



24<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of NAFO  
16-20 September 2002

Press Release

1. The 24th Annual Meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) was held in Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, Spain, during 16-20 September 2002, under the chairmanship of Enrique Oltuski (Cuba), President of NAFO. The NAFO constituent bodies - General Council, Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council convened their sessions at the Galicia Congress and Exhibition Centre.
2. The meeting was attended by 200 delegates from seventeen Contracting Parties - Canada, Bulgaria, Cuba, Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland), Estonia, European Union, France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon), Iceland, Japan, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and United States of America.
3. Prior to the Annual Meeting, the following NAFO meetings occurred during 2001: (1) Special Meetings (General Council and Fisheries Commission) in a framework of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting (Helsingør, Denmark, Jan. 29 – Feb. 01); (2) Standing Committee on International Control (Copenhagen, Denmark, May 6-9); (3) Working Group of Technical Experts on Precautionary Approach (Dartmouth, N.S., Canada, June 20-21); (4) Working Group on Management of Oceanic Redfish (Dartmouth, N.S., Canada, June 24-25); (5) Scientific Council Regular Meeting (Dartmouth, N.S., Canada, June 6-20); (6) STACTIC Drafting Group to Overhaul Conservation and Enforcement Measures (Ottawa, Canada, July 9-11).
4. The Scientific Council, under the chairmanship of Ralph Mayo (USA), reviewed and assessed the status of fish stocks in the NAFO Area. The scientific advice and recommendations from the Scientific Council were presented to the Fisheries Commission. The Scientific Council agreed that major groundfish stocks still remain at low abundance and, therefore, should not be recommended for directed fisheries during 2003. The biomass and fishery potentials of Yellowtail flounder in Div. 3LNO were assessed as stable with the possibility of a sustainable fishery. The Scientific Council Symposium on Elasmobranch Fisheries (held in advance of Annual Meeting) brought new ideas on shark management, harvest strategies and stock assessment.
5. The Fisheries Commission, under the chairmanship of Dean Swanson (USA), considered the advice of the Scientific Council in relation to the conservation of fish stocks in the Regulatory Area and agreed to conservation and enforcement measures.

The Fisheries Commission agreed to continue moratoria ("no directed fishery") in 2003 on the following stocks: Cod in Divisions 3M, 3L (that portion within the Regulatory Area) and 3NO, Redfish in Div. 3LN, American plaice in Divisions 3M and 3LNO, Witch flounder in Div. 3NO and 3L (that portion within the Regulatory Area); and Capelin in Div. 3NO. The Quota Table for 2003 was adopted (Attachment 1).

With respect to management measures for cod in Div. 2J3KL, Contracting Parties other than Canada expressed their serious concern that management measures for this stock may not be consistent throughout its range in the Convention Area in the year 2002.

The Fisheries Commission adopted new rules for assessing the compliance of the NAFO Contracting Parties with the Conservation and Enforcement Measures in the NAFO Area.

The Fisheries Commission agreed on continuing restrictive conservation measures in shrimp fishery on Flemish Cap and Division 3L by employing selective sorting grates for by-catch avoidance and 40mm mesh size. The fishing days in Div. 3M should be 90% of an earlier benchmark historical record. The Fisheries Commission also agreed on specific rules for controlling and monitoring by-catches and minimizing incidental catches in directed

fisheries and modifications to the Automated Hail/Vessel Monitoring System for continuous effective monitoring of fishing activities in the Regulatory Area.

6. The General Council, under the chairmanship of Enrique Oltuski (Cuba), deliberated several substantive issues regarding internal and external NAFO policy and finance on the following terms:
  - Standing Committee on non-Contracting Party Fishing Activity in the Regulatory Area (STACFAC) shall continue the study for application of the FAO International Plans of Action on Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing (IUU) to NAFO needs;
  - Concern was expressed with regards to non-Contracting Party fishing activity in the NAFO Regulatory Area in the second half of 2002, and STACFAC was instructed to review and monitor this situation.
  - The President of NAFO will contact the non-Contracting Parties (Belize and Cyprus) whose flag vessels were involved.
  - The General Council considered the re-establishment of the voting rights of Bulgaria based on Bulgaria's commitment to re-pay its outstanding contributions.
7. The General Council of NAFO elected a new Executive Secretary – Johanne Fischer (European Union), who will replace the outgoing Executive Secretary – Leonard Chepel effective January 01, 2003.
8. The following elections of NAFO officers took place:
  - Chairman of Standing Committee on Fishing Activities of non-Contracting Parties in the Regulatory Area (STACFAC) - D. Silvestre (France in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon) (re-elected)
  - Vice-Chairman of Standing Committee on Fishing Activities of non-Contracting Parties in the Regulatory Area (STACFAC) - N. Bouffard (Canada) (re-elected)

NAFO General Council  
20 September 2002

NAFO Secretariat  
Dartmouth, N.S. Canada