

Statements by NEAFC

(with some additions as Co-Chair of RSN)

Item 4: Global Framework on Biodiversity:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak briefly on behalf of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, and

And congratulations you on your election as Chair.....

As we have heard, GBF creates new impetus and opportunities to our existing work. I say existing as RFMOs such as NEAFC have had conservation objectives built into their conventions for decades, in the case of NEAFC since 2004.

Nevertheless, NEAFC is responding to the GBF commitment from our parties for further *and necessary* mainstreaming of biodiversity in our work. As an example, NEAFC already agreed in 2023 to report to CBD an OECM based on its area based protection for VME from bottom fishing, with further plans to report an OECM based on restricted bottom fishing areas, subject to independent scientific advice. This helps underline the role of fisheries in delivering the area based conservation targets of the GBF, and helps enhance NEAFC collaboration with other organisations such as OSPAR, the RSC for the NEA.

While OECM can highlight our existing protections, a significant initiative for NEAFC *takes us further forward*, and that is, that we are working to set out in more detail our biodiversity and ecosystem objectives. This will help focus the independent scientific advice NEAFC receives and hence further mainstream biodiversity within our ecosystem based management for sustainable use.

If I may, Chair I would also add a brief comment as Co-Chair of the Regional Fisheries Body Secretariats Network (RSN). I would highlight that the RSN is taking this issue forward in its joint activities. Next week we will meet for in Rome for an FAO- RSN workshop on supporting understanding in the Regional Fisheries bodies as they look at designating OECMs related to the area based measures that their organisations and members implement around the globe. Also in our regular meeting in the margins of COFI the RSN will be considering again not only the implications of the GBF, but also of the BBNJ, for the RSN members.

Thank you Chair

Item 5 Climate Change:

Thank You Chair

I make this brief intervention with two hats on, one as co-Chair of the RSN and another as Secretary of NEAFC.

As Tarub reported, RFMOs/RFB members of the RSN from the Pacific and Indian Ocean met in India in October last year to have a in depth discussion on their actions on climate change. As Chair of that meeting, I must say I was impressed in the progress and commitment I heard about at this meeting. And this kind of exchange of experience is a real help to RFB Secretariats to support their members to develop their thinking further on regional fisheries responses to climate change.

Although the similar RSN meeting for the Atlantic has not met, I was able to report back to my own parties in NEAFC on the meeting in India at our Commission meeting. Within NEAFC I am happy to report we have also recently made steps forward, having agreed a climate change resolution at the meeting of the Commission a couple of months ago. This commits NEAFC towards further considering climate change through its scientific and management processes as well thinking about the carbon footprint of NEAFC meetings themselves.

So, my reflection as RSN Co-Chair is that many RFMOs are very willing to get beyond the initial stages of making sure that climate change considerations are built into their processes. The real challenge will be turning an understanding of the longer term regional projections to a risk based approach to implement pragmatic changes for fisheries management in year to year decisions.

I thank FAO for the ongoing support that it is providing to RFMOs, including via the RSN, to help in our continuing exchange of information and development of our understanding on this.

Thank you