

MEETING ON HIGH SEAS FISHERIES IN THE CENTRAL ARCTIC OCEAN
Washington, D.C.
28-30 November 2017

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT¹

Delegations from Canada, the People's Republic of China, the Kingdom of Denmark in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, the European Union, Iceland, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Kingdom of Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States of America met in Washington, D.C., from 28-30 November 2017. They successfully concluded negotiations on the draft *Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean*.

The Agreement will prevent unregulated commercial fishing in the high seas portion of the central Arctic Ocean, an area that is roughly 2.8 million square kilometers in size, roughly the size of the Mediterranean Sea. Commercial fishing has never been known to occur in this area, nor is it likely to occur in the near future. However, given the changing conditions of the Arctic Ocean, the governments in question developed this Agreement in accordance with the precautionary approach to fisheries management.

The Agreement will establish and operate a Joint Program of Scientific Research and Monitoring with the aim of improving the understanding of the ecosystem(s) of this area and, in particular, of determining whether fish stocks might exist in this area that could be harvested on a sustainable basis. The Agreement envisions the possibility that one or more additional regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements may be established for this area in the future.

Before the Agreement will be open for signature, the delegations must first undertake a legal and technical review of its provisions, which will occur in the near future, and prepare the texts in the other languages in which it will be signed. During that time, delegations will also seek final approval within their respective governments to sign the Agreement.

Delegations expressed their sincere gratitude to the Government and people of the United States for their excellent work in hosting and organizing the meeting and for their warm hospitality.

¹ This Chairman's Statement attempts to capture the basic elements of the meeting but does not necessarily reflect the views of any individual delegation.