

## **Arctic Fisheries Nuuk Chairmans and ToR for 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting**

### **MEETING ON ARCTIC FISHERIES Nuuk, Greenland, 24-26 February 2014**

#### **CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT**

Officials from Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Kingdom of Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States of America met in Nuuk, Greenland from 24-26 February 2014 to continue discussions toward the development of interim measures to prevent unregulated fishing in the central Arctic Ocean and to continue discussion of related scientific matters.

#### **Scientific Matters**

At the meeting in Nuuk, officials reviewed the outcomes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Scientific Meeting on Arctic Fish Stocks held in Tromsø, Norway 28-31 October 2013 and decided on next steps to continue to advance scientific understanding of living marine resources and their ecosystems in the Arctic Ocean. They agreed:

- to continue to promote scientific research, and to integrate scientific knowledge with traditional and local knowledge, with the aim of improving understanding of the living marine resources of the Arctic Ocean and the ecosystems in which they occur;
- to promote cooperation with relevant scientific bodies, including but not limited to the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES); and
- to hold a 3<sup>rd</sup> Scientific Meeting no later than the end of 2015 and to finalize in the coming weeks terms of reference for that meeting.

#### **Interim Measures**

The meeting reaffirmed that, based on available scientific information, commercial fishing in the high seas area of the central Arctic Ocean is unlikely to occur in the near future. The meeting therefore also reaffirmed that there is no need at present to develop any additional regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) or arrangement for this area.

The meeting agreed on the desirability of developing appropriate interim measures to deter unregulated fishing in the future in the high seas area of the central Arctic Ocean.

Such interim measures will recognize that at least one existing RFMO – the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) – has the competence to adopt fisheries conservation and management measures in a portion of this high seas area, should such fisheries take place there. The interim measures will neither undermine nor conflict with the role and mandate of any existing international mechanism relating to fisheries, including NEAFC.

Based on a proposal from the United States, which was developed further during the meeting, officials of the five States agreed that the necessary interim measures will:

- Apply to the single high seas portion of the central Arctic Ocean that is entirely surrounded by waters under the fisheries jurisdiction of Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark in respect of Greenland, the Kingdom of Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States of America.
- Commit States participating in the interim measures to:
  - authorize their vessels to conduct commercial fishing in this high seas area only pursuant to one or more regional or subregional fisheries management organizations or arrangements that are or may be established to manage such fishing in accordance with modern international standards;
  - establish a joint program of scientific research with the aim of improving understanding of the ecosystems of this area;
  - coordinate their monitoring, control and surveillance activities in this area; and
  - ensure that any non-commercial fishing in this area does not undermine the purpose of the interim measures, is based on scientific advice and is monitored, and that data obtained through any such fishing is shared;
  - encourage other States to take measures in respect of vessels entitled to fly their flags that are consistent with the interim measures; and
- not prejudice the rights, jurisdiction and duties of States under relevant provisions of international law as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, or the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement, nor alter the rights and obligations of States that arise from relevant international agreements.

### **The Way Forward**

The meeting agreed that it is appropriate for the States whose exclusive economic zones border the high seas area in question to take the initiative on this matter. They also continued to recognize the interests of Arctic residents, particularly the Arctic indigenous peoples, in these matters and to engage with them as appropriate.

The meeting agreed to develop a Ministerial Declaration for signature or adoption by the five States based on the provisions described above. The meeting expressed the desire to finalize the Ministerial Declaration for signature or adoption in June 2014.

The meeting also reaffirmed that other States may have an interest in this topic and looked forward to a broader process involving additional States beginning before the end of 2014. The purpose would be to develop a set of interim measures, compatible with the Ministerial

Declaration, that would include commitments by additional States. The final outcome could be a binding international agreement.

21 April 2014

### **Terms of Reference for A Third Meeting of Scientific Experts on Fish Stocks in the Central Arctic Ocean**

Though commercial fishing in the central Arctic Ocean is not imminent, there is a need for further scientific research and monitoring on the state and nature of living marine resources and associated ecosystems, and increased understanding of the impact of climate change on Arctic ecosystems in general and fish stocks in particular.

Following discussions in Oslo, Norway, on 22 June 2010, and in Washington, D.C. in April-May 2013, where senior officials of Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States of America (the Arctic Ocean coastal States) stressed the need for further scientific research on fish stocks and their ecosystems in the Arctic Ocean, two Meetings of Scientific Experts on Fish Stocks in the Arctic Ocean were held--in Anchorage, Alaska, on 15-17 June 2011, and in Tromsø, Norway, on 28-31 October 2013.

The Anchorage workshop addressed current information on fish stocks, reviewed ongoing and planned scientific activities, identified current information gaps and indicated priorities in research requirements. The Tromsø workshop continued the consideration of these issues, and also discussed developments in other international scientific fora and ways to strengthen scientific cooperation with existing initiatives.

At a meeting of senior officials of the five Arctic Ocean coastal States in Nuuk, Greenland, on 24-26 February 2014, the outcomes of the Tromsø meeting were reviewed. Representatives of the States agreed that the scientific dialogue on living marine resources in the central Arctic Ocean should be continued.

Building on the Terms of Reference that were agreed before the Anchorage and Tromsø meetings, the purpose of these supplementary Terms of Reference is to describe the issues which the scientific experts are requested to consider in a third meeting. With the need for continuity in mind, this meeting will follow up on the previous meetings by:

1. Continuing the review of current programs for research and monitoring environmental parameters and patterns of fish distribution and abundance; establishing an inventory of research and monitoring programs and preparing a report on the status of and gaps in knowledge on the distribution and abundance of fish in the central Arctic Ocean. Such an inventory should include programs occurring in immediately adjacent shelf areas (i.e., within EEZs), which are linked and have relevance to the central Arctic Ocean (high seas).
2. Developing a framework for a Joint Program of Scientific Research and Monitoring for the Central Arctic Ocean, including the definition of baseline information needs and methods

necessary to determine the likelihood of sustainable fisheries being present. Additionally, this framework should include one or more components that investigate the role of fishes and shellfish in the marine ecosystems (and vice versa) in the Central Arctic Ocean, as well as linkages with the shelf areas and likely impacts of climate change.

3. Considering the development of an action plan (e.g., notional schedules, areas of operations, costs) for the Joint Program of Scientific Research and Monitoring.

4. Considering how to promote cooperation with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), as well as other relevant scientific entities and academic programs.

5. Considering workshops to address specific issues, including questions relating to modelling of ecosystem properties, survey design, sampling methods and projecting future states of the Central Arctic Ocean, its biota and ecosystems.

The meetings should include relevant scientific expertise from the Arctic Ocean coastal States, as well as other relevant scientific expertise from ICES, PICES, and other relevant bodies. The meetings will continue to consider the traditional and local knowledge held by the indigenous peoples of the Arctic region.

The third meeting of scientific experts should be held no later than June 2015, at a venue yet to be determined.

The outcomes of this third scientific workshop will advance scientific understanding of the status of fish stocks in the Central Arctic Ocean, their role in Arctic marine ecosystems, and linkages with adjacent seas.

The scientific experts will report back to their respective Governments, who will decide on further steps to be taken.

## Appendix B: List of Participants and Correspondents\*

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