



South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation

SOUTH EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES ORGANISATION REPORT OF THE 14TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

27 November to 30 November 2017

Swakopmund

NAMIBIA

The Secretariat

1 Strand Street, NatMirc

Swakopmund, Namibia

Phone: + 264 (64) 406-885

Email: info@seafo.org

Url: www.seafo.org

Mr. Dielobaka Ndombele

Chairperson of SEAFO Commission

dielobaka@gmail.com

1. Opening of the meeting

- 1.1. The 14th Annual meeting of the SEAFO Commission was convened at the Strand Hotel, Swakopmund, Namibia, from 27th to 30th November 2017.
- 1.2. The Hon Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources of Namibia, Bernhard Esau, officially opened the meeting.
- 1.3. The Chairperson, Dielobaka Ndombele (ANGOLA), made an opening statement.

2. Adoption of [Agenda](#) and Meeting Arrangements

The Commission adopted the agenda (Appendix I) with the following items to be added:

Items submitted by the EU which was discussed at the SC meeting and at the Joint Seminar:

[DOC/SC/20/2017](#) - Proposal CM Banning of gillnets (Agenda point 7)

[DOC/SC/21/2017](#) - Proposal Revision CM 04-06 (Agenda point 7)

[DOC/JS/03/2017](#) - Proposal to amend the Rules of Procedures for the Commission (Agenda point 6)

3. Introduction and Admission of Observers

The observers present were the Benguela Current Commission (BCC), United Kingdom (UKOT) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

4. Opening Statements by Contracting Parties and Observers

- 4.1. Six of the seven Contracting Parties were represented.
- 4.2. All Contracting Parties present presented their opening statements (Appendix IV) and introduced their respective delegates. The list of participants is provided in Appendix II.

5. Status of the Convention in Respect of Membership

The Executive Secretary informed the meeting that no new notification for accession to the Convention was received in 2017 by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The Executive Secretary confirmed that a letter of reminder was sent to the USA. The UKOT observer informed the meeting that the UK have interest in the SEAFO CA as an observer but no commitment yet from the UK.

6. Report of the 2017 Joint Seminar

- 6.1. The Chair of the Joint Seminar presented the Chair's summary of the 2017 Joint Seminar ([DOC/COM/09/2017](#)) to the Commission.
- 6.2. Extension of the SEAFO CA to the South West Atlantic:
The Commission noted the points raised during the Joint Seminar.

ACTION: The Commission agreed that discussions on this matter will continue in the next annual meeting.

6.3. EU Proposal to adopt Staff Regulations (Recommendations 37-44 of the Review Panel):

The matter was discussed, amongst other considering the low level of activity in SEAFO compared to other RFMOs, and whether there is a need for a data manager given the current IT-capacity in the Secretariat. It was deemed prudent for SEAFO to work on the staff regulation matters through its already established rules and see how the SEAFO situation develops in the future.

The Commission noted the advice and agreed that the Executive Secretary will continue to perform the Data Manager tasks with additional external support as needed until a further decision is agreed upon by the Commission

6.4. Renumbering of the Conservation Measures:

A working document was submitted by the Executive Secretary as requested in 2016.

ACTION: The Commission agreed to discuss it further at the next annual meeting on the basis of a document prepared by the Executive Secretary.

6.5. Biennial Commission meetings:

The Commission agreed to consider meeting physically on biennial basis coinciding with the years in which the SC provides advice on TAC's. The Commission agreed that the SC will continue to meet physically on an annual basis.

ACTION: At the next annual meeting the Executive Secretary will provide a document with options on the preparation of budgets, arrangements and procedures for holding biennial meetings, including experience from other organisations if applicable. CP's are encouraged to present ideas about practicalities involved in having biennial Commission meetings. The Commission will take a decision on this issue at next year's annual meeting, taking into consideration the practicalities and procedures involved.

6.6. EU proposal to amend the Rules of Procedures for the Commission

The Commission noted the EU proposal to establish a deadline for the submission of documents to be discussed at the Commission annual meeting. No consensus was reached on the adoption of the proposal.

ACTION: No specific action was adopted

7. Report of the 2017 Scientific Committee

7.1. The Chair of the Scientific Committee, Mr. B. Tjizoo, presented the 2017 report to the Commission ([DOC/COM/03/2017](#)).

7.2. A total of 10 Scientific Committee members from 5 Contracting Parties attended the Scientific Committee meeting. In addition, an observer from Birdlife SA attended the Scientific Committee meeting. The Commission noted that two CP's did not attend the meeting and recalled the importance of attending SC meetings.

7.3. Allocation for 2018

The allocation of N\$50 000 in 2016 for a deep-sea red crab and orange roughy workshop during 2017. Considering the workshops did not take place in 2017 SC recommended to the Commission to carry-over the allocation to 2018.

ACTION: The Commission agreed to carry over the allocation to 2018.

7.4. Request from Namibia for the co-operation on the Walvis Ridge EBSA refinement.

The SC advised that the Commission consider the Namibian request for co-operation in this regard as the CBD has already commenced the process on the further enhancement and augmentation of all EBSAs globally. The SC considered this as a good opportunity for SEAFO to contribute to the refinement work on the Walvis Ridge EBSA, should the Commission request the SC to engage in this activity.

ACTION: The Commission noted the SC's evaluation of the developments of the initiatives to refine the EBSAs but no consensus was reached on the matter.

7.5. Review of Orange roughy TAC recommendations

The SC developed advice based on the recorded historic catches of orange roughy within the SEAFO CA outside the main historical fishing area of Division B1, which have never exceeded 25t. The SC suggests two options for the management of orange roughy in areas outside Division B1 (where a moratorium on targeted fishing for orange roughy is in effect):

[a] to adopt a TAC on orange roughy not exceeding 25t allowing a limited target fishery and provision for incidental bycatches; or

[b] to only allow a bycatch on orange roughy in other fisheries not exceeding 25t. Targeted fisheries would be prohibited.

ACTION: There was no consensus on the recommendations from the SC regarding the TAC. The Commission agreed that the current CM on Orange roughy remains in force in 2018.

7.6. Review the Rules of Procedure #6 on the peer review of SC scientific work.

The SC proposed the following changes to the Rules of Procedure #6 for consideration by the Commission: "In the exercise of its functions, the Committee shall seek peer review of its methodologies, from FAO or other fisheries management, technical or scientific organizations with competence in the subject matter of such consultation, and may also seek independent expert advice as required on an ad hoc basis".

ACTION: The Commission accepted the proposal by the SC and recognized that the SC is mandated to revise the Rules of Procedure of the SC.

7.7. The protocol on Exceptional Circumstances on the application of HCRs.

The SC recommended that the Commission adopts the proposed 3-point protocol on Exceptional Circumstances on the application of HCR's provided in section 18.1 of the [report](#) when the stock and fisheries evaluation indicates that exceptional circumstances are occurring,.

ACTION: The Commission endorsed the adoption of the proposed protocol.

7.8. The 2018 Notice of Intent for Exploratory Fishing by Japan.

SC agreed, that although no objections were submitted against the Notice of Intent, concerns were expressed and the assessment did not result in a firm conclusion as to whether Significant Adverse Impacts on VMEs would be prevented.

Consensus was reached to conduct exploratory fishing with an additional mitigation measure in place, which is not to fish in the two areas where VME species were encountered during previous exploratory fishing. The two areas to avoid are:

Area 1: S 41° 35', E 2° 00'; S 41° 35', E 2° 20'; S 41° 55', E 2° 20'; S 41° 55', E 2° 00'

Area 2: S 42° 20', E 0° 40'; S 42° 20', E 0° 00'; S 42° 35', E 0° 00'; S 42° 35', E 0° 40'

Statement made by Japan on the "Notice of Intent" and "Additional Mitigation Measure"

– Firstly, the Scientific Committee (SC) agreed that no objections were submitted against the proposal as the proposal satisfies Conservation and Management Measures that need to be followed. Nevertheless, concern was expressed by some members of the SC which has caused this dispute. We wonder why additional conditions need to be imposed to the proposal which has satisfied the SC. Japan is unable to accept such a manner.

– Japan also likes to insist that "whether the VME indicators were found or not in certain area" and "whether VMEs exist or not in such area" are two separate issues. According to the FAO guidelines, presence of VME indicators in certain area does not mean that VME exist in such area. Therefore, it is not a scientific decision to prohibit the exploratory fishing only on the ground that VME indicator species were found in the area in the past exploratory fishing. Such a way of thinking can be said as denial of established measures agreed by SEAFO such as threshold value, move-on- rule and the exploratory fishing itself.

– Furthermore, Japan would like to stress that a certain level of uncertainty cannot be avoided completely in the fisheries resources management. We respect the concept of precautionary approaches. However, we cannot accept the abuse of this concept. We are concerned that denial of agreed rules and established practices by excessively applying the precautionary approach concept will disable SEAFO. If exploratory fishing is denied due to the uncertainties involved, collection of scientific data becomes impossible which is equivalent to the denial of fishery.

– Lastly, Japan welcomes the proposal made by Norway on the condition that the survey by Norwegian Research Vessel "Nansen" will be conducted in the near future in such a way to cover the two areas excluded from Japan's proposal this time. Unless existence of VMEs was confirmed by the research, Japan thinks that all areas, including two areas in question should be subject to the new fishery grounds based on the results of our exploratory fishing in future.

ACTION: The Commission endorsed the proposed exploratory fishing by Japan with the additional mitigation measure.

7.9. New Zealand request for data on seabirds and fisheries.

The Commission noted the NZ request put forward by the SC for its consideration.

ACTION: The Executive Secretary to enquire from other RFMO's how they deal with the request in accordance with the 2012 rules for access and rules for SEAFO data. The Executive Secretary will forward the NZ data request to the data owners.

7.10. EU proposal for a Conservation Measure on the banning of gillnets in the SEAFO CA.

The Commission considered that the SC in its advice noted that there is a need, as a precautionary measure, to prevent the development of gillnet fisheries in the SEAFO CA. The EU expressed its disappointment that all CP's but one could support the proposal and look forward to continuing constructive discussions at the next annual meeting.

ACTION: The Commission could not reach consensus on the proposal.

7.11. EU proposal for a Conservation Measure on the deep-water shark fisheries and the banning of shark finning in the SEAFO CA

The Commission considered that the SC in its advice noted that a targeted fishery for deep water sharks should not be allowed within the SEAFO CA.

ACTION: The Commission could not reach consensus on the proposal.

7.12. Review of the 2018 Work Plan

The Commission took note of the 2018 work plan.

8. Report of the 2017 Compliance Committee

8.1. The Chair of the Compliance Committee, Mr. O. Fachada, presented the 2017 Compliance Committee Report to the Commission ([DOC/COM/04/2017](#)).

8.2. The Commission noted Namibia's response to infringements by the vessel Argos Marine, including misreporting and fishing activities in a closed area. Namibia will undertake remedial measures in the future to avoid the repetition of these kind of infringements as recorded in paragraph 6 of the Compliance Committee report.

8.3. Annual Review of the "SYSTEM"

The Commission noted Norway's proposed editorial amendments to Article 24 on inspections of the SEAFO System ([DOC/CC/05/2017](#)), to make the text more clear and in line with other provisions of the System. They also proposed the deletion of Article 26 on the Application of Port State Control, taking into account the entering into force of the Port State Measures Agreement and the fact that all Contracting Parties that do not fall in the category defined by Article 26 are now parties of the Agreement. CC also recommends amending paragraph 24 bis.

ACTION: The Commission adopted amendments proposed by the CC to the "SYSTEM".

8.4. Consideration of the provisional SEAFO IUU Vessel list cf. SEAFO "SYSTEM"

The Commission noted the inclusion of the vessel "Cape Flower" in the 2018 SEAFO Provisional IUU vessel list by the CC and the inclusion of the vessels Antony, Asian Warrior, Sea Breeze, Yele and Atlantic Wind from the 2017 CCAMLR IUU vessel list as recommended by the CC.

ACTION: The Commission endorsed the inclusion of the vessel "Cape Flower" in the 2018 SEAFO IUU vessel list due to the seriousness of the infringement and sufficient evidence. The Commission also agreed to include the vessels Antony, Asian Warrior, Sea Breeze, Yele and Atlantic Wind in the 2018 SEAFO IUU vessel list.

8.5. Training on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) and request for training on compliance inspection reports

The ABNJ Deep Seas Project workshop on MCS that is scheduled for March 2018 to be held in La Reunion will replace the proposed port inspection workshop for South Africa. The Executive Secretary will continue working together with the ABNJ Deep Seas Project coordinator and SIOFA in the planning of the workshop.

9. Report of the 2017 Standing Committee on Administration and Finance (SCAF)

9.1. The Chair of SCAF, Mr. K. Bjorklund (Norway), presented the 2017 report ([DOC/COM/05/2017](#)) and the proposed 2018 budget to the Commission.

9.2. The Commission noted the SCAF report and adopted the 2018 budget.

9.3. A request was made by South Africa for budget projections that includes the post of the data manager. It was agreed that the Executive Secretary will distribute it to parties.

9.4. Some matters of concern for SEAFO were addressed by the auditors in the Management Report. These were:

- a. Misappropriation of SEAFO funds
A total of N\$ 204 972.28 was misappropriated by a previous employee of the organisation. Details of the nature of the misappropriation were given in the report.
The Auditors recommended that appropriate procurement procedures should be applied and payments to suppliers should be made by electronic transfers.
- b. Employee benefit reserve
Employee benefit reserves were recalculated by the auditor based on NETT salaries as stipulated in the staff rules.
The Auditors recommended to calculate benefits on GROSS salaries in order to calculate the total cost to the organisation.
- c. Administration of VAT in the organisation
Differences between the VAT control account in the general ledger and the VAT returns submitted for the year were detected. The Auditors recommended to perform monthly reconciliations between VAT returns and the general ledger.
- d. Authorisation of journals
The Auditors recommended in the report that all journal entries processed during the year are approved by the Executive Secretary since fraudulent transactions can be recorded by means of journal entry processing.

SCAF noted the auditor's recommendations and advised that the Executive Secretary sees them through in a responsible manner.

9.5. The Commission noted that the balance of the SRF is apparently negative since more money has been spent than the value of contributions and EU grants received. The Executive Secretary was tasked to present a further investigation of the SRF fund income and expenses.

9.6. Chair (Japan) & Vice-chair (Korea) was elected for 2018 and 2019.

9.7. The overall proposed budget for 2018 is N\$3 597 693, which is a 30% decrease from the allocated budget for 2017 of N\$ 5 169 381.

10. Report back from meetings attended by the Secretariat

The following reports were submitted to the Commission and the Commission took note of the reports.

- 10.1. The Areas Beyond National jurisdiction (ABNJ) Deep Seas Project 2nd Project Steering Committee Meeting (DOC/COM/06/2017) (7–9 February 2017 • Rome, Italy) - George Campanis.
- 10.2. The tenth session of the FIRMS Steering Committee (FSC10) meeting and the Intersessional CWP Meeting ([DOC/COM/07/2017](#)) (Copenhagen, Denmark at the premises of the ICES secretariat) -George Campanis
- 10.3. First meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on Port State Measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing ([DOC/COM/08/2017](#)) (Oslo, Norway, 29–31 May 2017) – Lizette Voges.

11. Reports of SEAFO Representatives at 2017 meetings of other Intergovernmental Organisations

The Commission noted the reports that were submitted and also noted that Korea did not submit a report on the 2017 ICCAT meeting.

([DOC/COM/10/2017](#)) ([DOC/COM/11/2017](#)) ([DOC/COM/12/2017](#)) ([DOC/COM/13/2017](#))
([DOC/COM/14/2017](#))

12. Nominations of Parties to represent SEAFO at 2018 meetings of other International Organizations.

The Commission adopted the following nominees to represent SEAFO as observers at the following meetings:

- ICCAT: Japan
- CCAMLR, NEAFC and NAMMCO: Norway
- NAFO and SIOFA: EU

13. Any other matters

No other matters were discussed.

Dr Martin Collins, observer from the UK, made the following statement:

*"I would like to bring to the attention of the Commission, some scientific work that has just began in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Tristan da Cunha, which I think is relevant to SEAFO. There are currently fisheries for bluenose (*Hyperglyphe antarctica*) and lobster (*Jasus tristani*) in the Tristan EEZ. The lobster fishery operates inshore around the islands and is MSC certified. Fisheries for bluenose operate on the seamounts in the southern part of the EEZ.*

The UK is currently undertaking the first of a series of longline surveys on the Tristan seamounts. In addition to this the UK will be undertaking detailed surveys of the seamounts in March 2018 using the research vessel James Clark Ross. This will include mapping the seamounts and using cameras to

investigate the benthic habitats and fauna. A similar research cruise is planned in 2019. The UK will be happy to provide a brief report on the 2018 surveys to the SEAFO Scientific Committee in 2018”.

14. Venue and Date of 2018 Commission meeting

14.1. The date for the 2018 Scientific Committee meeting is 19 November to 23 November 2018.

14.2. The date for 2018 Annual Commission meeting is 26th to 30th November 2018.

14.3. The venue for the 2018 Scientific and Annual Commission meetings is Swakopmund, Namibia.

15. Adoption of the Commission report

The Commission adopted the report.

16. Closure of the Meeting

The Chairperson closed the meeting at 12h30, Thursday 30th November 2017 and he commended the Contracting Parties for their efficient and effective conduct during the meeting. He thanked the Secretariat for the preparations. He also thanked delegates for their positive inputs and wished everyone a safe journey back home.



The Secretariat

Physical Address: 1 Strand Street, NatMirc, Swakopmund, Namibia

Phone: + 264 (64) 406-885 - Fax: + 264 (64) 406-884 - Email: info@seafo.org - Website: www.seafo.org

South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO)

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE 14TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COMMISSION (COM)
- 2017**

CHAIR: Mr. D. Ndombele (ANGOLA)

VICE-CHAIR: Mr. L. Molledo (EU)

Venue: Strand Hotel, Swakopmund

Date: 27 & 30 November 2017

Agenda Item		Working Document
1	Opening of the Meeting	
2	Adoption of the Agenda and Meeting Arrangements	DOC/COM/00/2017 DOC/COM/01/2017 DOC/COM/02/2017
3	Introduction and Admission of Observers	
4	Opening Statements by Contracting Parties and Observers	
5	Status of the Convention in Respect of Membership	
6	Report on the 2017 Joint Seminar	DOC/COM/09/2017
7	Report of the 2017 Scientific Committee	DOC/COM/03/2017
8	Report of the 2017 Compliance Committee	DOC/COM/04/2017
9	Report of the 2017 Standing Committee on Administration and Finance	DOC/COM/05/2017
10	Reports of meetings attended by the Secretariat	DOC/COM/06/2017 DOC/COM/07/2017 DOC/COM/08/2017
11	Reports of SEAFO Representatives at 2017 meetings of other Organizations	DOC/COM/10/2017 DOC/COM/11/2017 DOC/COM/12/2017 DOC/COM/13/2017
12	Nominations of Parties to represent SEAFO at 2018 meetings of other Organizations	
13	Any other Matters	
14	Venue and Date of 2018 Commission meeting	
15	Closure of the Meeting	

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[SEAFO Website](http://www.seafo.org)

APPENDIX II – List of Participants 2017 Commission Meeting

Dielobaka **NDOMBELE** (Chairperson)

Gabinete de Intercambio International
Ministerio das Pescas e do Mar
Avenida 4 Fevereiro N:30, Edificio Atlantico
Phone: +24 49 23 333 663
Fax: +244 222 309731
Email: dielobaka@gmail.com

ANGOLA

Domingos **AZEVEDO** (Head of Delegation)

Servico Nacional De Fiscalizacao Pesqueira e da Aquicultura
Ministerio das Pescas e do Mar
P.O.Box 83
Avenida 4 Fevereiro N:30, Edificio Atlantico
Phone: +24 49 23 340 100
Fax: +24 42 22 309 731
Email: domingosazevedo2001@yahoo.com

EU

Luis **MOLLEDO** (Head of Delegation)

DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs
External policy and International and
Regional Arrangement
European Commission
Rue Joseph 11,99
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 22 99 0857
Fax: +32 22 29 55700
Email: Luis.molledo@ec.europa.eu

Orlando **FACHADA**

Senior Expert
DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs
International Fisheries Relations
Regional Fisheries Management Organisations
European Union, Rue Joseph 11,99
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: 32-2-299-0857
Fax: 32-2-295-5700
Email: Orlando.Fachada@ec.europa

Luis J. **LOPEZ**

Instituto Espanol de Oceanografia
Via Espaldon Darsena Pesquera, PCL 8
38120 Santa Cruz de Tenerife
Tel: +34 922 549400
Fax: +34 922 549554
Email: Luis.Lopez@ca.ieo.es

Orlando **FACHADA**

Senior Expert
DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs
International Fisheries Relations
Regional Fisheries Management Organisations
European Union Rue Joseph 11,99
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: 32-2-299-0857
Fax: 32-2-295-5700
Email: Orlando.Fachada@ec.europa

JAPAN

Kenro **IINO** (Head of Delegation)

Special advisor to the Minister of
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
1-2-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
Japan, 100-8907
Tel: +81-3-3502-8460
Fax: +81-3-3504-2649
Email: keniino@hotmail.com

Yoshinobu **NISHIKAWA**

Deputy General Manager
Overseas Operations Department
Fisheries Operations Section
Taiyo A & F Co., Ltd
Tel: +81 3 6220 1260
Fax: +81 3 6220 1264
Email: y-nishikawa@maruha-nichiro.co.jp

Atsuko **NEGAMI**

Manager (Deputy Representative)
Taiyo A&F Co.,Ltd. Cape Town Office
19 Foregate Square,
Heerengracht Street, Foreshore
Cape Town 8000
South Africa
Tel: +27 21 417 3440
Fax: +27 21 417 3450
E-mail: taiyoct@mweb.co.za

Tsutomu Tom **NISHIDA**

Associate Scientist
National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries
5-7-1, Orido, Shimizu-Ward, Shizuoka-City,
Shizuoka, Japan, 424-8633
Tel/Fax: +81 54 33 66 052
Email: aco20320@par.odn.ne

Toshiharu **MURAOKA**

Executive Managing Director
Japan Overseas Fishing Association
Taiyo A & F Co., Ltd
Tel: +81 3 6220 1260
Fax: +81 3 6220 1264
Email: t-muraoka@maruha-nichiro.co.jp

Junichiro **OKAMOTO**

Councillor
Japan Overseas Fishing Association
Touei Ogawamachi Bldg, 5F, 2-6-3 Kanda Ogawa-Machi,
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
Japan, 101-0052
Tel: +81 33 291 8508
Fax: +81 3 3293 3267
Email: jokamoto@jdsta.or.jp

Ryo **OMORI**

Assistant Director
International Affairs Division
Fisheries Agency, Government of Japan
1-2-1 Kasumigaseki
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo, Japan 100-8907
Tel: +81 3 3502 8459
Fax: +81 3 3504 2649
Email: ryo_omori330@maff.go.jp

SEAFO 14th Committee Meeting Report (2017)

KOREA

No representatives were present.

NAMIBIA

Graca Bauleth D'ALMEIDA (Head of Delegation)

Director-Resource Management
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
Private Bag 13355
Windhoek, Namibia
Tel: +264-061-205-3114
Fax: +264-061-205-558
Email: graca.D'Almeida@mfmr.gov.na

Beau TJIZOO

National Marine Information & Research Centre
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
Private Bag 912
Swakopmund, Namibia
Tel: +264 64 410 1159
Fax: +264 64 404 385
Email: Beau.Tjizoo@mfmr.gov.na

Bony AMUTSE

Deputy Director: Operations-MCS
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
Private Bag 13355
Windhoek, Namibia
Tel: +264-61-205-3013
Mobile: 0811287921
Fax: +264-61-205-204-412
Email: bamutse@mfmr.gov.na

Johannes KATHENA

National Marine Information & Research Centre
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
Private Bag 912
Swakopmund, Namibia
Tel: +264 64 410 1159
Fax: +264 64 404 385
Email: John.Kathena@mfmr.gov.na

Malcolm BLOCK

Control Fisheries Inspector
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
P.O. Box 1594
Walvis Bay, Namibia
Phone: +264-64-201-6250
Fax: +264-64-2016-228
Email: Malcolm.Block@mfmr.gov.na

Moses MAURIHUNGIRIRE

Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
Private Bag 13355
Windhoek, Namibia
Tel: +264-61-205-3007
Fax: +264-61-224-566
Email: mmaurihungirire@mfmr.gov.na

Paul KAINGE

Chief Fisheries Biologist: Resource Management
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
Private Bag 912
Swakopmund, Namibia
Tel: +264-064-4101127
Fax: +264-64-404385
Email: Paulus.Kainge@mfmr.gov.na

Stanley NDARA

Control Fisheries Inspector: Operations
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
P.O. Box 1594
Walvis Bay, Namibia
Phone: +264-64-201-6250
Fax: +264-64-2016-228
Email: sndara@foa.com.na

Titus ILENDE

Deputy Director: Resource Management
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
Private Bag 13355
Windhoek, Namibia
Tel: +264 61 205 3071
Fax: +264 61 220 558
Email: tiilende@mfmr.gov.na

NORWAY

Terje LOBACH (Head of Delegation)

Senior Legal Adviser
Directorate of Fisheries
P.O. Box 2009, Nordney
5817 Bergen
Phone: +47 90 83 5495
Fax: +47 55 23 8090
Email: terje.lobach@fiskeridir.no

Kristoffer Krohg BJORKLUND

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
P.O. Box 8090 DEP NO – 0032 Oslo
Tel: +47 22 24 6323
Email: kkb@nfd.dep.no

Odd Aksel BERGSTAD

Scientist
Institute of Marine Research
Tel: +47 90 53 9902
Fax: +47 22 24 9580
Email: oddaksel@imr.no

SOUTH AFRICA

Mqondisi NGADLELA (Head of Delegation)

Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries
Private Bag X2
Roggebaai, 8012
CAPE TOWN
Tel: +27 21 402 3654
Email: MqondisiN@daff.gov.za

Fatima SAVEL

Advisor
Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries
Private Bag X2
Roggebaai, 8012
CAPE TOWN
Tel: +27 21 402 3654
Email: FatimaSA@daff.gov.za

Marisa KASHORTE

Advisor
Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries
Private Bag X2
Roggebaai, 8012
CAPE TOWN
Tel: +27 21 402 3654
Email: MarisaK@daff.gov.za

SEAFO 14th Committee Meeting Report (2017)

OBSERVERS

BCC

J. A. DOS SANTOS
Fisheries Advisor
NATMIRC Complex
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
1 Strand Street
Swakopmund
Private Bag 5031
Namibia
Telephone: +264 64 406901
Fax: +264 64 406902/3
Email: jerrydos.santos@gmail.com

UKOT CEFAS

Martin COLLINS
Fisheries Advisor
CEFAS
Pakefield Road
Lowestoft
Suffolk NR33 0HT
Tel: +44 (0) 1502 562244
Cell: +44 777 910 4557
Email: Martin.collins@cefasc.co.uk

FOA

William EMERSON
Senior Fishery Industry Officer
Fish Utilization and Marketing Service
Fishery Industries Division
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 570 56689
Fax: + 39 06 570 55188
Email: william.emerson@fao.org

SECRETARIAT & SUPPORTING STAFF

Elizabeth VOGES

Executive Secretary
NATMIRC
Strand Street No. 1
P.O.Box 8462
Vineta, Swakopmund
Tel: +264 64 406885
Email: lvoges@seafo.org

Delita KRAUZE

Administration Officer
NATMIRC
Strand Street No. 1
P.O.Box 8462
Vineta, Swakopmund
Tel: +264 64 406885
Email: dkrauze@seafo.org

Appendix III: Opening Addresses:

Opening Address - Hon Minister Bernard Esau

Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Namibia

Director of Ceremonies;

Esteemed Chair of the Commission; Mr Dielobaka Ndombele, from the Republic of Angola;

Esteemed Heads of Delegations:

- Mr Domingos Azevedo of the Republic of Angola;
- Mr Luis Molledo of the European Union;
- Mr Kenro Iino of the Republic of Japan
- Ms Graca D Almeida of the Republic of Namibia;
- Mr Terje Lobach of the Republic of Norway;
- Mr Mqondisi Ngadlela of the Republic of South Africa;

Government officials present,

Observers and other Non-Governmental Organizations present;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am delighted to welcome you this morning to Namibia, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia, and to deliver a keynote speech as I officially open the 14th Annual Meeting of the SEAFO Commission. Namibia is happy to be the Host Country of SEAFO Secretariat, which is based here in Swakopmund, and we are always eager to have SEAFO delegates come over to Swakopmund. Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to extend a word of thanks and appreciation to the Chairperson of SEAFO Commission and his team for the good preparations and arrangements for this meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Namibia has been involved in SEAFO since negotiations between the coastal States and distant water fishing nations (DWFN) started in 1997. From the date of signatures in 2001, the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources of the Republic of Namibia acted as an Interim Secretariat. In March 2005 and with the appointment of secretariat staff, a permanent Secretariat was opened in Walvis Bay, Namibia. The SEAFO Secretariat relocated to Swakopmund, Namibia in 2011, where it still is located to date.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am informed that the 14th Session of the SEAFO Commission will take stock of main activities undertaken by the Organization, and other considerations. SEAFO, as an intergovernmental organization concerned with fisheries science and management of the South East Atlantic Ocean, is important to all the 7 Contracting Parties. Namibia is currently involved in SEAFO related research especially on orange roughy, deep-sea crab and alfonso, and our private sector can participate in fishing in the SEAFO area, within the management measures agreed collectively at

SEAFO. However, Namibia is currently not participating in fishing of any of the Total Allowable Catches (TACs) in the SEAFO area, mainly due to operational reasons. I am in discussions with our private sector with a view to reversing this situation, and ensuring that Namibia, just like other Contracting Parties, benefits from the resources in the SEAFO area.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to call upon SEAFO Commission, and its Secretariat, to improve the communication to fisheries policy makers in Contracting Parties/States to ensure that SEAFO is always taken into account in relevance decision making processes. In Namibia, and perhaps in other member states as well, we do not have sufficient integration of SEAFO research and management activities in our Ministry workplan. I am sure that all member states would like to maximise value for money, and time spend by Ministry staff in SEAFO activities, by ensuring that SEAFO activities are integrated in our work plans. I am also made aware of the fact that research carried out at SEAFO is limited, often due to lack of financial resources. I call upon SEAFO Commission to deliberate on how the Secretariat can be strengthened, and how the commission can mobilise resources beyond traditional membership fees in order to finance critical research at SEAFO. I am convinced that the SEAFO area requires more research and management measures in order to unlock the potential of this area to be sustainably utilised for blue economic activities by contracting parties. These opportunities, and their associated sustainable management measures, can only be unlocked with sound research and data, which can be undertaken by SEAFO. Let us all, as Contracting Parties, think outside the box of the current activities at SEAFO, and ensure equitable economic participation of all Contracting Parties in the SEAFO Area.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to inform delegates that the Government of the Republic of Namibia is keen to facilitate the expansion of the SEAFO Head Office. The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources is in the process of finalising acquisition of land for a joint development of a Head Office complex that can house SEAFO and other sister organizations here in Swakopmund. The Commission will be updated on these developments once they are completed.

In Conclusion, Ladies and Gentlemen, I hereby declare the 14th Ordinary Session of the South East Atlantic Ocean (SEAFO) Commission officially open. I wish all delegates fruitful deliberations.

I thank You.

Opening Address – Mr Dielobaka Ndombele

Chairperson of the SEAFO Commission

- Hon Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources of Namibia, Dr Bernhard Esau
- Esteemed Heads of Delegations
- Esteemed Contracting Parties Delegations
- Esteemed Observers
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Honourable members, several activities were undertaken by the Commission during 2017 and I will highlight a few of them.

1. Attended the second Project Steering Committee meeting of the ABNJ Deep Seas Project which was held in Rome, Italy from 7–9 February 2017. The meeting was attended by representatives of 18 project partners. The PSC noted the satisfactory progress of the project to date; and that there are, currently, no external threats that might adversely affect
2. The tenth session of the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) Steering Committee (FSC10) offered the opportunity to discuss several matters among eleven partners - [CCAMLR], [FAO], [GFCM]; [IATTC]; [ICES]; [NAFO],[SEAFO];CECAF, [SWIOFC], [RECOFI], and [WECAFC]. A major outcome of FSC10 is the decision that FIRMS should take ownership of the Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries currently developed under the BlueBRIDGE project and will make use of this enhanced tooling capacity to offer data services for the monitoring of national stocks.
3. Attended the first meeting of the parties to the agreement on port state measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (Oslo, Norway, 29–31 May 2017). The need for concerted action by port States, flag States and other States in the implementation of the Agreement, together with the important role of FAO, regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and other international organizations and bodies, was recognized. The Parties noted the value of drawing lessons from existing relevant initiatives of RFMOs and other international organizations. A concerted effort of information sharing among RFMOs is vital to the overall and long term success of the Agreement and I should like to take this opportunity to encourage all of us to work together to find ways to share technical resources and information as far as possible.
4. SEAFO is an important partner of the ABNJ Deep Seas Project. SEAFO has been involved in the design and development of the Project and has agreed to contribute to activities that promote collaboration and sharing of experiences in deep-sea fisheries and associated biodiversity as well as specific activities on capacity building for developing countries. This contribution is coordinated by the SEAFO Secretariat.

Some of the recent ABNJ Deep Seas Projects are:

- Orange roughy stock assessment — use of acoustics data
- A review of the international legal and policy instruments related to deep-sea fisheries and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ
- Updating the VME Portal and DataBase
- Global reviews and best practices for the assessment and management of key deep-sea species
- 2nd edition of the Worldwide Review of Bottom Fisheries in the High Seas

- In late 2016, the report *Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems – processes and practices in the high seas* was published and summarizes the regional processes and practices in place for VMEs and their management.
- Deep-sea fisheries and VME regional workshops
- Data collection manual based on the additional requirements for reporting on VMEs that are included in the *FAO International Guidelines for Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas*, was published in late 2016
- The ABNJ Deep Seas Project partnered with the Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative and its working group of climate change experts to better understanding the consequences of climate change for deep sea ecosystems and deep-sea fisheries. (SEAFO was represented)
- An electronic application for reporting at-sea observations from deep-sea fishing vessels is being developed by the Information Technology Division of FAO. This application, SmartForms, will include an initial set of forms for VME reporting requirements, developed in consultation with regional partners. It will be available for testing by project partners interested in deploying the application in 2018.
- Support for the trialing of electronic monitoring systems on deep-sea fishing vessels operating in the ABNJ to collect information on VMEs.
- Support to activities related to improving the assessment of orange roughy and other deep-sea species.
- A global review of traceability in deep-sea fisheries is underway, including an examination of catch documentation schemes and ecolabeling opportunities; and a value chain analysis.
- An examination of monitoring control and surveillance practices in deep-sea fisheries in the ABNJ is underway. This will include an examination of ways Secretariats might better exchange information (such as IUU lists).

Projects for 2018:

- A global review of **rights based management** for deep-sea fisheries in the ABNJ.
- The ABNJ Deep Seas Project is collaborating with NPFC on a workshop scheduled for 12-15 March 2018, in Japan. The workshop will address the **protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the North Pacific Fisheries Commission Area: applying global experiences to regional assessments**. This workshop presents another opportunity for VME experts from deep-sea fisheries RFMOs to come together to discuss management of VMEs using global expertise. (SEAFO will be represented)

Appendix IV: Opening Statements:

ANGOLA

Mr Chair

First and foremost, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to all the delegates present, with particular emphasis on the Executive Secretariat by the invitation extended to the Republic of Angola for which I am the Head of Delegation, and to the Republic of Namibia for hosting the event particularly in this beautiful city of Swakopmund.

It is a great pleasure to be here again as the Head of Delegation, as you know, last year I ended my second term as Chairman of the Compliance Committee. My chairmanship was only successful because of the support of all the delegations that comprises Our Organization, and for that I am very grateful to you all.

Mr Chair, Distinguished Members of the Delegations, we all know about the great importance of SEAFO in the sustainable management of the marine resources in the Convention area, and even though Angola does not yet have the opportunity to exploit the resources of the area, which we can happen in the very near future, the country has always responded positively to the invitations made by the Executive Secretariat, to participate in the meetings, in supporting its management measures and fulfilling its financial obligations on a regular basis.

On this basis, Angola has been seeking to find appropriate ways to benefit from the resources available in the SEAFO Convention Area, in order to diversify the options and thus contribute to the efforts undertaken to guarantee food security.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the full willingness of the Ministry of Fisheries and the Sea to represent the Country to continue participating in SEAFO's efforts to promote responsible fishing for the sustainable management of marine resources and ecosystems.

I Submit Mr President.

Thank you very much.

EU

Mr Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

Observers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all allow me to congratulate you Mr Chair on your appointment as a Chair of SEAFO. We will support your endeavors to conduct our discussions to a positive result.

The EU is very pleased to attend one more year the SEAFO Annual meeting. This year we are back to beautiful Swakopmund in Namibia, after last year's equally charming Port Elizabeth in South Africa.

The EU is delighted to be here but at the same time we are concerned. And we are concerned because the low level of fishing is challenging not only the capacity of the Organisation to provide scientific advice to manage the stocks under its purview, but also the very existence and continuation of the activities of SEAFO as a whole.

It would take courage and wisdom to adopt the necessary measures to boost the Organisation. Some venues for action were identified last year in the Performance Review report, some other options were discussed yesterday at the Joint Commission-Scientific Committee Seminar and some will be deliberated upon during this week.

This year the EU and other Delegations are submitting a number of relevant proposals for discussions. We look forward to a fruitful outcome of our discussions.

Last but not least, the EU has the honor and the pleasure this year to Chair the Compliance Committee (CC). We are eager, Mr Fachada, to work with you to facilitate the deliberations of CC.

Thank you.

JAPAN

Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Japanese delegation, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Namibia for hosting the 14th Annual Meeting of the SEAFO in this beautiful coastal city of Swakopmund. We would also like to extend our thanks to the Secretariat staffs for their excellent works for organizing this meeting, as well as to the interpreters who always do excellent job.

At the beginning of the Meeting, Japan would like to emphasize that the SEAFO was established, as stipulated in Article 2 of the Convention, for the objective of ensuring the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources in the Convention Area. Japan fully supports the sustainable use of natural resources while taking into account the possible impact from fisheries to ecosystem based on the scientific evidences.

The SEAFO must not only impose duty for fishermen but also provide proper opportunities for them. The Number of vessels conducting fisheries in the SEAFO Convention Area has been gradually declining in recent years. But, in 2017, four (4) vessels catching Patagonian toothfish, Alfonsino, Armourhead and Deep-sea red crab operated in the Area. I am convinced that such situation can be maintained by determining the stable TAC on the related fish stocks. Japan thinks that the SEAFO must further strengthen the incentives to fish in the Convention Area in order to activate this Organization.

Finally, I would like to conclude my remarks by hoping that we will be able to make an important step of the future development of the SEAFO and the sustainable use of relevant fisheries resources, through a constructive discussion among all members during this four-day meeting.

Thank you very much.

Namibia

Norway

Chairperson, distinguished representatives, observers, ladies and gentlemen.

The Norwegian delegation is once again pleased to participate at an annual SEAFO meeting in Namibia, and in particular we are happy to be in Swakopmund, this beautiful spot at the Atlantic coast. I would like to thank the Government of Namibia for its hospitality and also the secretariat for organising the meeting.

Norway notes the good work undertaken by the Scientific Committee last week. Although quotas for all fish stocks were agreed last year for both 2017 and 2018, there is, based on new knowledge, a need to revise the conservation measure for Orange Roughy. Like other RFMOs, SEAFO has taken a series of measures in response to calls from the UN General Assembly to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems, including area closures and a framework concerning identification of existing and new areas. SEAFO last year improved the scheme further, agreed to comprehensive procedures and standards for the committee's consideration of proposals for exploratory fishing. Norway is pleased to note that this year the Scientific Committee has agreed on Guidelines for revision of VME closures.

Among other things, noting the present low fishing effort and low commercial interest in the fisheries, a seminar took place yesterday to focus on the future of SEAFO. Unfortunately, only four of the seven Contracting Parties attended the meeting. As the focus was on the future of the organization, it was in particular unfortunate that the host country did not participate. Those who showed up had, however, fruitful discussions, in particular on the possible extension of the Convention Area to the west, and we are looking forward to a briefing by the chair.

The Norwegian delegation is, as always, prepared to work hard for the next days and contributing to the success of this year's annual meeting.

SOUTH AFRICA

Madam Chairperson,

Distinguished delegates and Observers,

Ladies and gentlemen.

Chairperson, on behalf of the South African Government, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Namibia for once again hosting the 11th Annual Meeting of the Commission of SEAFO in this beautiful city of Swakopmund. I also would like to thank Executive Secretary, as well as all the Secretariat staff for the excellent preparations and arrangements for our meeting this week. It is a great pleasure for South Africa once again to be back in Namibia and be part of this 14th Annual Meeting of the SEAFO Commission.

We see this meeting as a critical milestone in the history of SEAFO as its decision will effectively determine how the organization conduct its business and therefore its success or failure going forward. We expect all parties to cooperate to ensure that SEAFO become a stronger organization and the actions that can – and must – be taken at this year's meeting will help in this endeavor.

In conclusion Chairperson, we look forward to your leadership. On behalf of the Republic of South Africa, I thank you!

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO) - OBSERVER

Mr President, distinguished delegates.

FAO welcomes the opportunity to participate in the 14th annual meeting of the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization.

Ocean governance featured prominently on the international agenda in 2017. The United Nations Ocean Conference supporting the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources and the Our Ocean Conference drew global interest and stimulated high level dialogue on sustainable fisheries and the protection of the marine environment in a changing climate. RFMOs are key players in achieving the targets set by such conferences and other international processes related to the sustainable use and conservation of the oceans.

In this regard FAO welcomes its ongoing collaboration with SEAFO through the ABNJ Deep Seas partnership. Deep-sea fisheries and biodiversity remain high on the international agenda and the ABNJ deep-seas project is one vehicle for inter-regional exchange and capacity development to address sustainable use and conservation issues in these ecosystems.

We also value our earlier collaboration with SEAFO on the implementation of the 2015 survey with the research vessel Dr Fridtjof Nansen. In this regard FAO is pleased to inform the Commission that, considering earlier requests from SEAFO, the EAF-Nansen Programme has allocated time for a possible survey with the new Dr Fridtjof Nansen in the SEAFO convention area in 2019.

At the global level illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing remains one of the main challenges in safeguarding the sustainability of fisheries. Improving flag State performance, implementing port State measures, together with enhancing the traceability of fishery products in the value chain, including through the use of catch documentation schemes are crucial elements in the fight against IUU fishing.

In the past few years, the sessions of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) have consistently covered a growing range of topics of relevance to the development and sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture. The 33rd COFI session, scheduled to take place from 9 – 13 July 2018, is expected to continue this trend. Fisheries and ocean governance, including combatting IUU fishing and regional and global processes, along with sustainable development, environmental matters and food security in a changing climate, will be addressed. FAO looks forward to welcoming SEAFO and its contracting Parties to the next COFI session in Rome.

Mr Chair, before closing, the FAO delegation would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair and Dr Lizette Voges on her appointment to the position of SEAFO Executive Secretary. We wish you all the success in your new roles. We look forward to following the deliberations and decisions taken during this meeting.

Thank you.

UKOT - OBSERVER

Chair, distinguished delegates, observers, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories, I would like to thank the Commission for the invitation to attend the 14th meeting of the SEAFO Commission. As you are aware the UKOT of St Helena, Tristan da Cunha & Ascension Island is a coastal state to the SEAFO Convention area and hence the UKOTs have an interest in the work of SEAFO and I look forward to observing the meeting and wish you well in your deliberations.

THE BENGUELA CURRENT CONVENTION (BCC), - OBSERVER

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates

On behalf of the Benguela Current Convention (BCC), I would like to express our utmost gratitude for the invitation to participate in this 14th Annual SEAFO Commission Meeting.

At the onset allow me to inform the meeting that the Benguela Current Convention (or BCC) has entered into force on 10 December 2015 and was subsequently registered with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 13th July 2016. This ground-breaking environmental treaty entrenches the BCC as a permanent inter-governmental organization to promote a coordinated approach to the long-term conservation, protection, rehabilitation, enhancement and sustainable use of the BCLME, in order to provide economic, environmental and social benefits. It is the first inter-governmental Convention in the world to be based on the Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) concept of ocean governance – a move towards managing transboundary resources at the larger ecosystem level rather than at the national level, and balancing human needs with conservation imperatives.

The Parties to the Benguela Current Convention, that is, Angola, Namibia and South Africa are also Parties to the SEAFO Convention. Closer collaboration between the two conventions is essential to ensuring that both objectives are achieved. Areas of mutual interest include data sharing of straddling fish stocks between the EEZs of the Parties and high seas within the SEAFO Convention Area and well as in combating Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing.

In terms of conservation of biological diversity, BCC has established a Working Group on Ecologically or Biologically Sensitive Areas (EBSA). The working group has updated 3 transboundary EBSAs. Naturally, BCC needs to work and collaborate with SEAFO in respect of the EEZ-ABNJ Walvis Ridge EBSA and align it with the SEAFO process on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs). BCC has also developed an EBSA data portal and will soon be available at BCC website. In addition to EBSAs, BCC is also one of the leaders in the introduction of marine spatial planning in Sub-Sahara Africa.

Allow me also to inform you that the BCC Demersal Fish Working Group and Small Pelagic Fish Working are functioning and focussing on the assessments of commercially important shared fish stocks.

Noting that we have so much in common to collaborate, we propose that BCC and SEAFO formalize the relationship with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

In closing, I wish you a successful deliberation.

I thank you.