



**34th ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES
COMMISSION
9-13 NOVEMBER 2015**

Report

1. Opening of the 34th Annual Meeting

The President, Johán H. Williams, Norway, opened the meeting. All Contracting Parties were represented.

2. Welcome address by the President and opening statements

The President made an opening address. All Contracting Parties made opening statements. Opening statements were also made by observers from cooperating non-Contracting Parties (Bahamas, Liberia and St Kitts and Nevis), intergovernmental organisations (FAO and OSPAR) and non-governmental organisations (Marine Stewardship Council, EAPO and Seas at Risk, which also spoke on behalf of other organisations). Opening statements were made available as Annual Meeting documents.

3. Adoption of the agenda and appointment of rapporteur

The agenda was adopted in the form that had been circulated before the meeting (document AM 2015-01).

The Secretary was appointed as rapporteur.

4. Establishment and arrangements for the Finance and Administration Committee, and other groups

Arrangements were made for FAC, PECMAC and PECMAS to meet in the margins of the meeting.

5. Status of the amended NEAFC Convention

The Secretary presented a report by the depository government on the status of the amended NEAFC Convention (document AM 2015-37). He noted that this was the second year that the depository government had submitted an annual report on the status of the Convention.

The Secretary pointed out that the report stated that the situation was unchanged regarding the entry into force of the amendments to the Convention. One of the two amendments had entered into force, but the other would not enter into force unless the Contracting Party which had lodged an objection to the amendment would lift that objection.

The Russian Federation confirmed that the objection had not been lifted. He noted that the process regarding ratification of the amendment continues domestically and that the objection would remain in place until that process was completed.

6. Report from the Working Group on Fisheries Statistics, WGSTATS

The Chair of the Working Group on Fisheries Statistics, Pernille Skov Jensen, the EU, presented the group's report (document AM 2015-10).

The WG STATS Chair noted that following consultations with PECMAS, the WG was proposing an amendment to the list in the Recommendation on statistics (Recommendation 2:2011, as amended). This was only a correction of species names and species codes. She noted that PECCOE had been informed of the proposed amendments, to enable that committee to make a corresponding proposal for amending lists in the Scheme of Control and Enforcement, which would be discussed under agenda item 14.2.

It was agreed to adopt the proposal as presented in document AM 2015-11.

7. Statistics on quota uptake and vessel activity

The tables containing final catch statistics for 2014, as presented in document AM 2015-22-Rev.1, were noted.

The Secretariat presented document AM 2015-53, which contains maps showing positions of possible bottom fishing in areas where bottom fishing is not authorised. Following comments on the clarity of the document, a revised version was produced.

It was noted that the data that the maps were based on was limited, and that they therefore showed indications of possible unauthorised bottom fishing, rather than evidence of such activity. Some of the activity that was perceived as bottom fishing was in fact clearly not bottom fishing. The gravity of such indications of unauthorised bottom fishing was nevertheless stressed by the Contracting Parties.

It was noted that each Contracting Party had an obligation to ensure that their vessels did not conduct unauthorised bottom fishing, and that they should all be implementing a system of automatic flagging in this context. It was further noted that PECCOE had addressed this issue earlier in the year, and that PECCOE had noted improvements in compliance with the bottom fishing regulation compared to 2014. PECCOE should continue to address this issue to ensure there is full compliance. It was further noted that the new role that the Secretariat had been given regarding monitoring should help the efforts to ensure compliance.

It was also noted that the situation regarding data quality in this context should improve drastically when implementation of the Electronic Reporting System (ERS) begins.

8. Report from the Permanent Committee on Management and Science, PECMAS

The PECMAS Chair, Evgeny Shamray, the Russian Federation, presented the PECMAS report (document AM 2015-12).

He noted that the request for scientific advice from ICES would be discussed under agenda item 10, that PECMAS was proposing to make minor amendments to the recurring request for advice from ICES, and that PECMAS was also proposing to include non-recurring requests.

The PECMAS Chair noted that one of the non-recurring requests was to ask ICES to assess the interim classification of deep-sea species that PECMAS was proposing the Annual Meeting adopt, and would be discussed under agenda item 11.7.3.

The Chair of the Working Group on deep sea species explained that the group had not been able to move forward in its work because data was missing from one Contracting Party. A progress report by the Chair was presented in document AM 2015-14. The WG will meet next year if the relevant data is received.

The PECMAS Chair pointed out that PECMAS had discussed management measures for various deep sea species, but that there had not been consensus on any of them.

He noted that during 2015, PECMAS had provided advice to the NEAFC Commission pursuant to Article 7.4 of Recommendation 19:2014, as amended, regarding three separate proposals for exploratory bottom fisheries. In all cases, no PECMAS member had expressed the position that the proposed bottom fisheries would have significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems. PECMAS had therefore advised in all three cases that the proposed exploratory bottom fishing should be approved. He noted that the NEAFC Commission had rejected all three proposals, for reasons that were not related to the PECMAS assessment.

In this context, the PECMAS Chair pointed out that PECMAS had begun the work of developing guidelines on how to deal with future proposals for exploratory bottom fishing.

The PECMAS Chair noted that, following a proposal that had been adopted at the 2014 Annual Meeting, PECMAS was working on the issue of marine litter in cooperation with OSPAR. A progress report on this was presented in document AM 2015-17. The information contained in this document had already been made available to OSPAR.

Finally, the PECMAS Chair noted that PECMAS was not proposing any new management measures, or amendments to existing ones, at this Annual Meeting.

9. Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES

Eskild Kirkegaard, Chair of the Advisory Committee of ICES, made a presentation which was presented as document AM 2015-55. He then responded to questions and comments from the Contracting Parties, and from observers.

10. Request for scientific advice

The PECMAS Chair noted that members of PECMAS had met in the margins of the meeting and made some amendments to the recurring request for advice from ICES, based on the proposals that had been agreed at the last PECMAS meeting.

It was agreed to send the request for advice to ICES in the form presented in document AM 2014-76.

11. Scientific advice and management measures

11.1. Pelagic *Sebastes mentella* in the Irminger Sea

11.1.1. Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES

11.1.2. Relevant reports

11.1.3. Recommendations on management measures

Eskild Kirkegaard, Chair of the Advisory Committee of ICES, made a presentation of the ICES advice. There were lengthy discussions on the scientific advice. This included a discussion on the basis for the advice, the importance of providing ICES with data disaggregated by depth, at which point ICES would advise no directed fishing and the participation in recent surveys. This also included a confirmation that the Russian Federation remains of the opinion that the ICES conclusion on stock structure and catch levels are not sound and should not be used as the basis for NEAFC management measures, and that Iceland remains of the opinion that the fishery should be closed due to the status of the stock.

It was noted that meetings of coastal States with other relevant parties had not resulted in an agreement on conservation and management measures.

There were consultations in the margins of the meeting, but these were not successful in reaching consensus on conservation and management measures and two proposals were presented. There was a vote on the two proposals, one of which was rejected and the other adopted.

The proposal in document AM 2015-66 Rev.1 **was adopted** through a vote where three Contracting Parties voted in favour, one abstained and one voted against.

11.2. Pelagic *Sebastes mentella* in ICES Sub-areas I and II in the Regulatory Area

11.2.1. Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES

11.2.2. Relevant reports

11.2.3. Recommendations on management measures

Eskild Kirkegaard, Chair of the Advisory Committee of ICES, made a presentation of the ICES advice.

It was noted that meetings of coastal States with other relevant parties had not resulted in an agreement on conservation and management measures.

Two proposals for conservation and management measures were presented, but neither of them had sufficient support to be adopted.

In was noted that Norway and the Russian Federation on the one hand and Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the European Union on the other, had very different positions on what were the appropriate NEAFC management measures for this stock, with allocation being the main disagreement. They were unable to bridge that gap at the meeting, and no measures were adopted.

The President noted that, although measures would presumably be adopted at the respective national levels, this could result in a second successive year where there were no NEAFC conservation and management measures for this stock. He encouraged the Contracting Parties to continue consultations with the aim of reaching agreement before the fisheries start in 2016.

11.3. Blue whiting

11.3.1. Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES

11.3.2. Relevant reports

11.3.3. Recommendations on management measures

Eskild Kirkegaard, Chair of the Advisory Committee of ICES, made a presentation of the ICES advice. He noted that in addition to the traditional advice, there had been one non-recurring request for ICES advice regarding blue whiting which ICES had not been able to address due to uncertainty in the assessment.

It was noted that meetings of coastal States with other relevant parties had not resulted in an agreement on conservation and management measures. However, continued consultations were already planned for later in November 2015. It was noted that following any agreement among the coastal States, a proposal for NEAFC conservation and management measures would be submitted for a decision through written communication.

The Russian Federation tabled a proposal to adopt management measures for 2016 at this meeting, which would be amended in the event of a coastal State agreement. All the other Contracting Parties opposed the Russian proposal.

11.4. Norwegian spring spawning (Atlanto-Scandian) herring

11.4.1. Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES

11.4.2. Relevant reports

11.4.3. Recommendations on management measures

Eskild Kirkegaard, Chair of the Advisory Committee of ICES, made a presentation of the ICES advice.

It was noted that meetings of coastal States had not resulted in an agreement on conservation and management measures. However, continued consultations were already planned for later in November 2015. It was noted that following any agreement among the coastal States, a proposal for NEAFC conservation and management measures would be submitted for a decision through written communication.

The Russian Federation tabled a proposal to adopt management measures for 2016 at this meeting, which would be amended in the event of a coastal State agreement. All the other Contracting Parties opposed the Russian proposal.

11.5. Mackerel

11.5.1. Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES

11.5.2. Relevant reports

11.5.3. Recommendations on management measures

Eskild Kirkegaard, Chair of the Advisory Committee of ICES, made a presentation of the ICES advice.

It was noted that meetings of coastal States had not resulted in an agreement on conservation and management measures. However, continued consultations were already planned for later in November 2015. It was noted that following any agreement among the coastal States, a proposal for NEAFC conservation and management measures would be submitted for a decision through written communication.

11.6. Rockall haddock

11.6.1. Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES

11.6.2. Relevant reports

11.6.3. Recommendations on management measures

Eskild Kirkegaard, Chair of the Advisory Committee of ICES, made a presentation of the ICES advice.

It was noted that the EU and the Russian Federation expected to hold a bilateral meeting on the conservation and management of this stock during 2016.

It was agreed to adopt the proposal in document AM 2015-62 for a continuation in 2016 of the measures that were in place for 2015.

11.7. Deep-sea fisheries

11.7.1. Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES

11.7.2. Relevant reports

11.7.3. Recommendations on management measures

Eskild Kirkegaard, Chair of the Advisory Committee of ICES, made a presentation of the ICES advice. He noted that most of the deep sea fisheries are for stocks that are classified as data limited stocks. He further noted that ICES was now emphasising in its presentation the deep sea stocks that were fished at a significant level in the NEAFC Regulatory Area.

It was agreed to adopt conservation and management measures for grenadiers in two separate areas as presented respectively in documents AM 2015-63 and AM 2015-64.

The EU abstained from voting on both proposals on grenadiers. It reiterated that it supported the principle of applying NEAFC measures to these fisheries. However, as with similar recommendations for 2015, the proposed recommendations were not consistent with conservation and management measures on the grenadier stocks already in place for EU vessels for 2015 and 2016. EU measures covered both EU waters and the NEAFC Regulatory Area. The EU noted that they had been managing such fisheries for a number of years and welcomed the new interest now shown by other Contracting Parties in ensuring comprehensive management of grenadiers.

The EU expressed its willingness to meet with other Contracting Parties during 2016 to discuss the conservation and management of grenadiers. The other Contracting Parties were positive towards the idea of holding such a meeting, and noted that there were significant grenadiers fisheries in the Regulatory Area and that they considered NEAFC measures necessary in order to establish fully comprehensive conservation and management.

Two proposals for management measures for orange roughy were presented, and consultations in the margins of the meeting were unsuccessful in reaching consensus. **It was agreed** to adopt the proposal in document AM 2015-74, which prohibits directed fishing for orange roughy in the Regulatory Area. Three Contracting Parties voted in favour of this proposal, one abstained and one voted against.

It was agreed to adopt an interim categorisation of deep sea species, as presented in document AM 2015-15. It was noted that the request for scientific advice from ICES, adopted under agenda item 10, included a request for ICES to assess the interim categorisation. NEAFC should therefore be able to have a long-term categorisation in place from the 2016 Annual Meeting, and could prioritise accordingly regarding the conservation and management of deep sea species.

It was agreed to adopt general management measures for deep sea species as presented in document AM 2015-72. This was a continuation of the measures that had been in place in recent years. It was noted that these measures were ineffective, but it was nevertheless considered important to have such general measures in place to prevent uncontrolled deep sea fisheries. The hope was expressed that the classification of deep sea species and the results from the work of the PECMAS Working Group on deep seas species would contribute to NEAFC adopting more effective general measures for deep sea species in the near future.

11.8. Area management

11.8.1. Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES

11.8.2. Relevant reports

11.8.3. Recommendations on management measures

Mark Tasker, Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee of ICES, made a presentation of the ICES advice and of the development of ICES' database of VME records. In response to a question, he confirmed that the previous advice regarding the Josephine Seamount still stands and on the same basis as before, with no new records regarding VMEs there.

In the context of area management, there was a discussion on the need for flag states to ensure that any fishing for sedentary species was consistent with their obligations under international law to respect the rights of coastal States.

In this context, there was also a discussion in this context on whether Norway and the Russian Federation had completed all the relevant procedures for submitting their declarations regarding the extent of their jurisdiction in the Barents Sea to the United Nations.

The Russian Federation confirmed that the relevant geographic coordinates had been submitted to the UN Office of Legal Affairs and that they were now available on the UN

website. Norway read a statement relating to this under agenda item 22 (any other business).

11.9. Other

11.9.1. Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES

11.9.2. Relevant reports

11.9.3. Recommendations on management measures

Eskild Kirkegaard, Chair of the Advisory Committee of ICES, made a presentation of the ICES advice regarding fish stocks that had not been covered under other agenda items, and regarding some areas outside the NEAFC Regulatory Area which provided context for the NEAFC advice.

It was agreed to adopt conservation and management measures for porbeagle and basking shark as presented respectively in documents AM 2015-67 and AM 2015-68.

12. Report from the Permanent Committee on Control and Enforcement, PECCOE

The Chair of PECMAC, Gylfi Geirsson, Iceland, presented the reports from the committee's meetings, presented in documents AM 2015-03, AM 2015-04, AM 2015-09 and AM 2015-61. He noted that this had been an unusually busy year for PECMAC, with four meetings, and that the Extraordinary Meeting in October had changed PECCOE to PECMAC, with substantive changes to the committee's Terms of Reference.

The Chair of PECMAC noted that PECMAC was presenting a number of proposals that would be dealt with under later agenda items.

In addition to the issues covered under other agenda items, one of the main issues that was highlighted by the PECMAC Chair was regarding electronic reporting systems (ERS). He noted that the deadlock that had been in place in discussions on how NEAFC should develop this had been resolved at the Extraordinary Meeting, and that both the Ad Hoc Working Group on ERS and PECMAC would be working on this issue in 2016. The Contracting Parties urged these groups to make every effort to ensure that a proposal regarding ERS could be adopted at the Annual Meeting in November 2016.

It was noted that PECMAC had managed to react quickly regarding formulating a proposal to clarify NEAFC's rules regarding the notification of the limits of areas under coastal States' national jurisdiction, after this was identified as a major issue to be dealt with at the Extraordinary Meeting in 2014. It was noted that NEAFC should have no role in this context, as it was entirely an issue for the relevant coastal State to notify the limits of areas under their national jurisdiction. It was further noted that any coordinates NEAFC may use for its database or maps should not be considered as formally determining any such limits or be used for navigational purposes.

It was noted that the expansion of the scope of the port state control system (PSC) had worked well, without any significant problems arising. The observer from FAO welcomed the fact that with the expanded scope the PSC was now fully aligned with the 2009 FAO Port State Measures Agreement.

The Chair of PECMAC noted that some concern had been raised in the committee regarding the functioning of JAGDM. He stressed that for this joint group to function as

effectively as its predecessor, AGDC, had done, the Contracting Parties would have to ensure that it held meetings frequently enough to be able to respond to all issues that were submitted to it, and to ensure that it could work intersessionally in a timely manner to provide advice at little notice.

13. Report from the Joint Advisory Group on Data Management, JAGDM

The Secretary presented the work of JAGDM, as presented mainly in document AM 2015-05. He pointed out that in 2015, JAGDM had elected Brent Napier, Canada, as its Chair, and that Ellen Fasmer, Norway, had been elected as Vice-Chair.

The Secretary noted that JAGDM was not making any proposal to the current Annual Meeting.

14. The NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement

14.1. Implementation of the Scheme

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

14.2. Possible adoption of proposals from PECCOE

It was agreed to adopt the proposal by PECMAC, as presented in document AM 2015-13, regarding amending species names and codes in Annex I b) and Annex V of the Scheme. It was noted that this amendment was consistent with the amendments to the lists in the Recommendation on statistics that had been adopted under agenda item 6.

It was agreed to adopt the proposal by PECMAC, as presented in document AM 2015-25 Rev1, regarding amending Article 11 and Annex 7 of the Scheme. It was noted that these amendments were a reaction to the issues that had been discussed at the 2014 Extraordinary Meeting, and should ensure that the NEAFC Secretariat is informed of any changes in the coordinates of the outer limits of areas under the national jurisdiction of the Contracting Parties.

It was agreed to adopt the proposal by PECMAC, as presented in document AM 2015-26, regarding amending Article 12.2 of the Scheme. It was noted that this was regarding the level of catches that may be reported under the 3-alpha code MZZ (marine fish not specified).

It was agreed to adopt the proposal by PECMAC, as presented in document AM 2015-38, regarding adding four species to the list in Annex V of the Scheme. It was noted that these species and codes had already been in use in the online PSC application on a temporary basis, pursuant to a decision by PECMAC on the procedure for such temporary additions. That procedure includes evaluation by JAGDM of temporary additions before they are added to the Scheme.

14.3. Possible adoption of proposals from JAGDM

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

14.4. A- and B- lists of IUU vessels

It was agreed to take note of the IUU B list of confirmed IUU vessels, as presented in document AM 2015-07. It was noted that no vessel had been added to or removed from

the IUU B list in the previous year. It was further noted that there were no vessels on the IUU A list.

14.5. Other

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

15. Cooperating non-Contracting Party Status

15.1. Possible renewal of cooperating non-Contracting Party status

As proposed by PECMAC, **it was agreed** to renew the cooperating non-Contracting Party status of the Bahamas, Canada, Liberia and New Zealand for the year 2016.

The PECMAC Chair noted that St Kitts and Nevis had also applied to have their cooperating non-Contracting Party status renewed, but there had been no consensus in PECMAC on making any recommendation to the Annual Meeting in this context.

The EU pointed out that it had notified St Kitts and Nevis of the possibility of being identified as a non cooperating third country in the fight against IUU. While progress had been made in bilateral consultations, the EU considered it was not appropriate to grant St Kitts and Nevis cooperating non-Contracting Party status at this juncture.

The Russian Federation proposed that St Kitts and Nevis be granted the status of a cooperating non-Contracting Party for the year 2016, as presented in document AM 2015-73. This proposal was adopted through a vote where three Contracting Parties voted in favour of the proposal, one abstained and one voted against. **It was thereby agreed** to renew the cooperating non-Contracting Party status of St Kitts and Nevis for the year 2016.

The EU stated that it reserved its position regarding this decision.

15.2. Possible new granting of cooperating non-Contracting Party status

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

16. Follow up to the 2014 NEAFC Performance Review, including possible adoption of Recommendations and/or amendments to the Rules of Procedure

It was noted that the Extraordinary Meeting of NEAFC in October had decided to establish a Working Group on a Framework for Coastal State Negotiations, but had deferred a decision on the group's exact Terms of Reference to the Annual Meeting.

Following lengthy consultation in the margins of the meeting, and the tabling of two separate proposals for Terms of Reference on which there was no consensus, **it was agreed** to set the Terms of Reference for the Working Group on a Framework for Coastal State Negotiations as presented in document AM 2015-81.

17. Relationships with other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations

17.1. Observer reports

The reports submitted by NEAFC observers at meetings of regional fisheries management organisations were noted.

It was agreed that the Contracting Parties would provide observer reports to the Annual Meeting in 2016 in the following way:

CCAMLR – Norway

ICCAT – EU

ICES – Iceland

NAFO – Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)

NAMMCO – Norway

NASCO – EU

Pollock in the Bering Sea – the Russian Federation

SEAFO – Norway

17.2. Regional Secretariats Network

The Secretary presented a report on the work of the RSN, of which he is Chair. It was noted that the RSN did not hold a meeting in 2015, but will meet in 2016. The Secretariat will continue to take part in the work of the RSN.

17.3. Other

The Secretary highlighted the Secretariat's good cooperation with the Secretariats of other RFMOs. Cooperation is particularly close with the NAFO Secretariat.

It was noted that the Secretariat had consulted with the NASCO Secretariat regarding cooperation between the two organisations against IUU fishing. A letter on this issue from NASCO was document AM 2015-34. Cooperation with NASCO on IUU issues was welcomed, as it was noted that this would benefit both organisations. It was further noted that the cooperation as explained by the Secretariat, and as outlined in the letter from NASCO, would not require the amendment of any NEAFC rules.

18. Relationship with other international fora

18.1. ICES

18.2. UN

18.3. FAO

18.4. OSPAR

18.5. Collective arrangement between competent international organisations

18.6. International MCS Network

18.7. North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum

18.8. Nordic cooperation

18.9. Civil Society

18.10. Other

The Secretary presented reports regarding the work of the different international fora and NEAFC's cooperation with them. Among the points raised were the following:

The Secretary stressed the importance of the meetings of ICES with the recipients of ICES advice (MIRIA) and encouraged all Contracting Parties to take active part in them. He further noted that the Secretariat was working with ICES to finalise the form and timing of the new bilateral fora between NEAFC and ICES, which the Extraordinary Meeting in October had agreed to establish.

The Secretary reported on the so-called BBNJ working group of the UN General Assembly and noted that the Secretariat would continue to monitor this process now that it was moving to another phase.

It was noted that the Secretariat continued to work very closely with the FAO and looked at it as an area for emphasis when it comes to international cooperation to work with the FAO and to work on projects where the FAO ask for input from NEAFC. Among the projects where NEAFC had cooperated with FAO over the past year were the global record of fishing vessels; the ABNJ Programme and its Deep Sea Project; the VME Database; PSMA Workshops; IUU Workshops; preparation for establishing new RFMOs or transforming advisory bodies into full-fledged RFMOs; and establishing and strengthening cooperation between RFMOs and Regional Seas organisations. On the last point, NEAFC is also cooperating with UNEP.

The fact that FAO repeatedly approaches NEAFC to cooperate on a variety of projects was welcomed. It was considered as recognition of the fact that NEAFC achieves high standards, despite the various challenges facing the organisation.

The observer from FAO emphasised the importance that the organisation places on cooperation with NEAFC and welcomed the continuation of NEAFC and FAO working closely together.

The Secretary stated that the Secretariat had developed a very good working relationship with the OSPAR Secretariat. The main issues of cooperation between the two organisations in recent years had been EBSAs and the collective arrangement. The third, marine litter, had been added by the Annual Meeting in 2014.

It was noted that there was currently no progress being made regarding EBSAs, but NEAFC would continue to work with OSPAR on this issue if and when there were any new developments. It was further noted that the PECMAS Chair had reported on the issue of marine litter under agenda item 8 and that document AM 2015-17 was a progress report on this. PECMAS will continue to work on marine litter in cooperation with OSPAR.

The first meeting under the collective arrangement with OSPAR was held in London earlier in 2015. At this initial meeting, several issues of an administrative nature were dealt with. However, one of the outcomes of the meeting was to note that future meetings would deal with more substantive issues and that increased participation by the Contracting Parties would therefore be desirable from the next meeting onwards. Preparations for the next meeting, scheduled to take place in Svalbard in April 2016, are already underway. That meeting will include a special session on Arctic issues, in addition to general issues under the collective arrangement.

It was further noted that efforts to bring IMO and ISA into the collective arrangement would continue. At the same time, these bodies will continue to be invited to take part in meetings under the collective arrangement even if they are not there as full participants in the arrangement.

It was noted that the Secretariat would continue to work with the International MCS Network on the same basis as in previous years.

It was noted that the Secretariat is regularly asked to take a seat on the advisory board of various projects that are run by academic institutions or non-governmental organisations. These invitations are usually not accepted, primarily due to such projects being less of a priority than cooperating with organisations such as FAO, other RFMOs or OSPAR. It was noted that the Secretariat might accept such offers if it considers the project to be sufficiently relevant and considers that its input is likely to have a significant positive impact on the project.

It was noted that the observer representing the fisheries sector within the EU had suggested NEAFC set up a stakeholder forum where the fisheries sector might be consulted directly within the framework of NEAFC. It was noted that there were no plans to set up such a forum within NEAFC. However, observer status would be granted by NEAFC to any group jointly representing the fishing sector of the Contracting Parties.

19. Report from the Finance and Administration Committee

19.1. Audited accounts for the year ended 31 December 2014 and preliminary statements for 2015

19.2. Draft budget for 2016 and draft budget estimate for 2017

19.3. Review of annual contributions from Contracting Parties with reference to Article 17.4 of the Convention

19.4. Other

The Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, Jóannes Hansen, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), presented the committee's report. The report, as presented in document AM 2015-82, was noted.

It was agreed to adopt the proposals by the committee to: take note of the audited accounts for 2014; take note of the latest forecast of outturn for the accounts for 2015; adopt the budget for 2016 set out in Annex 1 of the report of the committee; take note of the estimated budget for 2017 as set out in Annex 1 of the report of the committee; and, agree that the committee should reconvene if necessary if there is an Extraordinary Meeting of NEAFC during 2016.

It was noted that the budget adopted for 2016 included a supplementary part that would be decided on no later than June 2016, as set out in the report of the committee.

In adopting the budget for 2016, the level of contributions due from Contracting Parties was noted. **It was agreed** to use Article 17.4.c of the Convention as a basis for calculating the financial contributions of the Contracting Parties. It was also agreed that contributions for 2016 shall be paid in full no later than 1 April 2016. **It was agreed** that contributions relating to the additional contributions pursuant to the supplementary part of the 2016 budget shall be paid in full no later than 30 September 2016.

It was noted that issues related to future premises of the NEAFC office, after the current lease expires in early 2017, had been one of the main topics for the committee this time. The committee was commended for its work in this context, and **it was agreed** that the reflection on this issue in the committee's report should be considered as guidance for the

Secretariat in concluding this issue. In this context, the Russian Federation reserved its position regarding future premises being large enough to host coastal State meetings. It was noted that the committee had set out more than one option regarding size, and a final decision on new premises would be made in consultation with the Heads of Delegation.

20. Arrangements for future meetings

20.1. Annual meetings 14-18 November 2016 and 13-17 November 2017

20.2. Meetings of subsidiary bodies of NEAFC

It was noted that the 35th Annual Meeting will be held on 14-18 November 2016, and the 36th Annual Meeting will be held on 13-17 November 2017.

It was agreed that the timing of meetings of subsidiary bodies of NEAFC in 2016 will be as presented in the calendar in document AM 2015-80, although some changes may still be made in consultation between the President, the Heads of Delegation and the relevant committee and working group Chairs.

It was noted that no date was set for a meeting of the Working Group on Deep Sea Species, as it was unable to carry out its work until all the relevant data was submitted. The Contracting Party which had not yet submitted its data was encouraged to submit it as soon as possible so that the group could finalise its task.

21. Press statements and other reports of NEAFC's activities

It was agreed that the press statement from the meeting would be dealt with by the President and that the Secretary would support him in that task.

22. Any other business

In relation to the discussion under agenda item 11.8, regarding whether the coastal States in the Barents Sea had made all the relevant submissions to the United Nations, Norway asked that the following statement be included in the report of the meeting under this agenda item:

The EU asked whether the United Nations had received notification from Norway about the coordinates of the outer limits of the Norwegian continental shelf. We take it that the question relates to the Barents Sea.

On 15 September 2010, Norway and Russia signed the Treaty on maritime delimitation and cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean. It entered into force on 7 July 2011.

In the Treaty the border between the Norwegian and Russian continental shelf was drawn up.

The treaty and its coordinates was notified by Norway to the United Nations.

It was registered on 1 November 2011 with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, with registration number 49095. It can be found on the UN website.

This fulfils the notification requirements of article 84 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Iceland raised the issue of whether it might be possible for future Annual Meetings to be shorter than has been the practice for many years, for example to hold them over 3 or 4 days instead of 5. He clarified that he was not proposing this at this stage, but wanted to initiate a discussion on this issue. The President stated that he would look into this, and

encouraged all Contracting Parties to do the same so that they would be prepared for a more in-depth discussion on this later.

23. Closure of the 34th Annual Meeting

The President closed the meeting and wished everyone a safe journey home.