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**SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL MEETING – JUNE 1999**

**Report of the NAFO Observer**

**ICES Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM),  
Copenhagen, Denmark, May 1999**

by

Hans-Peter Cornus (SC Chairman)

The Chairman of the NAFO Scientific Council attended the ACFM meeting in the plenary part from 17 to 19 May to observe developments in relation to the advisory process and the implementation of the Precautionary Approach in this process.

The NAFO-Observer gave an overview on both NAFO SC and Joint SC/FC meetings on Precautionary Approach at San Sebastian, Spain, 26. April – 1. May and 3.-5. May 1999 respectively. He noted that the first meeting was a SC meeting for preparation of the joint meeting with the managers. In relation to the latter he especially noted the request of the managers for clear, transparent and simple presentation of involved scientific relationships understandable also for non-scientists. In enhancing the mutual understanding between managers and scientists he considered the meeting a success although there is still additional need for communication between both groups. In this context he raised the issue of harmonisation of concepts, abbreviations etc. in relation to PA. as requested by NAFO managers

ACFM discussed the presentation and noted that it agreed with NAFO on the need for harmonisation of concepts, abbreviations and definitions. It was recognised that while there is a need for clear concepts it would also be likely that the basis for the advice and setting of PA reference points would differ between east and west of the North Atlantic.

ACFM pointed to FAO as an organisation to take the lead on achieving this harmonisation but recognised that if FAO did not soon take an initiative NAFO and ICES would jointly need to do so.

ACFM recognise that its use of  $F_{lim}$  was probably not in the strict sense of the term as used by the UN agreement. ACFM therefor concluded that it would change its terminology from year 2000, i.e. leaving the use unchanged in the current year report. Off the cuff proposals included  $F_{lim}$  (in the ICES sense) be renamed to  $F_{crash}$  or  $F_{collapse}$ . There was a specific discussion on the use of the  $F_{MSY}$  based on a comments of the EU-Observer. It was identified that NAFO SC proposed this reference point as  $F_{lim}$  based on the ANNEX 2 of UN agreement while ICES saw this reference as an upper limit to a target reference point.

ACFM noted that in the process of implementation of the PA the speed of determining reference points was in some cases too quick and more time should be provided for discussion and evaluation. NAFO SC should consider this experience.

Concerning the display of historical and recent relation between SSB and  $F$  ACFM plots SSB over  $F$  as the SC chair proposed in former meetings. To avoid further confusion for the managers this has to be considered also in NAFO.

In the context of the implementation of the PA in the advice NAFO SC need to adapt the form of advice. The following structure is used by ACFM and may be a basis for a discussion in NAFO SC:

- 1 state of the stock/fishery
- 2 management objectives
- 3 advice on management
- 4 proposed reference points
- 5 relevant factors to be considered in management
- 6 catch forecast
- 7 elaboration and special comments
- 8 source of information

In this list an important item is missing: medium term forecast. NAFO SC should take this also into account. Concerning item 4 ACFM considers limit reference points but proposes PA (NAFO: buffer) reference points. Both are elaborated in the part 'technical basis' under this item. In the opinion of the NAFO Observer this may be too short as an explanation for managers.

The experience the NAFO Observer had with the Microsoft Software NETMEETING used during the ACFM meeting was excellent when it was used in the discussion of the report. A rapporteur has controll on the text file. Other participants in the local net can joint the 'netmeeting' and see immediately the changes which are made by the rapporteur without having controll on the text file. Proposals for changes can be made by everyone by means of a chat window in which everyone can see the proposal. If it is agreed by discussion the rapporteur simply copys it from the chat window to the text file.

This should be urgently considered by NAFO SC for use at it's meetings !