

MINUTES OF THE LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING

Reykjavik, 25 September and 1 October

1. Opening of the Meeting

First preliminary session of the Liaison Committee took place with the participation of those members who were present at the Consultative Committee session on 25 September to consider matters which had to be taken into account during the meetings of ICES Committees. All members participated at the second session on 1 October. The General Secretary also participated in the sessions.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was adopted together with the annexed requests from NEAFC and IBSFC for scientific advice, and the Chairmen of ICES Committees were requested to have those in mind when discussing terms of reference of Assessment Working Groups for 1978.

3. Timing of future meetings of the Liaison Committee and Assessment Working Groups of ICES

The problem of the proper timing of future meetings was discussed in detail at both sessions. Suggestions were made that, since advice on TACs seemed to have lost its urgency for NEAFC, and IBSFC was holding meetings in autumn, the advice from ICES might be provided by August-September. This would be advantageous to the users actually involved in the adoption of regulatory measures, since more contemporary assessments based on updated statistics could be made later in a year, thus reducing the gaps between the introduction of regulatory measures and the time the state of the stocks had been assessed. In case of such rearrangement, it might even have become necessary to convene Statutory Meetings in spring instead of in autumn.

The prevailing view, however, was that since in the assessment work catch data were used mainly on the calendar year basis, not much might be gained by delaying the Working Groups' meetings until late spring/early summer. Meetings later in a year would also, almost certainly, be accompanied by a number of technical difficulties. Besides that, at least for 1978, there was no official information on any change in the time of NEAFC annual meetings. Therefore, although some extension of time for assessments, e.g., into April, seemed possible, which was considered to be beneficial particularly for the Working Groups dealing with demersal species, it was tentatively recommended to hold the Liaison Committee meeting from 22 to 31 May 1978, pending further decision by the Council on its structure (since there is some cross-membership in the present Liaison Committee and the STACRES of ICNAF

scheduled to meet approximately at the same time). Simultaneously, it was felt advisable to draw attention of the present and potential users to the timing of regular meetings of the ICES Assessment Working Groups, so that the scope and quality of advice produced by them would not suffer from unexpected short-term notices for information. It was hoped, though, that the situation might improve after the current "transitional" period in the new management regime had been over.

The Committee also considered the possibility of reducing the number of existing Working Groups, e.g., by merging some of them. It was noted, that due to the number of stocks involved in assessments some of the Working Groups were already overburdened. Therefore, until such time that the routine updating of assessments becomes possible, any mergers would not help to save in terms of money, since it would be necessary to extend the meeting time.

4. Provision of advice for NEAFC on the regulation of fisheries

In accordance with the request from NEAFC it was agreed to provide to it the usual full range of advice for 1979. The Chairmen of the Committees were requested to consider at the meetings the necessity of updating further assessments or of new full-range assessments for specific stocks dealt with by their Committees and to recommend terms of reference for Working Groups accordingly.

5. Provision of advice to NEAFC on the distribution of commercial species in the Convention Area

NEAFC had requested further reviews of the biology, distribution and state of exploitation of shared stocks in the Convention Area, not already covered in Part II of the 1977 Liaison Committee Report. It was agreed to use as a basis those reviews which had already been prepared as Appendices to the Working Groups' reports in 1977, in accordance with the list annexed to the Agenda, and to request Working Groups to update them and previously provided reviews whenever necessary (e.g. North Sea herring, blue whiting, sole in southern areas etc.).

6. Provision of advice to the Fourth Session of IBSFC

The Committee noted that IBSFC, besides the usual advice on the regulation of fisheries, requested ICES to present advice on the biology, distribution and state of exploitation of shared fish stocks in the Baltic. It was agreed that terms of reference of the two Baltic assessment Working Groups should be formulated accordingly.

7. Inadequacies in data submissions to Assessment Working Groups

While most Chairmen specified data necessary for assessments in circular letters sent to members of their Working Groups prior to the meetings, only few complied with C.Res.1976/4:18 on identifying and specifying in detail shortcomings and gaps in data required. In order to remedy the situation, the Committee recommended that such listings should be prepared on a continuous basis and annexed to the reports of Working Groups. Simultaneously, the Committee agreed on the other recommendation aimed at improving data supply to the Assessment Working Groups by means of appointment of members presently active in the field, who should serve as contact points for obtaining national data.

8. Other matters

The Committee took note that the Chairman's summary on redfish

in Region 1 had been prepared and decided that it should be circulated as a working document (together with the report of the Working Group itself) to the Committee members, and that the consideration of it should be included into the Agenda for the next meeting.

A Note on the Liaison Committee Report on Effects of Areal-Seasonal Closures of the Norway Pout Fishery (of 1 October 1977) was considered, and it was agreed that the Note should be sent to the users as soon as possible.

There being no other business, the meeting was closed. The members expressed their gratitude to the Chairman, Mr G Sætersdal, for the effectiveness and tolerance, with which he always conducted the Liaison Committee meetings.

The Liaison Committee recommends, that:

- II (1)           the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Management should be convened for the mid-term meeting at Charlottenlund from 22 to 31 May 1978, and that funds should be made available for that purpose.

The Liaison Committee recommends, that:

- IV (1) all fish and shellfish Assessment Working Groups should make every effort to identify and specify in detail annually shortcomings and gaps in data required for stock assessment work and to summarise them as an Annex to their report.
- IV (2) member countries should be urged to check annually their membership in the ICES Assessment Working Groups with a view to appointing active members to all Working Groups dealing with the species they have major fisheries for, who should serve as a contact point for obtaining national data necessary for assessments.