

UN BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference. Agenda Item 6

Intervention by the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission

Thank you Madam President,

This is a short intervention by the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission to wish the Intergovernmental Conference a productive first session.

As a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation, NEAFC's aims are the effective management of fisheries in the North East Atlantic to achieve our Contracting Parties economic, social and environmental objectives.

Within our Convention the conservation objectives are clearly set out alongside the other objectives in fisheries management. We already have in place legally binding measures to ban the targeted fishing of deep sea sharks, rays and chimeras as well as certain other threatened species.

NEAFC was one of the early adopters of legally binding fisheries closures related to Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems, with independent science on locating these VMEs and continual review from International Council on Exploration of the Seas. The effect of the NEAFC approach to only carrying out bottom fishing in historical fishing areas means that the vast majority of our regulatory area in the ABNJ is in practice closed to bottom fishing.

I also want to underline the cooperation we have with many other RFMOs which have similar measures as NEAFC, and cooperation with Regional Seas Conventions. This cooperation is both strategic and practical. With other RFMOs the effect of this includes capacity building. With regional seas conventions this helps deliver an ecosystem based and cross sectoral approach, for instance NEAFC's ongoing concrete coordination on marine protected areas and on threatened deep sea sharks with the OSPAR, a regional seas convention in the North East Atlantic.

As this Intergovernmental Conference progresses in its work, my hope is that not only will the conclusions not undermine the existing regional sectoral bodies and competencies, but more positively that the outcome can in fact enhance such regional and sectoral activity as it helps support the implementation of the objectives you are discussing here.

Once again Madam President I wish the Conference every success

Thank you