



**REPORT OF THE 33rd ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES COMMISSION**

10-14 NOVEMBER 2014



33rd ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES COMMISSION 10-14 NOVEMBER 2014 Report

1. Opening of the 33rd Annual Meeting

The President, Jóhán 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 (Canada and St Kitts and Nevis), other non-Contracting Parties (Bahamas and Liberia), intergovernmental organisations (FAO and OSPAR) and non-governmental organisations (Marine Stewardship Council and Seas at Risk, which spoke also 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 2014-01).

The Secretary was appointed as rapporteur.

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

Arrangements were made for various bodies 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 2014-38). He noted that the depository government had agreed to submit a report on the status of the Convention to each Annual Meeting of NEAFC from now on. He pointed out that this should be useful in addressing the lack of direct flow of information from the depository to the Secretariat.

The Secretary pointed out that the report stated that one of the two amendments had entered into force, but that 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 issue was being scrutinised by the Russian authorities, in a process that he hoped would not take much time, and could lead to the ratification of the amendments.

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 2014-24).

The WG Stats Chair noted that there were some inconsistencies in the names used for certain species. The working group had sent a letter to PECMAS about this, with a copy to PECCOE. A proposal on how to proceed would likely be formulated on the basis of the response that will be received from PECMAS.

She noted that Recommendation 2:2011, as amended, includes a provision which states that it shall be reviewed at the Annual Meeting in 2014. The working group had reviewed the recommendation and concluded that it was generally working well. However, the group proposed one amendment to the recommendation to further improve the provision on statistics. **It was agreed** to adopt the proposal as presented in document AM 2014-25.

7. Statistics on quota uptake and vessel activity

The tables containing final catch statistics for 2013, as presented in document AM 2013-31-Rev.1, were noted.

The Contracting Parties commended the Working Group on Fisheries Statistics for having the final catch statistics available before the Annual Meeting. It was noted that this was a demonstration of the progress being made in improving NEAFC's work on catch statistics.

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

The PECMAS Chair, Evgeny Shamray, the Russian Federation, presented the PECMAS report (documents AM 2014-06 and AM 2014-12).

He noted that arguably PECMAS' biggest achievement this year had been finalising the new recommendation on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems. This had already been adopted through written communication and was already in force as Recommendation 19:2014.

The PECMAS Chair pointed out that PECMAS was proposing two new recommendations: one to amend Recommendation 19:2014 in order to add new closed areas pursuant to ICES advice (document AM 2014-14-Rev.1), and the other regarding sorting grids when fishing for shrimp with trawl in ICES sub-areas I and II of the Regulatory Area (document AM 2014-17). He noted that these proposals would be dealt with under agenda items 11.8 and 11.9 respectively.

The PECMAS Chair noted that there was a general agreement on the existing conservation and management measures for deep sea species being ineffective and insufficient. A year ago, the Annual Meeting had accepted a proposal by PECMAS on collecting data on deep sea species that could assist in improving the management. He explained that PECMAS was now proposing a way forward in dealing with this data.

It was agreed to accept the proposal by PECMAS to establish an ad hoc working group of PECMAS to collate the data and analyse it in a manner that would make it useful for PECMAS' development of management measures for deep sea species. It was decided that Odd Aksel Bergstad, Norway, would be the Chair of the group and that other Contracting Parties would inform the Secretariat before the end of the current meeting who their representatives in the group would be. The group would hold at least one meeting and present its report to PECMAS.

The PECMAS Chair noted that the committee would continue to cooperate with OSPAR. He noted in that context that the collective arrangement with OSPAR, which had been discussed at previous Annual Meetings, had now been formally agreed by both organisations. He noted that he expected PECMAS to play a key role in implementing it from the NEAFC side.

9. Report by the Advisory Committee of ICES

ICES made two presentations under this agenda item. One was made by Eskild Kirkegaard, the Chair of ACOM, and focused on the new form that the ICES advice will have from next year. The other was made by Henrik Sparholt, Deputy Head of the ICES advisory programme, and focused on the general and non-stock-specific parts of the ICES advice, including regarding the methodologies used in formulating the advice.

Both presenters responded to questions, and gave further explanations as required.

10. Request for scientific advice

The President 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. The amendments were primarily intended to increase clarity regarding the request on vulnerable marine ecosystems.

It was agreed to send the request for advice to ICES in the form presented in document AM 2014-80 Rev.1.

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

Henrik Sparholt, Deputy Head of the ICES advisory programme, made a presentation of the ICES advice. There were lengthy discussions on the scientific advice. This included a discussion on the probability for recovery based on different catch levels. 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.

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

Three proposals for management measures were presented, but none of them had sufficient support to be adopted. After all three proposals had been voted down there were further consultations in the margins of the meeting. This resulted in a revised version of one of the proposals being tabled.

The proposal in document AM 2014-57 Rev.1 **was adopted** through a vote where four Contracting Parties voted in favour 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

Henrik Sparholt, Deputy Head of the ICES advisory programme, made a presentation of the ICES advice and responded to questions regarding the ICES conclusion on total catches advised.

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

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

It was noted that Norway and the Russian Federation on the one hand and the other three Contracting Parties on the other, had very different positions on what were the appropriate NEAFC management measures for this stock. They were unable to bridge that gap at the meeting, and no measures were adopted.

The President noted that the current measures will expire at the end of the year and encouraged the Contracting Parties to continue consultations with the aim of reaching agreement on the management of this stock.

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

Henrik Sparholt, Deputy Head of the ICES advisory programme, made a presentation of the ICES advice.

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) made a presentation on oceanographic changes in the Denmark Strait and the Irminger Sea, relating to all the major pelagic stocks.

The Chair of the NEAFC working group on the distribution of blue whiting in the North-East Atlantic, Åge Høines, Norway, made a presentation of the group's work and main conclusions. He stated that the main conclusions were that it was not possible to use catch statistics to get a conclusion on the actual zonal attachment of the stock and that the information needed to make a good average by zone on the basis of biological data was not available. He further noted that in addition to the group's report, the database and all the information gathered by the working group was available at the Secretariat.

It was noted that meetings of coastal States with other relevant parties had not resulted in an agreement on management measures. However, continued consultations were already planned for December 2014. It was considered likely that these consultations would result in an agreement, and procedures for the adoption of NEAFC measures through written communication would then be initiated.

The Russian Federation tabled a proposal to adopt management measures for 2015 already 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

Henrik Sparholt, Deputy Head of the ICES advisory programme, made a presentation of the ICES advice.

It was noted that meetings of coastal States had not resulted in an agreement on management measures. However, continued consultations were already planned for December 2014. It was considered likely that these consultations would result in an agreement, and procedures for the adoption of NEAFC measures through written communication would then be initiated.

The Russian Federation tabled a proposal to adopt management measures for 2015 already 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

Henrik Sparholt, Deputy Head of the ICES advisory programme, made a presentation of the ICES advice.

It was noted that earlier in the year, a three-party agreement had been reached on management for 2014. Efforts had since been made to reach agreement on comprehensive management measures on the basis of that agreement, but these had not been successful before the meeting. However, further coastal State consultations had already been planned for later in November 2014, and it was considered likely that these

would result in at least a three-party agreement, and possibly a more comprehensive conclusion. Procedures for the adoption of NEAFC measures through written communication could then be initiated.

The Russian Federation tabled a proposal to adopt management measures for 2015 already at this meeting, which would be amended in the event of a coastal State agreement. No other Contracting Party supported the Russian proposal, although one abstained from voting.

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

Henrik Sparholt, Deputy Head of the ICES advisory programme, made a presentation of the ICES advice.

It was noted that the EU and the Russian Federation had not held a meeting on the management of this stock.

It was agreed to adopt the proposal in document AM 2014-50 for a continuation in 2015 of the measures that were in place for 2014.

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

Henrik Sparholt, Deputy Head of the ICES advisory programme, 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 intended to initiate a discussion in the near future on data gathering targets for different stocks and that for stocks that are small and have low catches it might not be worthwhile to aim at having very comprehensive data. Maintaining reasonable data limited status might be considered acceptable for several of the stocks.

It was noted that it would be useful for NEAFC to have as precise information as possible included in the ICES advice regarding how great the catches of each stock are in the Regulatory Area, as this is a key element in determining whether it would be appropriate to adopt management measures in NEAFC. It was stated that NEAFC was currently receiving advice for several stocks where there are very small, or even no, catches in the Regulatory Area.

It was noted that at the 2013 Annual Meeting it was decided to request that the Secretary carry out a bottom fishing overview. The document prepared by the Secretary in this context (AM 2014-39-Rev.1) was noted.

It was agreed to adopt conservation and management measures for spurdog, porbeagle and basking shark as presented respectively in documents AM 2014-51, AM 2014-52-Rev.1 and AM 2014-53.

More general measures on the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by NEAFC **were also adopted** as presented in document AM 2014-73-Rev.2. These measures include reporting requirements and a prohibition on the removal of shark fins at sea.

It was agreed to adopt conservation and management measures for roundnose grenadier and routhead grenadier as presented respectively in documents AM 2014-75 and AM 2014-74. The EU abstained from voting on both proposals on grenadiers. The EU explained that they were not opposed to these measures and noted that they only applied to the Regulatory Area. However, he stated that he was not sure about the figures used in the proposals and noted that the EU had set measures for its vessels regarding both species for the year 2015. He further noted that there was not full consistency in the management areas used in the proposals and in the EU measures. Other Contracting Parties were in favour of adopting the proposals.

Two proposals for management measures for orange roughy were presented, but neither of them had sufficient support to be adopted. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that they would adopt management measures for their vessels despite there not being any NEAFC measures in force in 2015.

It was agreed to adopt general management measures for deep sea species as presented in document AM 2014-81. This is a continuation of the measures that have been in place in recent years. In this context, the establishment of an ad hoc working group of PECMAS on deep sea species, as reflected under agenda item 8, was noted.

It was agreed to approve interim guidelines on management of deep sea species as presented in document AM 2014-58 Rev.1. The hope was expressed that they would prove helpful for both ICES in providing advice on deep sea species and for PECMAS in formulating proposals for management measures.

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 ACOM, made a presentation of the ICES advice and of the development of ICES' database of VME records.

It was noted that PECMAS had made proposals for adding three new areas to those that are closed to bottom fishing. These areas were on the Southwest Rockall Bank, the Hatton-Rockall Basin and the Hatton Bank.

Norway presented a document with a proposal that included all the elements of the PECMAS proposal, but had also various minor changes and corrections to other parts of Recommendation 19:2014. **It was agreed** to adopt that proposal as presented in document AM 2014-65.

It was noted with concern that the bottom fishing overview that was presented under agenda item 11.7 seemed to indicate that there were numerous cases of bottom fishing taking place in a manner that was contrary to the legal obligations of the Contracting Parties under Recommendation 19:2014 and the regulations that were in place before that entered into force. It was noted that all Contracting Parties must ensure that the activities of their vessels were fully consistent with their NEAFC obligations. They needed to ensure that all bottom fishing that was not in accordance with Recommendation 19:2014, and other relevant rules, cease. **It was agreed** to request that PECCOE look at the issue of possible bottom fishing in areas where such fishing is not authorised.

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

Henrik Sparholt, Deputy Head of the ICES advisory programme, made a presentation of the ICES advice regarding non-recurring requests for advice that he had not already covered under previous agenda items.

It was agreed to adopt the proposal by PECMAS regarding sorting grids when fishing for shrimp with trawl in ICES sub-areas I and II of the Regulatory Area as presented in document AM 2014-17.

It was also agreed to adopt the proposal by Norway regarding marine litter as presented in document AM 2014-28. This will include work by PECMAS and cooperation with OSPAR. The observer from OSPAR welcomed this cooperation.

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

The Chair of PECCOE, Gylfi Geirsson, Iceland, presented the reports from the committee's meetings, documents AM 2014-05 and AM 2014-16.

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

Apart from issues covered under other agenda items, the main issue that was highlighted by the PECCOE Chair was electronic reporting systems. He noted that there remained a deadlock in discussions on how NEAFC should develop this, and this was preventing any further progress. He stated that NEAFC had been a pioneer in the development of monitoring, control and surveillance, but that this impasse could result in NEAFC lagging behind other RFMOs in this development. He concluded that as it was not possible to agree on a way forward within PECCOE, instructions were needed from the NEAFC Commission that would cut the knot.

Another PECCOE meeting was held in the margins of the Annual Meeting. The report of that meeting is document AM 2014-84.

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

The interim Chair of JAGDM, Ellen Fasmer, Norway, presented the reports from the group's meetings, documents AM 2014-03 and AM 2014-04.

The Interim JAGDM Chair noted that this had been the first year that the group was active, after it had succeeded the Advisory Group on Data Communications, AGDC. JAGDM was a joint group with NAFO, and the first meeting had taken place at NAFO headquarters. Among the issues that had been looked at were the group's Terms of Reference, its Rules of Procedure and guidelines for the Secretariats. A second meeting was held at NEAFC headquarters.

The new web page www.jagdm.org of JAGDM and the www.naf-format.org were presented. The group would try to keep the formats used for electronic data exchange in NEAFC and NAFO harmonised and also be updated on new formats used by the Contracting Parties that might be useful for the two organisations in the future.

She pointed out that information about the work of the group was sent to several RMFOs telling them that it was possible to ask for advice on technical data management issues.

As the successor group to AGDC, JAGDM has responsibilities for the implementation of the Information Security Management System (ISMS) of NEAFC. The interim JAGDM Chair pointed out in that context that Security System Administrators must be appointed by all Contracting Parties. She noted that information on what persons have been appointed could be put on the NEAFC website.

She pointed out that she had served longer than she had expected as an interim Chair in the absence of other JAGDM members having a mandate to accept serving as JAGDM Chair. She noted that this should now have been resolved and she expected a Chair of JAGDM to be elected at the group's next meeting and encouraged the Contracting Parties to consider putting forward a candidate for Vice-Chair.

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 PECCOE regarding port state control, as presented in document AM 2014-18 Rev.1. It was noted that this would *inter alia* result in the online application used for NEAFC's port state control being properly reflected in the Scheme of Control and Enforcement.

It was agreed to adopt the proposal by PECCOE regarding authorisations to fish for regulated resources, as presented in document AM 2014-22.Rev.1. It was noted that this would make it possible to authorise more than one species in one notification, but that those who preferred to continue with current practices could do so.

It was agreed to adopt the proposal by PECCOE regarding adding the gear code NIL (for "no fishing gear to report"), as presented in document AM 2014-23.

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 adopt the proposal by PECCOE, as presented in document AM 2014-21, to remove the vessel “Dolphin” (IMO 8422852) from the IUU B list, as it had been scrapped.

It was agreed to take note of the IUU B list of confirmed IUU vessels, as presented in document AM 2014- 20 Rev.1. It was noted that there were no vessels on the IUU A list.

It was noted that the IUU B list included a vessel that had been identified as an IUU vessel by the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation and added to the NEAFC IUU B list pursuant to Article 44.6 of the Scheme of Control and Enforcement. Such cooperation between regional fisheries management organisations was considered very useful to strengthen the fight against illegal fishing.

14.5. Other

Norway presented document AM 2014-29-Rev.2, with proposals regarding notifications of fishing gear used. This included reversing the decision from the 2013 Annual Meeting to making the data field “Vessel Gear” mandatory in the Notification of fishing vessels, and to report the fishing gear used as a new mandatory data element in catch reports.

There was a lengthy discussion on the proposal, where the other Contracting Parties were generally positive but considered that this issue needed to be dealt with by PECCOE to ensure that the Annual Meeting plenary was not making decisions on technical matters that would result in a need for further formulation. **It was agreed** to adopt Proposal 1 in document AM 2014-29-Rev.2 and to request that PECCOE look at the issue addressed in Proposal 2.

Norway presented a proposal to move the deadline for applications for cooperating non-Contracting Party Status from 30 September to 30 June, to ensure that Contracting Parties would have sufficient time to consider such applications before Annual Meetings. **It was agreed** to adopt the Norwegian proposal, as presented in document AM 2014-78.

The EU presented a proposal (document AM 2014-82) to add new species to the list of regulated resources in Annex I of the Scheme of Control and Enforcement. The other Contracting Parties stated that they had not had sufficient time to consider the proposal. **It was agreed** to not adopt the proposal at this time, but rather to request that PECCOE consider this issue.

15. Cooperating non-Contracting Party Status

15.1. Possible renewal of cooperating non-Contracting Party status

As proposed by PECCOE, **it was agreed** to renew the cooperating non-Contracting Party status of Canada, New Zealand and St Kitts and Nevis for the year 2015.

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

Not all Contracting Parties had finalised the internal procedures they need to complete before accepting the application of the Bahamas, before the PECCOE meeting in September. PECCOE had therefore not been in a position to make a recommendation to the Annual Meeting regarding the granting of cooperating non-Contracting Party status to the Bahamas. This situation remained unchanged at the Annual Meeting.

PECCOE had proposed that Liberia's application for cooperating non-Contracting Party status not be accepted at this time. However, following the PECCOE meeting in September, Liberia submitted additional information.

A PECCOE meeting was held in the margins of the Annual Meeting. PECCOE welcomed the additional information but noted that its late arrival did not allow sufficient time for its scrutiny. There was no consensus on any proposal to the Annual Meeting on this matter.

In the absence of proposals by PECCOE to grant either the Bahamas or Liberia cooperating non-Contracting Party status, **it was agreed** to grant neither of them that status at this time. However, **it was also agreed** to request PECCOE to look at this issue at its meeting in January 2015. If PECCOE's conclusion would be to propose granting the status, the committee should consider the option of initiating a decision making process through written communication.

16. Report of the NEAFC Performance Review Panel

The members of the Performance Review Panel, Steve Murawski, Andre Tahindro and Kevern Cochrane, presented their report.

While the report was largely very positive, it nevertheless identified significant issues that needed to be addressed. The most prominent among these was the failure to reach agreement on the allocation of the major stocks.

The Contracting Parties thanked the panellists for their report and noted that there were many elements in the report that needed further study. The Contracting Parties had not digested the report fully and had not formed positions regarding the various elements and proposals.

Following discussions on the report, which included further elaboration and clarifications by the panellists, **it was agreed** to not make any decisions at the current meeting on how to proceed regarding the report and the panellists' proposals. Rather, **it was agreed** to hold an Extraordinary Meeting of NEAFC in 2015 to discuss these issues and decide on the next steps.

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 2015 in the following way:

CCAMLR – Norway

ICCAT – the EU

ICES – Iceland

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

NAMMCO – Norway

NASCO – the 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. It was noted that at the RSN meeting in 2014, the NEAFC Secretary was elected as the chair of RSN, replacing Andrew Wright of CCAMLR. 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.

18. Relationship with other international fora

18.1. ICES

18.2. UN

18.3. FAO

18.4. OSPAR

18.1. International MCS Network

18.2. North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum

18.3. Nordic cooperation

18.4. Civil Society

18.5. Other

The Secretary presented reports regarding the work of the different international fora.

He noted that ICES had expressed to the Secretariat that the VMS and catch data that was being provided to ICES following the decision at the 2013 Annual Meeting was very useful to them in providing NEAFC with advice. The Secretariat was currently working on providing this data, with all the limitations that are in place, for previous years to ensure that ICES has all the relevant data.

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.

The Secretary noted that the work of the so-called BBNJ working group of the UN General Assembly was continuing, and pointed out that fisheries were a significant part of the discussions in this forum. The Secretariat will continue to monitor this work, including by attending as observers at the working group's meetings.

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 FAO and to work on projects where the FAO ask for input from NEAFC.

The Secretary pointed out that the Secretariat had contributed to the FAO's work of making a prototype of the global record of fishing vessels, which had been presented at the FAO COFI meeting earlier in the year. He stated that the Secretariat would continue to work with the FAO on this issue. However, this would eventually result in the FAO requesting specific data to be submitted by NEAFC into the fully functioning global record and before any such data was submitted the Secretariat would come back to the Contracting Parties and ensure that they are content with what will be submitted and with any limitations that will be put on the use of the data.

It was noted that NEAFC will take part as a partner in the Deep Sea Project of the wider ABNJ Program, which had been presented in greater detail to the Annual Meeting in 2013. This project was being run by the FAO and formed a part of the wider ABNJ Program being run by the FAO in association with the World Bank and UNEP. The project was funded through GEF.

The Secretary pointed out that, at the request of FAO, the Secretariat had made presentations at workshops that FAO organised on the implementation of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) from a legal and policy, institutional and capacity development, and operations point of view.

The Secretary pointed out that the Secretariat would, at the request of FAO, contribute to the work of setting up a fisheries body for the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

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 were currently two.

Firstly, there was the issue of ecologically and biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs). It was noted that there was currently no progress being made in this regard but NEAFC would continue to work with OSPAR on this issue if and when there were any new developments.

Secondly, there was the issue of the collective arrangement with OSPAR. It was noted that the arrangement had been formally adopted by both NEAFC and OSPAR earlier in the year. It was further noted that it was expected that the first meeting under the arrangement would take place next year and that the President would work in consultation with the Heads of Delegation in making practical arrangements for the meeting.

It was further noted that the collective arrangement was not intended to remain a bilateral arrangement between NEAFC and OSPAR. Efforts to involve other relevant international bodies would be supported, with emphasis placed on involving the International Maritime Organisation and the International Seabed Authority.

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

The Secretary pointed out that the Secretariat had, at the request of FAO and UNEP, taken part in a scoping meeting for a project which aimed at strengthening the cooperation between fisheries management organisations and environmental protection organisations in Africa. OSPAR had also taken part and the organisers were interested in building on the experience of NEAFC and OSPAR to the extent possible. It was noted that NEAFC would likely be asked to take part in the project when its implementation would begin, and that the Secretariat would participate to the extent that its resources made possible.

The Secretary stated that there continued to be growing interest in issues related to the Arctic, and that since NEAFC's Regulatory Area included a part of the central Arctic high seas the Secretariat was regularly invited to events addressing such issues. He noted that the quality of discussions in this context was improving markedly and that misconceptions that had previously been very common were thankfully becoming a rarity.

The President noted that there was considerable interest from various non-governmental organisations in NEAFC-related issues. He pointed out that there had been some criticism of a letter that he had written to one such organisation and accepted that he should have consulted with the Heads of Delegation before sending a letter like that in his capacity as President of NEAFC.

The observer from IMO drew attention to developments within IMO that were relevant for fisheries organisations. This included the development of a convention for certification and training requirements; the work of the joint working group of IMO and FAO on IUU fisheries; and the decision to have IMO numbers available to fishing vessels over 100 GT. The observer from FAO noted that the latter point was essential for the global record of fishing vessels, which the FAO was developing with a contribution from NEAFC.

19. Election of President and Vice President

Johán H. Williams, Norway, was elected as President of NEAFC for 2015-2016.

Andrew Thomson, the EU, was elected as Vice President of NEAFC for 2015-2016.

20. Report from the Finance and Administration Committee

20.1. Audited accounts for the year ended 31 December 2013 and preliminary statements for 2014

20.2. Draft budget for 2015 and draft budget estimate for 2016

20.3. Review of annual contributions from Contacting Parties with reference to Article 17.4 of the Convention

20.4. Other

The Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, Andrew Thomson, the EU, presented the committee's report. The report, as presented in document AM 2014-83, was noted.

It was agreed to adopt the proposals by the committee to: take note of the audited accounts for 2013; take note of the latest forecast of outturn for the accounts for 2014; adopt the budget for 2015 set out in Annex 1 of the report of the committee; take note of the estimated budget for 2016 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 2015.

In adopting the budget for 2015, 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 2015 should be paid in full no later than 1 April 2015.

It was noted that the committee's Chair will relinquish his post before the 2015 Annual Meeting, and that the committee had elected the current Vice Chair, Jóhannes Hansen, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), as the next Chair. The outgoing Chair was thanked for his excellent work for NEAFC in his many years as the committee's Chair.

21. Arrangements for future meetings

21.1. Annual meetings 9-13 November 2015 and 14-18 November 2016

21.2. Meetings of subsidiary bodies of NEAFC

It was noted that the Annual Meeting in 2015 will be held on 9-13 November, and the Annual Meeting in 2016 will be held on 14-18 November.

It was agreed that the timing of meetings of subsidiary bodies of NEAFC in 2015 will be as presented in the calendar in document AM 2014-79, with the exception of the autumn meetings of PECCOE and the working group on fisheries statistics. The Secretary was requested to work with the Chairs of these groups to find alternative dates for those meetings, preferably arranging them so that delegates could attend both meetings in one trip to London.

22. 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.

23. Any other business

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

24. Closure of the 33rd Annual Meeting

It was noted that Kate Partridge was retiring after having worked for NEAFC ever since the office of the independent Secretariat was established in 1999. She was thanked for her excellent work for NEAFC and given best wishes for the future.

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