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Statement of FAO Observer to 14th Annual Meeting of ICNAF

Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Gentlemen:

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to say a few words to you and at the same time to convey greetings from the Director General of FAO. I am sorry to have missed the first days of your meeting. The governing bodies of FAO are at this time considering carefully the work of our Fisheries Division and examining its successes and failures. This process has been undertaken in response to a resolution of the 12th FAO Conference held last November, which called on the Organization to plan for a far more effective role in encouraging the rational harvesting of food from the oceans and inland waters. This need arises from the great expansion and the dynamic changes in world fisheries. The subject of reorganisation of the FAO Fisheries Division will be discussed definitively at the 43rd session of the FAO Council in October, 1964 and the Director General will invite ICNAF to be represented at that meeting.

The FAO Conference noted the close collaboration in biological and statistical matters that has been built up with your Commission and expressed the opinion that the same kind of relationship should be developed with other regional and specialized fisheries organizations. I hope that in the future we shall be able to do this without weakening our close links with ICNAF.

Mr. Holt has told me of your scientific discussions here and we have given you, in Document 104, a report on those of our activities which we thought would be of interest. Several distinguished scientists connected with ICNAF are members of FAO's Advisory Committee on Marine Resources Research. The ACMRR, at its second session early this year, set up several working groups on technical matters of worldwide concern. The Committee advised our Director General that FAO should begin work, in collaboration with other bodies, to develop a World Program of Marine Resources Research, which would provide a framework for the co-ordination of the scientific activities of the regional fisheries bodies. The Program would include an attempt at a general appraisal of the state of knowledge of marine resources, their distribution and potential yields. It would consider, on a broad scale, what steps might be taken to improve this knowledge as a basis for future exploitation, management and perhaps, ultimately, improvement. At present we are working to formulate this proposal in more detail and will certainly consult ICNAF about it in coming years.

We are also establishing in the Fisheries Division a special group to work on the assessment of fish stocks. Only a nucleus is possible at present. We hope that in future years this group can help with problems of compiling catch and effort statistics where this is not already being done adequately. We hope it can also assist in appraising such information, along the lines of your own highly successful assessment group.

We are most pleased with the success in achieving co-ordination of international statistical work in the North Atlantic area. We hope that this will benefit all concerned and that we can apply the lessons we learn here to similar problems in other areas.

I feel, Mr. Chairman, that I have joined FAO at a most exciting time in the history of its Fisheries Division and at a time when the likelihood of great developments in fisheries seems very high. I have noted your Commission's

concern over the great increase in fishing activity in the ICNAF area in recent years and am pleased to hear that your Research and Statistics Committee is to study the long-term effects of such changes.

May I close by saying that my association with ICNAF began some years ago in Montreal when I attended your annual meeting as an observer for INPFC. I am very happy to renew this association again and hope that in the years to come we may continue to work together, cordially and effectively.

Thank you.

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