



OPENING STATEMENT

At the 41st Annual Meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
Bordeaux, France September 23-27, 2019

Chair, Heads of Delegation, Delegates and fellow Observers, we are pleased to be making this opening statement on behalf of Oceans North and the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, in the beautiful city of Bordeaux.

As this is Oceans North's first attendance as an observer to NAFO, we want to thank you for the continued transparency and for welcoming observer organizations. We work in the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans, with the goal of achieving healthy ocean ecosystems and vibrant coastal communities with a focus on Indigenous fisheries and conservation initiatives.

The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition and its 75+ member organizations continue to work towards the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems and the sustainable management of deep sea fisheries. We have seen significant progress in NAFO's efforts towards these ends over the past decade and look forward to a continuation of that progress at this year's meeting.

We are calling on NAFO this year close all remaining seamounts in the NAFO Regulatory Area to bottom fishing activity. NAFO was the first RFMO to adopt conservation measures for seamounts in 2006, but in 2019, the job is not yet complete. If this was agreed, NAFO would be the first RFMO to close all seamounts setting an important precedent for high seas fisheries management.

While we are well aware of the good work of the Scientific Council and the WS-ESA on the 2020 review of the VME closures and the 2021 impact assessment, we hope that the scheduled UNGA bottom fishing review in May of 2020 provides some incentive for NAFO to adopt new VME measures this year.

As many of you know, this week States will meet at the United Nations General Assembly to address the critical issue of addressing climate change. The IPCC report on Oceans and the Cryosphere will be released on September 25th. In the past NAFO has failed to fully address climate change in its fisheries advice and related management decisions. This year, it is imperative that NAFO makes progress on incorporating climate change and considers climate vulnerability of NAFO regulated species into its decision making as well as makes progress on the ecosystem roadmap.

Additionally, we have provided our top recommendations for all in an easy to follow one-pager that we hope will be a guide to NAFO's success by the end of this week.

Additional measures for VMEs:

- NAFO Contracting Parties should formally agree research vessel trawls in all VME closed areas as has been advised by Scientific Council.
- NAFO should adopt FAO observer codes for VME species at this meeting, thus rendering the encounter protocol as a potentially effective mechanism to further protect known VME area. We also

urge Contracting Parties to provide adequate resources to scientists for the VME work scheduled for 2020 and 2021.

For Fisheries Management:

- Follow precautionary science advice from the Scientific Council when setting catch levels for all NAFO regulated stocks, including 3M shrimp.
- Close the unregulated fishery for Splendid Alfonsino in Division 6G.
- Take concrete steps toward implementing the ecosystem roadmap in fisheries management decisions.
- Continue to implement the Action Plan in Management and Minimization of Bycatch and Discards and adopt in full the recommendations of the WG-BDS as per NAFO Com 19/05.
- Urge Contracting Parties to submit timely and complete haul-by-haul data in line with NAFO Resolution 18/27.
- Improve reporting on Greenland shark discards and increase efforts to minimize incidental catches and mortality of Greenland sharks, in line with NAFO 18/17.

With regards to activities within the NAFO area, but outside of NAFO's fisheries jurisdiction and noting the ongoing negotiations of a new treaty under UNCLOS to protect biodiversity on the high seas, we strongly urge NAFO to continue its collaboration and cooperation with other sectoral bodies and begin to identify mechanisms where biodiversity protection is achieved across these sectoral management organizations. In particular, we urge:

- Contracting Parties engage where possible in the Regional Assessment of exploratory oil and gas drilling on the Grand Banks / Flemish Cap area to ensure that the intent of a transboundary impact assessment is fulfilled.

We look forward to this week's discussions and deliberations and urge Contracting Parties continue to make progress, notably on the recommendations above.

Thank you

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