

Annual Report

by
Secretariat

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2015/2016 period

Annual Report on the Commission's Activities

Secretariat

Abstract:

This paper highlights the activities of the Commission since the last Commission meeting in September 2015. The Commission has held its Scientific Committee meetings, been represented at meetings of NPAFC, FAO COFI, UN UNFSA Conference, and UN Deep Sea Panel discussions and met with several RFMO executives to seek their advice to establish a strong Secretariat in support of the Commission. The Secretariat staff have been recruited and worked to enhance the administrative and operational tools and rules of the Commission in preparation for development and delivery of the Commission Work Plan over the next four years.

Introduction

In accordance with the Rule 6 of the Rules of Procedure, this is the Secretariat's Report on the Commission's intersessional activities carried out during the 2015/2016 period. Although the annual report intends to describe activities conducted by the Commission during the previous financial year, this report also encompasses the first half of the financial year 2016 considering that 2015 financial year lasted only 7 months from September 2015 to March 2016. This is the Commission's first year, consequently, activities focused on setting up the Secretariat by hiring staff, opening the bank account to receive Member's contribution and manage the budget, establishing communication systems, developing internal rules and procedures to purchase equipment and supplies for the operation of the Secretariat.

Activities

I. Setting Up the Secretariat

1) Entry into Force of the Convention

The Convention entered into force on 19 July 2016, 180 days following receipt of the fourth ratification, acceptance, approval or accession by the Depositary State, Korea. Besides current members of six, it is envisaged that the USA and Vanuatu will join the NPFC in the near future.

2) 1st Commission meeting

The 1st Commission meeting was held in Tokyo, Japan, on 3 September 2015 resulting in the selection of Mr. Kenji Kagawa as the first Chairman of the Commission and Dr. Aleksei Baitaliuk as the Vice Chair of the Commission. Dr. Dae-Yeon Moon was appointed as the first Executive Secretary of the Secretariat.

3) Headquarters Agreement

The signing of the Headquarters Agreement between the NPFC and Government of Japan was held on 30 November 2015 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. The Executive Secretary and the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan were the signatories to this Agreement. The Agreement remains in the process of endorsement by the DIET of Japan, and may not be ratified until 2017 which means that the Commission is required to continue paying all taxes until such a time as the Agreement is ratified with no reimbursement process.

4) Employment of Staff

Professional staff

The Executive Secretary, Dr. Dae-Yeon Moon was unanimously selected at the first Commission meeting in September 2015.

Mr. Peter Flewwelling was selected as Compliance Manager in January 2016 and commenced work in February 2016.

Dr. Aleksandr Zavolokin was selected as Science Manager in February and commenced work in April 2016.

General Service Staff

Ms. Yuko Yoshimura-Takamiya was appointed, and commenced work, as the Executive Assistant to the Executive Secretary in January 2016.

5) Financial Affairs

Bank account

The Bank account for the Commission was opened at the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ as a general account. The account is a zero interest rate account as is the norm in Japan at this time to enhance general cash flows in the country.

Member contributions

The Status of Members' Contributions – Income for the Commission is noted in the Auditors report circulated as Circular 057-2016, and also in NPFC-2016-SWG-Fin & Admin-WP03. All members except one have paid their contributions for 2015. The Agreement for 50% of the level of contributions set for 2016 to be paid by 1 April, the start of our fiscal year, was honoured by Korea, Chinese Taipei, Canada and China as of 5 August.

Auditing

Tokoro Ltd. of Japan was selected as the Auditor for the Commission and completed their first audit of the Secretariat's financial operations in June 2016. The resultant Report has been circulated as Circular 057-2016 in July of this year and is available on the NPFC website, Members' area under the information documents for this meeting as document number NPFC-2016-SWG-Fin & Admin-IP01.

Expenses – Personnel and Other Services

The Auditor report noted the deficit of 5,100,011 JPY in Income due to the failure of the Russian Federation to pay its 2015 contribution, leaving total contributions paid for 2015 at 73,104,685 JPY. Total expenditures for personnel were 19,543,825 JPY and for other services 16,840,428 JPY or a total expenditures of 36,384,253 JPY of a total budget of 78,204,657 JPY. Total equity at the end of 2015 financial year was reported as 41,820,443 JPY which was carried over to 2016 as the Working Capital Fund.

Proposed Budget Expenses for 2016-2019

NPFC-2016-SWG-Fin & Admin-WP03, our budget and expense document, will be discussed in detail under the results of the Special Working Group for Finance and Administration, but in summary, the Secretariat was attempting to address the following items:

- a. Confirm the budget details in JPY;
- b. Ensure that the collective contributions for Members of this new Commission:
 - did not increase over the next four years (the current term of the Secretariat); and
 - built up the Working Capital Fund to assist in initial system set up for both scientific and compliance operations;
- c. Maintain, or gradually increase the planned expenditure levels to address MCS, science support and database management work plans;
- d. Completion of the recruitment for two technical core team of the Secretariat to address: Information Technology/Data Management and Finance and Administration;
- e. Assurance of education allowances for Staff Members;
- f. Assist staff to manage the very high accommodation rates in Tokyo;
- g. Other minor housekeeping financial issues of the Secretariat.

6) Secretariat housekeeping documents

- a. Confidentiality Agreements have been developed and are in use for all permanent staff of the Secretariat as well as temporary staff and service providers.
- b. The Secretariat has developed a draft Four Year Work Plan for the Secretariat with the final two sections – Scientific and Compliance to be completed by the Members and thus create the Commission Work Plan for 2016-2019.
- c.
- d. In addition, the Secretariat has developed policies and initial guidelines on the following matters for consideration by the Commission Contracting and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties:
 - i. General NPFC Information Security Management System;

- ii. Rules for Documents and Numbering;
- iii. Rules for Media Access;
- iv. Regulations, Responsibilities and Obligations of Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties to the Commission; and
- v. A format for the Compendium for active Conservation and Management Measures of the Commission

These documents have been circulated for comments and final revision and adoption by Members.

II. Scientific Committee Meetings

Three meetings of Small Scientific Committees (SSCs) were held in Tokyo from 14-27 April 2016, the SSC on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (Chair, Dr. Loh-Lee Low); SSC on North Pacific Armorhead (Chair, Dr. Taro Ichii); and SSC on Pacific saury (Chair Dr. Toshihide Iwasaki), and also the 1st formal Scientific Committee (SC) meeting of the Commission chaired by Dr. Joji Morishita. Members presented their research activities, discussed VME Encounter Protocols, reviewed Interim and Voluntary Measures of NPFC, elaborated stock assessment for priority species and discussed data collection. SSCs made recommendations which were accepted by SC with some amendments and deferred to Commission for consideration.

III. International Liaison

During the 2015-2016 period, the NPFC was represented at the following meetings:

1) Workshop on Worldwide Review of Bottom Fisheries in the High Seas

The Science Manager attended, and gave a presentation on NPFC activities to the Workshop on Worldwide review (WWR) of bottom fisheries in the high seas which was held in the FAO Headquarters in Rome from 3 to 5 May 2016. The objectives of the workshop were (1) to present the framework and intent for the WWR, (2) to review draft regional chapters of the WWR and receive feedback, (3) to identify any revisions required for each chapter,

and (4) to agree on a plan of work for completing the drafts and a deadline for publishing the document, now expected to be the end of 2016.

2) North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

The Executive Secretary was invited as an observer, and attended for 3 days, the 24th annual meeting of NPAFC during 16-20 May 2016 in Busan, Republic of Korea. Agenda items included: enforcement, scientific research and statistics, administrative and financial matters.

Cooperation between NPFC and NPAFC with over 20 years of history could benefit NPFC in various aspects of our Science and Compliance components especially in our start-up phase. It should be remembered that NPAFC have made efforts to cooperate with NPFC by attending NPFC meetings in the pre-Commission period and shared information on collaborative enforcement activities and strategy with NPFC, highlighting the importance for NPFC to undertake an initial analysis of its MCS requirements before discussing potential cooperation with other entities.

3) UN FSA Review Conference

The Compliance Manager attended the UNFSA Review Conference in New York at the UN headquarters from 23 to 27 May 2016. The meeting was mandated to assess the effectiveness of the Implementation Agreement in securing the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks, by: a) reviewing and assessing the adequacy of its provisions, and the progress of Members in implementing the recommendations from the 2006 and 2010 Review Conferences, and, b) proposing means of strengthening the substance and methods of implementation of those provisions and the revised recommendations prior to the next review conference proposed for after 2020.

4) RSN-6 and COFI-32

The Executive Secretary attended the 6th meeting of Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN) and 32nd session of the Committee of Fisheries held during 9-14 July 2016, at FAO Headquarter, Rome, Italy, the former being a Network established in 1999 composed of the Secretariats of around fifty such bodies to promote information sharing on common issues for regional fisheries bodies. The meeting highlighted several points

including: consistency and coordination within and between member state delegations; attendance at various international fora related to fisheries and/or environmental or ocean governance, is highly instrumental in fostering and supporting the work of RFBs; promotion of strengthening cooperation at the regional level, e.g., MOU for synergy enhancement. The role of RFBs is particularly pertinent with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, in particular SDG 14. The RSN underlined the very low level of participation of RFBs Members in the resumed review Conference on the UNFSA, as well as in the 1st meeting of the preparatory committee on the BBNJ. RSN encouraged RFBs to be actively involved in the work of the BBNJ preparatory committee. Continued involvement in RSN is recommended exchange information and learn from existing organizations with regard to operation of the secretariat as well as benefit from side events on more practical issues such as FAO projects on VME issues and operational status of other RFMOs.

At COFI-32 meeting, relevant and important agendas to RFMOs include: Global and Regional Process / RFBs related matters. States and RFMOs called for FAO to continue to lead global fisheries issues and cooperate to avoid duplication, and recognized that there has been progress in bottom fishing management with establishment of NPFC, SPRFMO and SIOFA. Participants were urged to attend the UN Review Conference and stressed the need to ensure that the UN BBNJ process does not undermine existing RFMOs, and recognizes the importance of FAO's role. Participants recognized various issues including cooperation among RFMOs to eliminate IUU fisheries in their respective convention areas, the importance of governance issues, the establishment of a new RFMO in arctic high seas, role of FAO, IOTC issues, performance review on a regular basis and so on. In the margin of the plenary meeting, some relevant side events were valuable to attend – IUU fisheries, VME database and Pacific RFMO informal meeting.

5) UN Bottom Fishing Workshop

The Executive Secretary attended UN Bottom Fishing Workshop held during 1-2 August 2016 at UN Headquarters, New York, USA. The workshop was to discuss implementation of paragraphs 113, 117 and 119 to 124 of resolution 64/72 and paragraphs 121, 126, 129, 130 and 132 to 134 of resolution 66/68 on sustainable fisheries, addressing the impacts of bottom

fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems and the long-term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks. The NPFC was invited as a panelist to present the progress on the management of bottom fisheries in the North Pacific Ocean in conjunction with establishment of the NPFC. Major agenda items addressed five segments: Impacts of bottom fisheries on vulnerable marine ecosystems and the long-term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks; Progress made by States; Focus on the experience and the special requirements of developing; Progress made by regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements; Opportunities and challenges in further addressing the impacts of bottom fisheries on vulnerable marine ecosystems and long-term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks. There were questions on NPFC's presentation, especially from NGOs such as WWF and PEW on challenges to NPFC such as data collection and research needs including stock assessment for target species in the NPFC Convention area.

The workshop was quite valuable and informative to participants especially to NPFC as a new RFMO setting its initial regulations and systems to cope up with current international issues in relation to bottom fishing management in world oceans.

IV. Information Technology - Data Management System and Website Development

The Secretariat wishes to note its gratefulness to the Japanese Fisheries Agency for their assistance and support in setting up an interim web page during the development of the Commission. The Secretariat then contracted Diverta Ltd. to transfer the Interim Secretariat's website from the Japanese Fisheries Agency to a separate NPFC website.

It was the intent of the Secretariat to establish an '.int' domain for both e-mail and website management and connection to our future data management system. The Secretariat was able to get permission to use the '.int domain' from the global controller of this domain, IANA and then established its e-mail accounts on the new NTT ".int domain". Unfortunately, it was found that the Diverta-developed NPFC web site was not transferrable to the new NTT '.int domain' due to its data management system. Consequently the new NPFC website is also temporary now and it will be upgraded and transferred to int.domain by the end of 2016. As per

Circular 054-2016, the new NPFC website is launched and includes a 'Member's only' security access page, that facilitates sharing information for Members' needs, communications and meeting preparations. The Secretariat has also published the new e-mails to contact the Secretariat and its staff.

WCPFC has been very supportive of our IT initiatives. WCPFC's IT Manager, Mr. Samuel Taufao, visited the Secretariat in mid-July to assist in reviewing the data management needs of NPFC and suggesting possible solutions which are currently under consideration and will be discussed with Members as we proceed.

Finally the Science and Compliance Managers have been liaising with other RFMOs and Members in their respective areas of competence to gather information to assist Members in the development of a Commission Work Plan for the next four years – thereby completing the document NPFC-2016-SWG-Fin & Admin-WP02.