

For information



**WWF** *for a living planet*

**AM 2005/35**

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To delegates, Mr Chairman, thank you for allowing WWF to attend the 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission as observers.

In addition to the comments made by SAR, WWF would like to add its support to NEAFC's review of its constitution and request that consideration is also given to a provision which will allow for the precautionary and sustainable development of new fisheries and the application of the ecosystem based approach to the management of existing fisheries particularly those which capture deep sea species. Such a provision could entail the implementation of an environmental impact assessment which could be carried out on an area basis or by fishery. This assessment should consider the impact of fishing activity on the target species, its habitat and the wider marine ecosystem and suggest appropriate mitigation measures for any negative impacts.

WWF also invites delegates to consider the haddock fishery off the Rockall Bank. Due to overfishing of immature haddock on the Rockall Bank, ICES have advised that a management plan be implemented for this stock so that fishing mortality is reduced to 0.4 - the precautionary level. ICES have also advised that misreporting and under reporting are a serious problem in the fishery and that catch compositions include fish below the minimum landing size of 30cms. WWF therefore urges the meeting to consider increasing the mesh size to be commensurate with those fishing within the EU regulations to allow immature fish to breed at least once before they are removed from the stock. WWF also urges the Commission to retain the existing closure on Rockall and implement adequate monitoring and use of onboard observers. Selective gear should be used to minimise the capture of non-target species and the TAC should not exceed 6000 tonnes. All of these measures have been recommended by ICES.

Finally I would draw to the attention of delegates a report on illegal fishing recently published by WWF International, the International Transport Workers Federation and the Government of Australia. It describes the extent of the problem as far as is possible under the cover of the flags of convenience system. It is estimated that 2,500 large fishing vessels are flying the flags from 14 flagging countries. At the UNGA (United Nations General Assembly), WWF will be calling for an end to this system which enables unscrupulous companies to circumvent the law, causing further depletion to stocks and costing the industry 1.4 billion US dollars a year.

If anyone would like a copy of the report please leave your contact details with my colleague Mr Kalenchenko, who will be here all week. I will leave a copy on the table outside.

Thank you Mr Chairman, delegates, this concludes the opening statement from WWF



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