archives.
Activity 2.1.1.2.	
Activity 2.1.1.3.	Analysis of interactions between Deep Sea Fisheries and key areas of biodiversity in the NAFO area.
Activity 2.1.1.4.	Updating the North West Atlantic chapter of the <i>Worldwide Review of Bottom Fisheries in the High Seas</i> .
Activity 2.1.1.5.	Production of a manual of best practices for identification of VMEs.
Output 2.1.2.	
Activity 2.1.2.1.	Development of an environment for all data collected in the project.
Activity 2.1.2.2.	Review NAFO information for the VME database. Contribute to the VME database and to the potential development of additional functionalities of the VME database.
Output 2.1.3.	
Activity 2.1.3.1.	Review the current VME indicators and use new data layers to examine VME information for the North West Atlantic (see Activity 2.1.2.2), including a specific application for the NAFO area to review information on VMEs.
Component 3.: Improved planning and adaptive management for DSF in the ABNJ	
Output 3.1.1.	
Activity 3.1.1.1.	Development of an operational manual for Deep Sea Fisheries management, encounter protocols, and use of VME criteria.
Activity 3.1.1.2.	Compilation of information and network of experts.

Annex 17. Press Release

NAFO MAKING WAVES: BANS ON BOTTOM FISHING

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Halifax, Nova Scotia, CANADA, 25 September 2015—The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) held its 37th Annual Meeting over 21-25 September to make decisions for the fishery in 2016. In particular, the final total allowable catches (TACs) were announced for NAFO stocks, as well as the elimination of all bottom fishing on seamount areas.

“While some NAFO stocks are still at low levels, it seems clear that our efforts at conservation and the sustainable use of our fishery resources are bearing fruit,” says NAFO President Veronika Veits, “with evidence that stocks are rebounding, including some which have recently been reopened.”

The management of the cod and redfish (ocean perch) stocks on the Flemish Cap (Div. 3M), both of which are in a healthy state, can support an increase in catches over the next two years. Catches were also increased for witch flounder (grey sole) on the Grand Bank.

To protect marine ecosystems, in particular slow growing deep water corals, it was also decided that all bottom fishing is now banned on seamounts in the NAFO Regulatory Area (NRA). This decision is based on NAFO’s continuous efforts in maintaining the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management.

It was also decided that a mechanism will continue to exchange information about fisheries and oil and gas exploration activities to ensure smooth co-existence of these activities.

At this meeting, it was decided to start preparations for NAFO’s second performance review. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations called on all Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), such as NAFO, to undergo regular performance reviews. As a result, NAFO underwent their last performance review in 2011, and has since addressed all recommendations.

NAFO also agreed on additional technical measures to further improve compliance and enforcement measures in the northwest Atlantic, such as follow-up to infringements. NAFO noted that its latest comprehensive compliance review demonstrates a trend of continued increasing compliance.

PART II.

Report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD)

37th Annual Meeting of NAFO, 21-25 September 2015
Halifax, Nova Scotia

1. Opening by the Chair

The first session of STACFAD was opened by the Chair, Deirdre Warner-Kramer (USA) on 21 September 2015. The Chair welcomed delegates and members of the NAFO Secretariat to the meeting.

Present were delegates from Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), European Union, Japan, Russian Federation, the United States of America and members of the NAFO Secretariat (Annex 1).

2. Appointment of Rapporteur

The NAFO Secretariat was appointed as Rapporteur.

3. Adoption of Agenda

The provisional agenda (Annex 2) was adopted with the addition of the following items:

- NAFO website, including access to documentation, to be included under agenda item 5 “*Administrative and Activity report;*” and
- Two items were included under agenda item 18 “*Other Matters*” - Standardization of NAFO reports and Memorandum of Understanding (STACFAD WP 15/09).

4. Auditors’ Report for 2014

The auditing firm of WBLI Chartered Accountants performed the audit of the financial statements of the Organization for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2014. The financial statements and report to the General Council were circulated to the Heads of Delegation of the General Council and to STACFAD delegates in advance of the Annual Meeting.

The Senior Finance and Staff Administrator for NAFO presented the Draft Independent Auditors’ Report and Financial Statements of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization for the year ended December 31, 2014. As auditing standards do not permit Auditors to sign and date the Auditors’ Report until after the statements are reviewed and approved, the financial statements will be shown as draft statements until they are reviewed by STACFAD and approved by the Organization at the Annual Meeting. It was noted that the total expenditures incurred for the fiscal period ending 2014 amounted to \$1,826,286, which was \$63,714 under the approved budget of \$1,890,000.

Consistent with prior years, the Independent Auditors’ Report noted that the Organization:

- 1) has not recorded or met all disclosure requirements for employee future benefits, including the pension plan assets, liabilities and unfunded deficit;
- 2) has a policy not to capitalize its capital assets; and
- 3) also has a policy not to capitalize finance leases.

Furthermore, the audit determined the financial affairs of the Organization had been conducted in accordance with the Financial Regulations and budgetary provisions of NAFO and presented, in all material respects, a fair and accurate accounting of the financial affairs of the Organization.

STACFAD recommends that the 2014 Auditors’ Report be adopted.

The committee was also informed that the audit of the 2015 financial statements will be the fifth and final year of the current five-year term that WBLI will serve as Auditors for the Organization. The Secretariat will

Report of STACFAD, 21-25 Sept 2015

invite firms to present proposals to carry out the audit for the 2016-2020 fiscal years. The proposals will be presented to STACFAD at the next annual meeting.

5. Administrative and Activity Report by Secretariat

The Executive Secretary highlighted NAFO administrative matters and activities for the period September 2014 to August 2015 (GC Doc. 15/02).

Following the PRP recommendation, in 2012 and 2013, the Secretariat adopted a NAFO Communication Strategy (NAFO GC Doc. 13/06). In light of new ways to communicate, such as social media, it is prevalent that the current communication strategy needs to be improved to expand NAFO's outreach and communication efforts. Therefore, an updated communication strategy will be completed over the next year and presented at the 2016 Annual Meeting.

a. NAFO website

The NAFO website, including access to documentation, was discussed taking into account points raised under GC agenda item 8 "*Transparency in NAFO Proceedings.*" In this context, STACFAD agreed that the NAFO webpages should be more transparent and accessible, including by providing meeting documentation more accessible for all.

Between 2012 and 2014, the NAFO website underwent a number of changes to improve its look and feel. These changes include updating the interface, improving searching capabilities and enhancing the homepage by providing links to key documents.

In the coming 12 months, the NAFO Secretariat plans to create a new platform and structure for NAFO's website to enable users to navigate and find information more quickly in a more user-friendly and modern format. The new platform, a Content Management System (CMS), was presented in STACFAD WP 15/08.

STACFAD **agreed** that the redesign of the NAFO website should incorporate concerns raised regarding transparency in NAFO proceedings specifically access to its documentation and should also take into account the differing user groups of the website including the public.

STACFAD recommends that an *Ad hoc* virtual Working Group be established, of self-identified interested participants, to assist in the re-design process of the NAFO website namely:

- **to provide feedback during the development, testing and implementation stages; and**
- **in consultation with the Chairs of STACTIC and STACFAD, to develop standards and guidelines of access to documentation contained on the site including which documentation requires password protection.**

6. Financial Statements for 2015

Budgetary Expenses

The Executive Secretary informed the Committee that efforts to minimize costs and maximize efficiencies at the NAFO Secretariat continued during 2015. The operating budget for 2015 was approved at \$1,981,000 and expenditures for the year are projected to be at \$1,951,000, or \$30,000 under the approved budget. Savings for the year can be attributed to the following:

- 1) two long term employees retired early in the year and were replaced by staff at lower salary levels;
- 2) the SC Coordinator resigned late in the year with his replacement not expecting to take office until 2016; and
- 3) travel incurred during the year was limited.

It was also noted that three budget categories were over budget during the year. In particular, no budget had been set to perform the Staff Classification review, legal fees required to defend a wrongful dismissal suit exceeded budgeted costs and the unexpected departure of the SC Coordinator resulted in non-budgeted relocation costs. Without these items, the savings for the year would have been significantly greater.

All remaining 2015 operating expenses are anticipated to be on or near budget for the year.

The above noted cost savings of \$30,000 will be returned to the accumulated surplus and will be available to reduce Contracting Parties contributions in 2016.

Assessed Contributions

At the beginning of the 2015, the accumulated surplus had \$301,228 which, was deemed to be in excess of the needs of the Organization and was allocated towards the 2015 operating budget. Therefore, in order to meet the 2015 operations budget of \$1,981,000, Contracting Parties were assessed contributions in the amount of \$1,679,722.

Balance Sheet

The Organization's cash position at December 31, 2015 is estimated to be \$572,207. The cash balance should be sufficient to finance appropriations in early 2016 pending the receipt of annual payments by Contracting Parties in the spring of 2016.

7. Review of Accumulated Surplus and Contingency Funds

According to the Financial Regulations of the Organization, STACFAD and General Council shall review the amount available in the accumulated surplus account during each Annual Meeting. The accumulated surplus account shall be set at a level sufficient to temporarily finance operations during the first three months of the year, plus an amount up to a maximum of 10% of the annual budget for the current financial year to be used for unforeseen and extraordinary expenses to the good conduct of the business of the Organization.

The Secretariat noted the accumulated surplus account at December 31, 2015 is estimated to be \$552,680.

STACFAD recommends that the amount maintained in the accumulated surplus account be set at \$285,000 of which \$200,000 would be sufficient to finance operations during the first three months of 2016, and of which \$85,000 would be a contingency fund available to be used for unforeseen and extraordinary expenses.

8. Personnel Matters

This year, the Secretariat said goodbye to two long-term employees. After 36 dedicated years at NAFO, Cindy Kerr, Senior Fisheries Information Manager and Barbara Marshall, Senior Information Officer, retired. This left two open positions. In 2015, two new employees joined the Secretariat, Jana Aker and Dayna Bell.

a. Personnel updates

The Executive Secretary presented to the Committee a summary report on personnel matters at the NAFO Secretariat. The NAFO Secretariat presented those staff members who were eligible for promotion, and the Committee was in agreement with the proposed promotions.

b. NAFO Secretariat classification scheme review

At the 2014 NAFO Annual Meeting, the General Council tasked STACFAD to review the existing NAFO Secretariat classification scheme, including salary scales and relevant employment benefits' to improve efficiency and support the priorities of the Organization and its Contracting Parties.

Stephen MacDermott, SJM Consulting, was selected to perform the review. He presented the current draft of the report of the Staff Classification review (STACFAD WP 15/10) to the Committee. The Committee and staff members expressed concerns that the level of detail and analysis contained within did not fully meet the terms of reference. The NAFO Staff Association presented its concerns in STACFAD WP 15/11 for consideration. The Committee agreed comments should be collected from Contracting Parties, the NAFO Secretariat and staff members then forwarded to the consultant for a revision.

The report included a review of NAFO's separation indemnity benefits including the comparison of separation indemnity benefits received in the Public Service of Canada (PSC) and similar RFMOs; and possible modifications to the severance payment for NAFO employees.

STACFAD **agreed** to defer the consideration of possible modifications to NAFO's separation indemnity benefits as it is intended to be a part of the overall NAFO Secretariat classification scheme review. Canada will provide a proposal on this issue in time for consideration at the next Annual Meeting.

To ensure the Committee had a fully developed report of the NAFO Secretariat classification scheme and subsequent recommendations for consideration, STACFAD **agreed** to the following:

- **Contracting Parties, the NAFO Secretariat and staff members provide comments to the NAFO Secretariat on the report by 30 October 2015.**
- **The NAFO Secretariat compile these comments to be forwarded to the consultant, with a copy to STACFAD members, and used for a revision of the NAFO Secretariat classification scheme review to be received by the end of 2015.**
- **The revised review of the NAFO Secretariat classification scheme to be circulated to STACFAD Members in early 2016.**
- **Using the revised report of the NAFO Secretariat classification scheme as a basis, the NAFO Secretariat develop and circulate recommendations for STACFAD's consideration in advance of the 2016 Annual Meeting of NAFO, 19-23 September 2016.**

9. Internship Program

The Secretariat presented a report on the activities of the internship program which occurred during the year including the tasks performed by the intern, Toni Bartulin, hosted at the Secretariat in 2015.

The budget for the 2015 internship program was set at \$6,000 which allowed for a three (3) month internship period during the year. The Committee once again endorsed the continuation of the internship program recognizing the considerable benefits to the Secretariat.

The intention of the program is to provide an opportunity for nationals from all NAFO member countries a chance to participate.

The Committee recommends that the Secretariat continue to pursue alternate and additional methods to recruit prospective interns particularly to nationals of NAFO that have not yet participated, including a review of the stipend amount.

10. Rules of Procedure: Observers

It has been five years since the current Rules of Procedures for Observers has been in place. According to Rule 5(e) of the NAFO Rules of Procedure for Observers to NAFO Meetings, accreditation of NAFO Observers is required to be reviewed every five years "*taking into account any new information or development regarding the NGO since the last accreditation.*" This year, marked the first five-year review of accreditation of NAFO Observers.

The status of four NAFO Observers was up for review namely the Ecology Action Centre (EAC); the International Coalition of Fisheries Associations; the Pew Environment Group; and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). All were granted renewal of NAFO Observer status.

The Dalhousie University - EIUI is up for renewal in July 2018 and the Marine Stewardship Council in January 2019.

11. Report of the Annual Meeting of the International Fisheries Commissions Pension Society (IFCPS)

The Annual Meeting of the International Fisheries Commissions Pension Society (IFCPS) was held 14-16 April 2015 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, and the Secretariat provided the Committee with an update on the highlights of the meeting. Background information on the pension plan, investment performance, financial status, as well as future administrative support was included with the information paper (STACFAD WP 15/03).

12. Update on implementation of Performance Review Panel recommendations tasked to STACFAD

One remaining PRP recommendation tasked to STACFAD remains outstanding. PRP Recommendation 7.2.3 suggests amending certain provisions of the NAFO Staff Rules pertaining to the rights and obligations of NAFO Secretariat Staff, particularly dismissal or termination of appointment. A review of this item has been deferred in prior years until the conclusion of the current wrongful dismissal legal case against NAFO. In the meantime, the Secretariat has inquired with its lawyers if they would review our current Staff Rules relating to dismissal or termination of appointment and provide comments or recommended changes to the Staff Rules. NAFO's lawyers stated that such a review would cost approximately \$1,500.

13. Budget Estimate for 2016

The Committee reviewed the 2016 budget estimate as detailed in GC WP 15/01. Keeping in mind the significant efforts undertaken the past few years to keep the budget at or near a zero-growth level, the 2016 estimate contained numerous categories which were maintained at already reduced levels. Furthermore, costs saving measures continued by the Secretariat in 2015 have also assisted with keeping budget increases to a minimum.

Notwithstanding the reduced budget categories noted above, computer services was one area in which the budget estimate was increased to address the recommendations from the 2015 IT security audit and also for the restructuring of the NAFO webpages. Additionally, the NAFO Internship program budget was expanded to allow for up to a 6 month period at the Secretariat. As a final note, following the resignation of the SC Coordinator, the recruitment for the new SC Coordinator is underway and it is anticipated that the position will be filled in early 2016. As this position is recruited internationally, \$45,000 has been budgeted for recruitment and relocation costs.

The overall 2016 budget estimate of \$1,997,000 represents a slight increase of \$16,000 or 0.8% over the prior years approved budget. If not for the recruitment and relocation budget which includes a \$45,000 extraordinary provision for the hiring of the SC Coordinator, the 2016 budget would have seen a decrease of \$29,000 or about 1.5%.

<i>Approved Budget 2015</i>	<i>Preliminary Budget Forecast 2016</i>	<i>Budget Estimate 2016</i>
<i>\$1,981,000</i>	<i>\$2,032,000</i>	<i>\$1,997,000</i>

STACFAD recommends that the budget for 2016 of \$1,997,000 (Annex 3) be adopted.

A preliminary calculation of billing for the 2016 financial year is provided in Annex 4. The preliminary calculation of billing is based on the budget estimate of \$1,997,000 and shall be reduced by any amount determined by the General Council to be in excess of the needs of the accumulated surplus account.

The accumulated surplus account at December 31, 2015 is estimated to be \$552,680 and the recommended minimum balance in the accumulated surplus account for operations and emergency use for the 2016 fiscal year is \$285,000. This allows for \$267,680 (\$552,680-\$285,000) to be applied towards the 2016 billing.

Funds required to meet the 2016 administrative budget and appropriated from Contracting Parties are estimated to be \$1,729,320 (\$1,997,000 - \$267,680).

14. Budget Forecast for 2017 and 2018

STACFAD reviewed the preliminary budget forecast for 2017 (\$1,995,000) and 2018 (\$2,031,000) (Annex 5) and approved the forecast in principle. It was noted that the budget for 2017 will be reviewed in detail at the next Annual Meeting.

15. Adoption of 2015/2016 Staff Committee Appointees

The Secretariat members nominated the following people to serve as members of the Staff Committee for September 2015–September 2016: Emilia Batista (EU); Joanne Morgan (Canada) and Deirdre Warner-Kramer (USA).

STACFAD recommends that General Council appoint the three Staff Committee nominees September 2015–September 2016.

16. Time and Place of 2016–2018 Annual Meetings

As previously agreed, the 2016 and 2017 Annual Meetings will be held 19-23 September and 18-22 September, respectively. The meetings will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, unless an invitation to host is extended by a Contracting Party and accepted by the Organization.

STACFAD recommends that the dates of the 2018 Annual Meeting (to be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, unless an invitation to host is extended by a Contracting Party and accepted by the Organization) to be as follows:

17-21 September 2018

In prior years, the Committee has been informed that conference facilities in the Halifax area are limited and that it has become more and more difficult to reserve and hold conference space on a short term basis (i.e. one year basis). Hotels are seeking a long term commitment as they quite often will have other clients willing to book two years or more in advance. NAFO is limited from committing two years in advance as offers from CPs to host a NAFO Annual Meeting can be issued up to one year prior to an Annual Meeting. The Secretariat provided an update on future bookings and potential financial implications if the Organization is requested to make a substantial non-refundable deposit to hold onto conference space.

The Committee **recommends** that:

Contracting Parties strive, whenever possible, to provide more than 12 months notice of the intention to extend an invitation to host a NAFO Annual Meeting.

Understanding the limitations that CPs may be faced with in providing more such advance notice, the Committee further **recommends** that:

In the occasion that the Secretariat has committed to a meeting venue, and a subsequent invitation to host is accepted by the Organization, any cancellation penalties incurred may be financed by the contingency fund.

17. Election of Vice-Chair

According to Rule 5.2 of the GC Rules of Procedure: *"The Committee shall elect from among its members, to serve for two years, a chair and a vice-chair who shall be allowed to vote."*

The present Vice-Chair, Élise Lavigne (Canada), was nominated and re-elected for a two-year term.

18. Other Matters

The following matters were referred to STACFAD by the General Council during the current Annual Meeting:

a. Standardization of NAFO meeting reports

Under GC agenda item 8 *"Transparency in NAFO Proceedings,"* it was reiterated that NAFO meeting reports should accurately capture discussion during the sessions as well as appropriate meeting outcomes.

STACFAD noted that the importance of the Rapporteur to strike a balance with the current reporting procedure of preparing an accurate and concise report; and the noted concerns expressed at this meeting.

STACFAD noted that if this continues to be a concern that Contracting Parties may wish to formulate more formal guidelines, either in the Rules of Procedure or as a stand-alone document, to assist with better standardization of the reporting procedure of NAFO meetings.

b. Memorandum of Understanding

Following the upcoming resolution of the court case, Canada noted its continued intention to move forward with the finalization of the Headquarters Agreement. In addition a Memorandum of Understanding (STACFAD WP 15/09), the companion document to the Headquarters Agreement, was presented by Canada under this agenda item. The Secretariat identified three key items that are still of concern to the Secretariat:

- 1) access to the lease agreement as currently the Secretariat does not have a copy of the current lease agreement;
- 2) allocation of space as NAFO headquarters does not conform to the Government of Canada Workplace standards; and
- 3) appropriate security measures for an international organization.

Canada stated that the Government of Canada would perform a NAFO Headquarters needs assessment in advance of lease renewal to identify requirements in terms of space allocation and security of the premises.

To allow Contracting Parties to consider the proposed text, STACFAD **recommends** that:

Contracting Parties review the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (STACFAD WP 15/09) and provide comments to the Secretariat by 30 November 2015 to be compiled and sent to the Government of Canada.

Report of STACFAD, 21-25 Sept 2015

19. Adjournment

The final session of the STACFAD meeting adjourned on 23 September 2015.

Gratitude was expressed to the Committee members for their effective cooperation this week, and to the NAFO Secretariat for its excellent support.



Annex 1. List of Participants

Élise Lavigne	Canada
Esben Ehlers	Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)
Herbert Schuller	European Union
Tadaaki Kakinuma	Japan
Yulia Badina	Russian Federation
Elizabethann English Deirdre Warner-Kramer	United States of America
Fred Kingston Stan Goodick Lisa LeFort Alexis Pacey	NAFO Secretariat

Annex 2. Agenda

1. Opening by the Chair, Deirdre Warner-Kramer (USA)
2. Appointment of Rapporteur
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Auditors' Report for 2014
5. Administrative and Activity Report by NAFO Secretariat
 - a. NAFO website
6. Financial Statements for 2015
7. Review of Accumulated Surplus and Contingency Fund
8. Personnel Matters
 - a. Personnel updates
 - b. Secretariat Staff Classification Review
9. Internship Program
10. Rules of Procedure Re: Observers
11. Report of the Annual Meeting of the International Fisheries Commissions Pension Society
12. Update on implementation of the NAFO Performance Review Panel (PRP) recommendations tasked to STACFAD
13. Budget Estimate for 2016
14. Budget Forecast for 2017 and 2018
15. Adoption of 2015/2016 Staff Committee Appointees
16. Time and Place of 2016-2018 Annual Meetings
17. Election of Vice-Chair
18. Other Matters
 - a. Standardization of NAFO meeting reports
 - b. Memorandum of Understanding
19. Adjournment

Annex 3. Budget Estimate for 2016

NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES ORGANIZATION

Budget Estimate for 2016

(Canadian Dollars)

	Approved Budget	2015	Projected Expenditures 2015	Preliminary Budget Forecast 2016	Budget Estimate 2016
1. Personal Services					
a) Salaries	\$1,029,000		\$975,000	\$1,074,000	\$992,000
b) Superannuation and Annuities	358,000		358,000	358,000	353,000
c) Medical and Insurance Plans	91,000		89,000	95,000	92,000
d) Employee Benefits	67,000		55,000	62,000	60,000
Subtotal Personal Services	1,545,000		1,477,000	1,589,000	1,497,000
2. Additional Help	1,000		1,000	10,000	2,000
3. Communications	24,000		23,000	24,000	22,000
4. Computer Services	31,000		34,000	31,000	42,000
5. Equipment	28,000		28,000	28,000	28,000
6. Fishery Monitoring	36,000		36,000	37,000	37,000
7. Hospitality Allowance	3,000		3,000	3,000	3,000
8. Internship	6,000		6,000	5,500	11,000
9. Materials and Supplies	28,000		28,000	29,500	28,000
10. NAFO Meetings					
a) Sessional	114,000		110,000	115,000	115,000
b) Inter-sessional Scientific	25,000		25,000	25,000	25,000
c) Inter-sessional Other	30,000		24,000	30,000	32,000
Subtotal NAFO Meetings	169,000		159,000	170,000	172,000
11. Other Meetings and Travel	35,000		18,000	35,000	35,000
12. Performance/External Reviews	0		15,000	0	0
13. Professional Services	51,000		62,000	46,000	51,000
14. Publications	12,000		12,000	12,000	12,000
15. Recruitment and Relocation	12,000		49,000	12,000	57,000
	\$1,981,000		\$1,951,000	\$2,032,000	\$1,997,000

Notes on Budget Estimate 2016
(Canadian Dollars)

Item 1(a)	Salaries Salaries budget estimate for 2016.	\$992,000
Item 1(b)	Superannuation and Annuities Employer's pension plan which includes employer's contributions, administration costs, actuarial fees and the required annual payment towards previous pension plan deficits.	\$353,000
Item 1(c)	Group Medical and Insurance Plans Employer's portion of Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, Group Life Insurance, Long Term Disability Insurance and Medical Coverage.	\$92,000
Item 1(d)	Employee Benefits Employee benefits as per the NAFO Staff Rules including overtime, repatriation grant, termination benefits, vacation pay, and travel to home country for internationally recruited members of the Secretariat.	\$60,000
Item 2	Additional Support Other assistance as required.	\$2,000
Item 3	Communications Phone, fax and internet services Postage Courier/Mail service	\$22,000 \$16,000 4,000 2,000
Item 4	Computer Services Computer hardware, software, supplies and support.	\$42,000
Item 5	Equipment Leases (print department printer, photocopier and postage meter) Purchases Maintenance	\$28,000 \$18,000 5,000 5,000
Item 6	Fishery Monitoring Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) annual maintenance fee including programming changes as required due to changes to CEM	\$37,000

Item 10(a)	NAFO Sessional Meetings Annual Meeting, September 2016, Halifax, Canada SC Meeting, June 2016, Halifax, Canada SC Meeting, September 2016, Copenhagen, Denmark	\$115,000
Item 10(b)	NAFO Inter-sessional Scientific Meetings Provision for inter-sessional meetings and a general provision for unforeseen expenses necessarily incurred by SC required for the provision of answering requests for advice from FC.	\$25,000
Item 10(c)	NAFO Inter-sessional Other General provision for GC and FC inter-sessional meetings.	\$32,000
Item 11	Other Meetings and Travel International Meetings regularly attended by the NAFO Secretariat: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA) 2. Committee on Fisheries (COFI) 3. Co-ordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) 4. Fisheries Resources Monitoring Systems (FIRMS) 5. International Fisheries Commissions Pension Society (IFCPS) 6. Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN) 7. United Nations 	\$35,000
Item 13	Professional Services Professional Services (audit, consulting, legal fees, and insurance) Professional Development and Training Public Relations	\$51,000 \$35,000 11,000 5,000
Item 14	Publications Production costs of NAFO publications, booklets, brochures, posters, etc., which may include the following: Conservation and Enforcement Measures, Convention, Inspection Forms, Journal of Northwest Atlantic Fishery Science, Meeting Proceedings, Rules of Procedure, Scientific Council Reports, Staff Rules, Secretariat Structure, etc.	\$12,000

Annex 4. Preliminary Budget Forecast for 2017 and 2018 Budget Estimate for 2016

NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES ORGANIZATION
Preliminary Budget Forecast for 2017 and 2018
(Canadian Dollars)

	Preliminary Budget Forecast 2017	Preliminary Budget Forecast 2018
1. Personal Services		
a) Salaries	\$1,023,000	\$1,051,000
b) Superannuation and Annuities	355,000	357,000
c) Medical and Insurance Plans	95,000	99,000
d) Employee Benefits	63,000	63,000
Subtotal Personal Services	1,536,000	1,570,000
2. Additional Help	2,000	2,000
3. Communications	23,000	23,000
4. Computer Services	42,000	42,000
5. Equipment	28,000	28,000
6. Fishery Monitoring	37,000	38,000
7. Hospitality Allowance	3,000	3,000
8. Internship	11,000	11,000
9. Materials and Supplies	28,000	28,000
10. NAFO Meetings		
a) Sessional	118,000	119,000
b) Inter-sessional Scientific	25,000	25,000
c) Inter-sessional Other	32,000	32,000
Subtotal NAFO Meetings	175,000	176,000
11. Other Meetings and Travel	35,000	35,000
12. Professional Services	51,000	51,000
13. Publications	12,000	12,000
14. Recruitment and Relocation	12,000	12,000
	\$1,995,000	\$2,031,000

**Preliminary calculation of billing for Contracting Parties
against the proposed estimate of \$1,997,000 for the 2016
financial year (based on 12 Contracting Parties to NAFO)
(Canadian Dollars)**

Annex 5

Budget Estimate	\$1,997,000
Deduct: Amount from Accumulated Surplus (pending approval from General Council)	<u>267,680</u>
Funds required to meet 2016 Administrative Budget	<u>\$1,729,320</u>

60% of funds required =	\$1,037,592
30% of funds required =	\$518,796
10% of funds required =	\$172,932

2015 Billing for comparison purposes		
Approved Budget 2015		\$1,981,000
Deduct: Accumulated Surplus		<u>301,228</u>
Funds required 2015 Budget		<u>\$1,679,772</u>
Nominal Catches for 2012	% of Total Catch in the Convention Area	2015 Annual Contribution
500,305	57.91%	\$729,173.13
960	0.11%	43,102.95
156,492	18.12%	257,001.10
36,198	4.19%	84,223.77
1,065	0.12%	43,424.11
-	-	41,994.30
-	-	41,994.30
-	-	41,994.30
3,140	0.36%	45,622.61
11,806	1.37%	55,802.03
-	-	41,994.30
153,919	17.82%	253,445.10
863,885	100.00%	<u>\$1,679,772.00</u>

Contracting Parties	Nominal Catches for 2013	% of Total Catch in the Convention Area	% of Total			2016 Preliminary Billing
			10%	30%	60%	
Canada	357,615	51.13%	\$95,945.59	\$43,233.00	\$530,520.78	\$669,699.37
Cuba	845	0.12%	-	43,233.00	1,245.10	44,478.10
Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) (1)	144,541	20.67%	38,779.34	43,233.00	214,470.27	296,482.61
European Union	39,695	5.67%	-	43,233.00	58,831.47	102,064.47
France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon)	316	0.05%	84.78	43,233.00	518.80	43,836.58
Iceland	92	0.01%	-	43,233.00	103.76	43,336.76
Japan	-	-	-	43,233.00	-	43,233.00
Republic of Korea	-	-	-	43,233.00	-	43,233.00
Norway	2,846	0.41%	-	43,233.00	4,254.13	47,487.13
Russian Federation	11,399	1.63%	-	43,233.00	16,912.75	60,145.75
Ukraine	-	-	-	43,233.00	-	43,233.00
United States of America	142,092	20.31%	38,122.29	43,233.00	210,734.94	292,090.23
	699,441	100.00%	\$172,932.00	\$518,796.00	\$1,037,592.00	<u>\$1,729,320.00</u>
Funds required to meet 1 January - 31 December 2016 Administrative Budget						<u>\$1,729,320.00</u>

(1) Faroe Islands 4,803 metric tons
Greenland 139,738 metric tons