

Opening Statement made to the Council on behalf of Canada

Mr Vice-President, distinguished Guests, Heads of Delegations, Commissioners, Delegation Members, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that Canada welcomes you all to Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, for the 32nd Annual Meeting of NASCO.

My name is Richard Nadeau, Head of the Canadian Delegation to NASCO, and Regional Director General for the Quebec Region of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

I will begin by recognizing the tremendous amount of work, effort, and expertise that has been necessary to prepare this Annual Meeting and I wish to thank the NASCO Secretary and his excellent team for all their work. I will also take the opportunity to thank Cal Wenghofer who was in charge of planning the event at our end with the help of many people in Happy Valley-Goose Bay that I will not name here for fear of missing someone (to the exception maybe of Beverly White of the Torngat Secretariat and Andrea Gibson from DFO).

One may wonder why Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Among the reasons for hosting the 32nd Annual Meeting in this beautiful area is to show the NASCO community how important Atlantic salmon is to the residents of Labrador and to their cultural heritage. To this extent we have engaged many local leaders and residents in the preparations and attendance at this meeting, and we will also have the opportunity to visit a remote community to experience Labrador history and witness the important role natural resources, including salmon, play in the life of Labradorians.

This meeting, here this week, is extremely important for NASCO and for Canada given the situation facing many of our salmon stocks. The returns in most Canadian rivers were disastrous last year and Canada has already taken some steps to improve the situation. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has established a Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) to consult all groups interested in the conservation of salmon in Atlantic Canada and make recommendations on measures that could be put in place to improve returns. The MAC released interim recommendations on fisheries management measures that could be put in place in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island and the Minister acted promptly on these recommendations in ordering the implementation of mandatory Catch and Release in all three provinces starting this year.

We have a lot of work in front of us. As much as I recognize the work that needs to be done, I also want to acknowledge that we have to rely upon the relationships built over the years to have these difficult discussions that hopefully will lead to viable long term commitments to better protect and conserve wild Atlantic salmon.

Just to say a few things about our ambitious agenda for the week, we have much to do and not that much time. It is critical that we use this time wisely and work to everyone's best interests to achieve our objectives. With new regulatory measures for the WGC and NEAC, looking at the current status of salmon, Implementation Plans, Annual Progress Reports, important research and discussions on mixed-stocks, it is important that we stay focussed. Everyone or almost everyone here represents people or communities dependent on salmon in some way and understands the value and importance of salmon. If we undertake our discussions with this in mind I am sure we will come to agreement where it is important to reach agreement.

In 2014 many North American salmon rivers had their worst year ever in terms of returns and in Canada we are already putting in place measures to help improve the situation, but we cannot do it alone. We will be asking our neighbours from Greenland and St Pierre and Miquelon to take a hard look at their salmon fishery practices and see how they can help improve the situation in our rivers ultimately to the benefit of their communities.

To conclude, I wish to thank everyone for joining us here in Labrador. We look forward to this week's meetings and all of the productive discussions.

Thank you.

***Opening Statement made to the Council on behalf of
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)***

Vice-President, distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf the Faroe Islands and Greenland, I would like to begin by thanking our Canadian hosts for arranging this meeting and making us feel so welcome here in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Many years ago now, the Faroes and Greenland made the decision to refrain from all commercial fisheries of wild salmon in our waters. This was done in order to protect and rebuild the stocks. The decision came with a high price for our fishing industries, as they could no longer conduct commercial fisheries for wild salmon. In the interest of preserving the salmon stocks, we have maintained this policy.

We have kept our side of the bargain.

Despite these measures, the state of the stocks has not improved.

Therefore, evidently it is necessary to consider other factors in order to achieve sustainable management of wild salmon including fisheries elsewhere as well as factors causing mortality at sea.

We are of the view that the best and fairest solution would be if NASCO could regulate fisheries for wild salmon in the homewaters of all Parties and jurisdictions of NASCO.

Nevertheless, the Faroe Islands and Greenland are pleased that over the last few years there has been more emphasis on fisheries below their Conservation Limits, and particularly on Mixed-Stock Fisheries, within NASCO.

Also it was an important step in the right direction when, in 2013, the Parties submitted the new Implementation Plans for the period up to 2018.

We are very pleased that we have established a procedure where Parties now submit written Annual Progress Reports and that these reports are thoroughly reviewed before being discussed at the Annual Meeting.

We come here in good spirit and in the hope that, through a positive dialogue and joint efforts, we can come closer to achieving our vision for the wild salmon.

Finally, Vice-President, I would like yet again to thank our hosts and the Secretariat for the excellent preparations for this meeting. Thank you for your time and attention.

Opening Statement made to the Council on behalf of the European Union

Mr Vice-President, Mr Secretary, distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen

The European Union is thankful to the Canadian authorities for their hospitality and for selecting this unique venue, the “hub” of Labrador, for NASCO’s Thirty-Second Annual Meeting. A special acknowledgement goes to the Secretary and to his staff, for their relentless work to ensure, as on previous occasions, a seamless, smooth and pleasant meeting.

It is the second time this year that the EU delegation crosses the Atlantic to attend NASCO meetings. Many Atlantic salmon stocks embark in a similar, though much longer and perilous journey to feed and grow to adults, and eventually return to their home rivers to spawn and ensure the continuity and survival of the species. We made this journey inspired by the very same reason and moved by a sense of urgency to protect, conserve and restore our Atlantic salmon stocks, in line with NASCO’s conservation objectives. We enshrined those objectives into our laws and strive to achieve them across the EU Member States and jurisdictions. Our strong political commitment to the preservation, conservation and restoration of Atlantic salmon has been often translated into drastic measures, such as the closure of fisheries in many rivers, estuarine and coastal areas. Vast amounts of public funds have been invested in several projects, from habitat restoration and dam removal, to improvement of water quality, and research on mortality factors. Additional funds have already been earmarked for the years to come, and progress of ongoing projects is being carefully monitored.

However, measures and sacrifices taken in home countries will not bear their fruits if not complemented by an equally strong level of commitment at NASCO. The EU is confident that such a level of commitment will inspire our discussions during this Annual Meeting and that the resulting outcomes will live up to the high expectations that brought us all the way to Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

As far as the EU is concerned, those expectations result from the rather worrying picture emerging from the recent ICES scientific advice, indicating that in 2014 many southern European rivers hit some of the historically low records in salmon return rates. This record comes on top of what has often been a pattern of constant decline over the last years. Attempting to halt and reverse such decline is part of our responsibility. Failing to do that, might lead to irreversible biodiversity, cultural heritage, and economic losses.

The EU trusts that the scientific advice will thus guide negotiations and final deliberations at this Annual Meeting. The EU is particularly looking forward to fruitful and successful discussions on the new regulatory measures at West Greenland and at the Faroe Islands.

Opening Statement made to the Council on behalf of Norway

On behalf of Norway, I would like to thank Canada for hosting the Thirty-Second Annual Meeting of NASCO.

NASCO has gone through an important change over the last years.

In our opinion those changes have worked well and fulfilled our expectations. Thus, we feel NASCO has managed to uphold its relevance to Atlantic salmon management. In particular, we would like to focus on salmon fisheries management and the introduction of NASCO guidelines, which has contributed significantly to advancements in national policies, management strategies and research.

The establishment of the National Scientific Advisory Committee on salmon management in Norway has proven essential to promote the scientific work of estimating spawning target achievement and giving catch advice.

Despite some local and regional differences, the Pre-Fishery Abundance in Norway has continued to be at a historically low level in 2014. Nevertheless, mostly due to stricter fisheries regulations in recent years, spawning targets have been met for an increasing number of stocks.

With regard to fisheries maybe our biggest challenge remains the River Teno in northern Norway, where many stocks have especially poor status, and there are no known impacts other than overharvesting. As many of you are well aware, negotiations with our colleagues in Finland have been ongoing for a number of years. Unfortunately, there is still no final agreement in place. Although it concerns us that the conclusion of the negotiations has been postponed several times, we are still optimistic and hopeful that new regulations will be in effect from the 2017 fishing season.

We are also content to report that together with our colleagues from the Russian Federation we have been following up on salmon management and fisheries issues of common interest and that our future collaboration on salmon management and research will be based on a MoU, which is about to be signed.

Finally, we apologise for having to repeat ourselves, but as last year, we still have severe concerns about the future of our stocks. The grilse component is still very low and sea survival seems not to have improved in general. Adverse human impacts remain high and increasing in some areas. All this combined with climate change underlines the necessity for our continued common effort, and the need for NASCO to strengthen its role as a forum contributing to common understanding of challenges and management approaches.

Norway would like to thank Canada and the Secretariat for excellent preparations and the Norwegian delegation looks forward to a productive and successful meeting.

Opening Statement made to the Council on half of the Russian Federation

Mr Vice-President, distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Russian delegation I am pleased to greet all participants at the Thirty-Second Annual Meeting of NASCO in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, Canada.

First, I take this opportunity to thank Canada for hosting this meeting in this picturesque province renowned in the world as a prestigious place for recreational Atlantic salmon fishing.

I feel that Canada and Russia have the same view on where we should go in Atlantic salmon management to achieve our task in conserving the resource for future generations. There are no commercial fisheries for wild Atlantic salmon in Canada and the effort in commercial fisheries in Russia has been noticeably reduced over the past two decades. This reduction is aimed at conserving Atlantic salmon stocks and enhancing recreational fisheries. In both countries, a recreational fishery with well-developed and widely used Catch and Release principle seems to be the most valuable and important way of the rational exploitation of Atlantic salmon stocks. At the same time there are some Aboriginal fisheries for food, social and ceremonial purposes in Canada and there are traditional Pomor coastal salmon fisheries in the White Sea in Russia. Nowadays these fisheries are viewed more as a social measure – a traditional way of fishing by local people.

Rational management of Atlantic salmon stocks in Russia could not be productive and fruitful without NASCO's recommendations that cover the whole range of the problems relating to conservation and management of Atlantic salmon. This year the Theme-Based Special Session will focus on maintaining and improving river connectivity with particular focus on impacts of hydropower. This is a great opportunity for Parties and observer organisations to present information relevant to the theme of the session. Therefore, I would like to mention a joint Finnish-Russian pilot project conducted in 2014 to study the feasibility of adult salmon transfers over the Upper-Tuloma dam and investigate their spawning migration. The large River Tuloma system discharges into the Barents Sea in the Murmansk region of the Russian Federation with the source of the upper tributaries of the system in Finland. The pilot experiment showed the good potential for future activities attempting to start salmon stock-rebuilding in the upper parts of the Tuloma system.

And in conclusion I would like to thank Canada for hosting this Annual Meeting once again for hospitality, and wish all of us success in working together during this week. Mr Vice-President, my delegation is looking forward to having important and fruitful discussions during this meeting.

Thank you for your attention!

Opening Statement made to the Council on behalf of the United States

Mr Vice-President, Secretary Hutchinson, distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The US Delegation to the 32nd Annual Meeting of NASCO is delighted to be here in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Canada, with colleagues and friends who share a common purpose – to provide for the conservation, restoration, and rational management of Atlantic salmon throughout its range.

On behalf of the United States, I offer my sincere thanks to our Canadian hosts for their hospitality and for the excellent accommodations. Being in Labrador, once again close to the salmon, will inspire us to redouble our commitment to NASCO as the best forum in which to collaborate towards fulfilling our profound shared responsibility and purpose. I also wish to express our sincere appreciation for our Secretary and his staff, whose hard work has prepared the stage for our deliberations this week. Well done, and thank you for your tireless efforts in support of this body.

In late February, many of us here today were in another stunning location, Nuuk, Greenland, for an intersessional meeting of the West Greenland Commission. I extend the appreciation of the United States to the Parties of the Commission, especially to our gracious hosts in Greenland, Emanuel Rosing and Katrine Kaergaard, to our chairman, Ted Potter, and to Paul Knight for representing the Non-Governmental Organizations, and, of course, to the Secretary, who coordinated the meeting. The discussions at the inter-sessional meeting were challenging but effective in advancing our understanding of one another's interests and informing our deliberations this week of a possible regulatory measure for the Mixed-Stock Fishery off West Greenland, which includes catch of some stocks that are below their conservation limits. We certainly have more work to do to, and we are confident that the spirit of open inquiry and collaboration engendered in Nuuk will continue here in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

As I mentioned, some salmon stocks originating in North America are in a grave condition, and accordingly, have been the subject of new emphasis and inquiry by governments and NGOs. We commend Canada for having recently convened a Ministerial Advisory Committee on Atlantic Salmon to focus on conservation, restoration, and salmon science. We appreciate Canada's commitment to Atlantic salmon, as witnessed through important conservation and management actions that have already been taken based on the Committee's recommendations, and we are eager to hear the Committee's other ideas for the best, lasting solutions to conserve, protect, and rebuild salmon stocks of Canadian origin. In the United States, we have recently launched a national campaign focused on our eight most critically endangered marine species – with Atlantic salmon topping the list. The campaign is called "Species in the Spotlight," and it will serve to focus resources and attention on a national scale to these eight imperiled marine species. We will keep you posted as this program is implemented.

Also, the United States recently designated the Penobscot River in Maine as a National Habitat Focus Area. As many of you know, the Penobscot is a crucial river for US Atlantic salmon, as approximately 75% of all US returns have come from this river. This designation helps to align the priorities of federal agencies to give special emphasis to the Penobscot in support of

protections, collaborative restoration efforts, and education about the importance of healthy rivers.

During the Theme-based Special Session on improving river connectivity on Wednesday, we will hear two presentations from the US delegation about important accomplishments and work underway in the Penobscot. One will highlight the significant efforts we have undertaken to address the threats to anadromous species posed by dams in the Penobscot as well as in other rivers in Maine. The second presentation will be from John Banks, who will describe the successful collaboration of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust, a consortium of NGOs, the Penobscot Nation, state agencies, communities, and federal partners, which led to the removal of major dams in the watershed and improved access to many miles of habitat in the river. Mr. Banks is a Native American and member of the Penobscot Nation, for whom Atlantic salmon is a culturally foundational species, central to the tribe's history, ceremony and sustenance. Since 1989, the Penobscot Nation has voluntarily suspended its sustenance catch of Atlantic salmon out of concern for the health of the species. As you know, commercial and recreational fishing for federally endangered salmon in the United States are prohibited, and we continue to make major investments in the recovery of the species. Still, there is work to be done. In order to restore critically low stocks of salmon, it will be necessary to continue to make sacrifices, and tough management calls are unavoidable. We greatly look forward to working with and learning from all of the Parties this week. We look forward to taking a good look at the science, the status and trends in Atlantic salmon, and what sort of new precautions are needed to protect and restore salmon populations.

Of course, NASCO's consideration of work in homewaters and our accountability relative to NASCO agreements are driven primarily through the Implementation Plan process. We, the Parties, must continue to work to make the Implementation Plan process as robust and effective as possible. Submission of Implementation Plans and annual reports that mark accomplishments against those plans appropriately highlight the progress and shortfalls in each jurisdiction and aid transparent review and more effective implementation of NASCO's agreements. We are looking forward to a rigorous discussion of the 2014 annual reports during the Special Session slated for Wednesday morning. We urge all Parties and observers to take full advantage of the Implementation Plan process and this Special Session.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the serious concern of the United States with regard to critically endangered US populations of Atlantic salmon. The risk of extinction of these populations is real, and our responsibility, individually and collectively, to avoid such an outcome cannot be overstated.

Thanks once again to our hosts and the Secretariat for the excellent preparations for this meeting. The United States looks forward to working with you all this week to ensure a successful meeting.

Thank you.

***Closing Statement made to the Council on behalf of
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)***

Chair, Secretary, distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The unusual closing remarks in the West Greenland Commission have put Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) in the position where we find it necessary to make the following statement:

We believe we have had constructive exchanges and that Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) has cooperated fully by working in the Review Group, the Standing Scientific Committee, the West Greenland Commission's *Ad hoc* Working Group, the inter-sessional meetings of the West Greenland Commission and over the last three days. We believe this demonstrates our commitment to the management of wild salmon.

We have further improved the regulatory measures and have, on several occasions, repeated our commitment to continue improving these measures in order to accommodate and reassure the other Parties of the West Greenland Commission.

Therefore, we find that the closing remarks in the West Greenland Commission undermine the work of this Organization, including that undertaken over the last year, and its spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.

We will now return to our administration and will seriously consider our options as to how to move forward.

Opening Statement made by the Chairman of the West Greenland Commission

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen. It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to Happy Valley-Goose Bay for the 32nd Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission. I would like to begin by thanking our hosts, Canada, for inviting us to this wonderful location and for the excellent arrangements made for this meeting.

You will recall that this Commission has held a number of meetings over the past two years. In April last year, we had an inter-sessional meeting that allowed for a detailed exchange on the status of Multi-Sea-Winter salmon stocks and the role of all Members of the Commission in the management of these stocks and the fisheries that exploit them. These discussions highlighted the continuing critical condition of many of the stocks exploited in the West Greenland fishery, despite the efforts and investment by States of origin to reduce harvests and to protect and restore salmon habitat and the sacrifices made by Greenland in restricting their fishery.

Our meetings have also allowed for detailed discussion on the control and monitoring of the West Greenland fishery. In 2012 the Greenland Government adopted a new Executive Order aimed at improving catch accounting. In our discussions last year we agreed that States of origin may be able to assist Greenland by sharing experiences on the development of further approaches to improve the monitoring of landings with a view to ensuring full reporting. And last June, we established an *Ad Hoc* Working Group to recommend options to enhance the monitoring and control of the West Greenland salmon fishery. That Working Group had a very constructive meeting in Nuuk at the end of October, and following the meeting Greenland developed a draft Plan to implement the Working Group's recommendations. This Plan was finalised at our inter-sessional meeting in February so that there would be sufficient time to allow Greenland to take forward actions for the 2015 fishery. We look forward to receiving an update on progress in implementing this Plan at this meeting.

Building on those discussions and the Plan, we agreed a framework for a regulatory measure for the West Greenland fishery for the period 2015-17, as a basis for Parties to prepare for this meeting. So it is this document which will be the main focus of our attention over the next 3-4 days.

We are all here because we have an international obligation to conserve, restore and rationally manage salmon stocks. Pursuing this aim has required major sacrifices by all Parties, not least Greenland which is so dependent upon its fisheries. But the situation facing many salmon stocks is grave, and we cannot ignore that fact if we are to conserve this resource, as our Convention requires, for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations. Continuing sacrifices will be needed by all Parties in the coming years. But we have a very good track record within this Commission and a good spirit of cooperation and mutual trust that I hope will underpin our work this week.

So, we have important issues to resolve, and Peter and I very much look forward to working with you all in planning for a new agreement that recognises both the importance of the fishery to Greenland and the serious situation facing Multi-Sea-Winter salmon around the North Atlantic.

I would now like to ask if there are any Opening Statements by the Parties.

***Opening Statement made to the West Greenland Commission
on behalf of Canada***

I would like to thank everyone for participating in this important meeting of NASCO's West Greenland Commission.

I would like to thank all of our delegation members for their contributions to this meeting. Both government officials, aboriginal members and stakeholders play important roles and Canada wishes to emphasize the importance we all play.

As wild Atlantic salmon is a trans-boundary species, and as Canada shares these stocks with the United States, states of the European Union and Greenland, the discussions within this Commission are vital to ensuring the long term sustainability of trans-boundary wild Atlantic salmon.

As Parties have recently made extra strides in our collaboration for the West Greenland Commission, specifically during a recent inter-sessional meeting in Nuuk, we hope we can continue the discussion and come to agreement on some important issues.

Canada continues to recognize the needs of aboriginal and local communities in all countries for a subsistence way of life. However, we have to come to ground with commercial harvests where they exist. The stocks cannot continue to support this type of fishery.

The facts are clear, the science is clear. We have all taken significant steps to manage our fisheries. It is now the time to go one step further.

Canada has taken further steps to reduce retention in its recreational fishery. We will give an overview of these steps later in the agenda. We know that all parties realize what is at stake here. We are confident that we can reach consensus on a new regulatory measure.

***Opening Statement made to the West Greenland Commission
on behalf of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)***

Mr Chair, distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Greenland, I would like to begin by thanking our Canadian hosts for arranging this meeting and making us feel so welcome here in Goose Bay.

Many years ago, Greenland and the Faroe Islands took the decision to stop all commercial fisheries for wild salmon in our waters. Now Greenland only conducts a small internal-use fishery and has exercised an export ban since 1998. This was done in order to protect and rebuild the stocks. The decision has come at a high price to the small fishermen and the settlements along the coast of Greenland that rely on fisheries and hunting. However, in the interest of preserving the salmon stocks, we have maintained this policy.

In order to show our continued commitment to NASCO and the preservation of the salmon stocks, Greenland has laid all bare and been completely transparent. Greenland has further committed to improve the monitoring, control and management measures of its internal-use fishery. Greenland has continually reduced the fishery and evaluated the regulatory measures for the fishery for more than 20 years.

However, that has not changed the status of stocks – the Atlantic salmon is still in a poor state. It is obvious that reducing or closing fisheries is not going to solve the problem alone - we have done that for years! Even ICES concludes that the continued low abundance of the stocks is due to factors other than the fishery: *“The continued low abundance of salmon stocks across North America and in the Northeast Atlantic, despite significant fishery reductions, further strengthens the conclusion that factors other than fisheries are constraining production.”*

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) has fought for years to move the attention towards factors other than the fishery. There can be many reasons for the continued poor state of the salmon stocks and Greenland believes that it is time for NASCO to focus on these other factors that threaten Atlantic salmon stocks such as pollution, dams, hydro-power and climate change.

Now is the time for us to shift the focus towards these other threats. In the Theme-based Special Session this year, NASCO is focusing on the problems with hydro-power and how these can be solved. That is a step in the right direction. When reviewing the Annual Progress Reports it is obvious that many States of origin do a lot of work and many have made sacrifices, but it is also evident that there is a great amount of work still to be done. Thus, Greenland believes that the continued work in NASCO and the West Greenland Commission should focus on identifying the factors that are constraining production and causing low abundance in order to work together to solve these issues.

Greenland has committed to continue its work with further limiting its fishery and improving the control and management of the fishery – and we honor that commitment! Issues have been identified together with the West Greenland Commission and we continue to work towards a better management and an even more limited internal-use fishery. However, it is also necessary to look at fisheries elsewhere in order to achieve sustainable management of wild salmon. The

fishery in West Greenland is a Mixed-Stock Fishery and thus, is greatly affected by the abundance of stocks from the States of origin.

Therefore, Greenland strongly encourages the West Greenland Commission and indeed all members of NASCO to be completely transparent and go through the process of working with the 6 tenets – with which the Greenlandic management, monitoring and control has been assessed. It is a very helpful tool.

Greenland further encourages all members to give attention to the other problems facing salmon stocks and work together, because if we do not identify and eliminate the other factors that threaten the Atlantic salmon – the sacrifices made by Greenland and others will have been in vain. We hope that the new regulatory measures that we are going to agree here will reflect that desire. We are ready to work towards a solution that benefits all parties: States of origin, the Greenlandic people and the Atlantic salmon stocks.

We come here in good spirit and in the hope that, through a positive dialogue and joint effort, we can create the right circumstances for the salmon stocks to thrive again.

Finally, Mr Chair, I would like yet again to thank our hosts and the Secretariat for the excellent preparations for this meeting.

Joint Closing Statement made to the West Greenland Commission on behalf of Canada, the European Union and the United States regarding the regulatory measure for the West Greenland Salmon Fishery

Canada, the European Union and the United States came to the 32nd NASCO Annual Meeting optimistic that an agreement could be reached on a comprehensive regulatory measure for the West Greenland salmon fishery. Despite the efforts of the last few days, more work remains to be done to achieve a consensus on a total catch limit. Simply establishing a catch limit unilaterally falls short of internationally recognised management practices. However, significant progress was made towards enhancing monitoring and control of the West Greenland fishery, and a new sampling agreement was adopted. We urge Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) to take immediate and substantial action to improve the quality and completeness of reporting in the salmon fishery at West Greenland.

Canada, the European Union and the United States reiterate their commitment to work with Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), notwithstanding its decision to prosecute a Mixed-Stock Fishery which, according to ICES scientific advice, does not provide catch options. We hope that consensus on a comprehensive regulation to manage this Mixed-Stock Fishery will be achieved in the near future so that we may collectively address further threats to wild Atlantic salmon, which face extinction in some States of origin.

***Closing Statement made to the West Greenland Commission
on behalf of the United States***

On behalf of the United States and in addition to sentiments expressed in the joint statement by the United States, Canada and the European Union on the regulatory measure for the West Greenland fishery, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few important issues for the information of the Commission and for the record of the meeting. We began our proceeding with an inflammatory statement from an unaffiliated third party, and in part, I would like to set the record straight.

First a word of thanks to my colleagues and delegations of each Party. Thank you for your hard work this week. Thank you for the professional cordiality and thank you for working through our points of disagreement to memorialize points of agreement in the West Greenland Commission regulatory measure.

In the blush of enthusiasm for having achieved an agreement, we too easily forget the difficulty and problems that have brought us to this point. The United States is extremely disappointed that the Members of the West Greenland Commission could not agree on a total allowable catch. While I am pleased that we have an agreement representing progress on several fronts, we strongly believe the total catch level set unilaterally by Denmark (in respect of the Faroes Islands and Greenland) is too high. The US-origin stock is imperiled and at risk of extinction. We have never cited Greenland as the sole cause for the stock's decline, nor solely responsible for its recovery. We must take every precaution at home and in the salmon's marine life stages to protect and restore this stock. While there are certainly many threats to marine survival that we cannot address, a fishery is one we can. I am disappointed that we have missed that opportunity this week.

For a dozen years, ICES advice has been that the aggregate stocks cannot support a fishery, and yet, for most of that time, the WGC has allowed a fishery to continue for internal use - local markets, and personal consumption – referencing 20 tonnes as a subsistence level. In 2012, Greenland asserted a commercial fishery authorizing landings to factories and quota for that fishery at 35 tonnes; contrary to the considerations of the Parties in their deliberations leading to the regulatory measure. We feared this step would expand fishing effort and that fear has been realized. Data on the fishery obtained last year demonstrate that the over-harvest of salmon is far worse than we imagined. Reporting and data from the fishery are incomplete, and information on prior landings are suspect, suggesting that actual landings are likely much higher. The US has attempted to work together with the Parties to better understand Greenland's needs and to work toward an equitable solution. At the same time, the commercial aspect of the fishery has expanded greatly at significant risk to all contributing stocks. The United States has recognized the need for better reporting, monitoring and control of the fishery and has offered tools to facilitate those discussions and aid Greenland in improving these areas. While we are encouraged by the improvement in monitoring and control, we remain very concerned about the impact of the West Greenland fishery on Atlantic salmon

Despite preliminary conversations about expectations for this meeting, Greenland has not made a compelling case for a fishery in terms responsive to NASCO's basic, guiding documents in regards to the dependency of communities on salmon for subsistence needs. Greenland identifies a need for food security and yet has not expressed how that need relates to the

country's exports of vast quantities of seafood. Greenland also has indicated that the salmon fishery is of significant economic importance to the country, but then has stated that the government is reluctant to invest in the full management of this fishery. In document WGC(15)4, Greenland presented case studies demonstrating the interests of two remote settlements, but in turn, calls for access to the fishery by all people, even those in towns where infrastructure exists for transportation, food distribution and economic opportunities. Greenland insists on the support of NASCO and sanction for its fishery, but has not always embraced the Organization's expressed and shared processes or principles. Despite the poor status of many of the stocks, Greenland is continually pressing to take more and more fish.

Stocks in many areas of the North Atlantic are at, or are close to, all time low levels of abundance, and US stocks are particularly imperiled. It is indisputable that salmon from these stocks are caught in the commercial fishery off West Greenland. As we heard this week, the United States and other States of origin have invested enormous amounts of money and human capital to ensure that wild salmon stocks are not extirpated from our waters. As indicated in two presentations during the Theme-based Special Session, the United States has made giant strides, spending over \$64 million in the Penobscot alone, to address threats posed by dams in salmon rivers and to ensure connectivity to our abundant and critical spawning habitats. We have removed a number of dams in important salmon rivers and we have strict performance standards for fish passage at others. After decades of careful monitoring and control and improvement, our water is clean and our rivers are productive. In response to these monumental efforts and investments the abundance of many diadromous species in our rivers has increased. As we have said, the signal for salmon returns is not the same. Certainly we have more work to do, and our shoulder is at that wheel. To give endangered US salmon the best chance of continued survival and eventual recovery, we need to address all threats wherever they occur, including those from Mixed-Stock Fisheries.

The United States remains steadfast in our commitment to ensure that Atlantic salmon are not extirpated from our waters and that ultimately, we are able to achieve recovery of this species. As in many other locations, salmon are of cultural and social importance to residents of the United States and to Native American Tribes. Not only are we working hard to connect salmon habitats in rivers, estuaries and marine waters, but we are also trying to reconnect the people with this treasured resource. All NASCO Parties must consider fully the scientific advice and the Organization's Convention and guiding principles, to which we all are party, particularly the Precautionary Approach, when considering whether or not to authorize a Mixed-Stock Fishery. Enabling the continued over-harvest of salmon populations to serve one country's commercial fishery rather than supporting conservation measures in line with science to ensure the future of this iconic species flies in the face of the NASCO Treaty and other fundamental agreements and will ultimately undermine the ability of all fishermen to benefit from the resource over the long- term.

With that said, the US remains committed to this body and this process and the US remains committed to working with Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), with Canada, the European Union, all the Parties of NASCO and the NGOs toward the protection, conservation and rational management of wild Atlantic salmon.