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Spanish proposal for the allocation of surplus cod stocks

- a note by the Government of Spain

During the Annual Meeting of the Commission in June 1976, the Spanish Delegation introduced the notion that, in order to avoid discrimination in allocations to non-coastal states of surpluses of stocks which are, at present, declining, a partially new principle of distribution should be advocated.

This principle stresses the Spanish commitment to continuing cooperation with the Coastal States, while simultaneously giving due recognition to historical participation in a fishery as the basis for later allocation when restrictive quotas are introduced as safeguard conservation needs. This last element was, in fact, fully considered when systems of distribution were introduced by the Commission formerly (40%, 40%, 10%, 10% - 1972; 45%, 45%, 10% - 1974).

Thus, the only novelty in the proposal lies with the consideration, for quota distribution purposes, of species as a whole. The stock-by-stock approach seems to be very useful for a fuller scientific understanding of each species. However, the economic significance of participation in a fishery by any given country is determined by the total quota allocated, whether or not this allocation is, in turn, distributed over several individualized stocks.

On this basis, Spain considers that the "stock-by-stock" concept is valid as the scientific starting point on which global TACs should be determined. Not so, however, when national quotas must be distributed out of a surplus to the needs of the Coastal States for any given species. In this case, Spain believes that only by introducing the "total consideration" concept in any species can full recognition be given to past performance in a fishery.

In consequence, Spain believes and proposes that, in the Special Meeting of the Commission in December 1976, the national quotas of non-coastal states be allocated, in the case of species at present declining, according to the following procedure:

- After approval, on the advice of STACRES, of global TACs on a stock-by-stock basis, the needs of the Coastal States should be deducted.
- The total surplus should be divided among non-coastal states in proportion to their average percentage participation in the fishery for any given species over the 10-year period, 1966-1975, following the formula determined by STACREM.
- Therefore, a total national quota shall be allocated to each country in every fishery in which it participates.
- This total quota shall be composed of the sums of the partial quotas which a country may obtain in each stock of any species, as a consequence of the application to each stock TAC of the percentage participation of that country in the overall fishery of that particular species.

It is quite evident that this procedure would, in practice, preclude the entry of newcomers into a declining fishery. It is the feeling of Spain that this consequence, difficult as it might be considered, should be faced with the same realism with which traditional countries heavily dependent on fisheries confront the harsh realities of the present.

Otherwise, a situation of discrimination against traditional participants is produced without any moral justification, having extremely important economic consequences for the countries involved.

Conversely, the situation should be different when the fishery, instead of declining, is on the increase. In this case, Spain believes that, while the same principle of distribution of the surplus should apply protecting the States present in the fishery, adequate provision should be made for new participants. Perhaps the best system would be to continue maintaining an "Others" quota of sufficient magnitude.