Statement by the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) regarding the conclusion of the negotiations on the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean

The Commission,

Having regard to the duty of cooperation under international law as reflected in the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea,

Emphasizing its long standing experience in managing fisheries in cooperation with other relevant international mechanisms,

Welcomes the signing of the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean on 3 October 2018,

Noting that parties to that agreement underline the importance of ensuring cooperation and coordination between them and this Commission, which has the competence to adopt conservation and management measures in a portion of the high seas of the central Arctic Ocean,

Highlighting that, pursuant to Article 14.4 of the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean, that Agreement shall neither undermine nor conflict with the role and mandate of any existing international mechanism relating to fisheries management,

Committing to enhancing ocean governance by cooperating with all parties to the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean towards the long-term strategy to safeguard healthy marine ecosystems and to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of fish stocks, and

Informing that current conservation and management measures are applicable in the NEAFC Convention Area situated in the central Arctic Ocean, including the following:

(i) The Scheme of Control and Enforcement, i.e. authorizations to fish and notifications of fishing vessels, recording and reporting requirements, mandatory vessel monitoring system, at-sea inspection system, port control, follow-up procedures of violations, and measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;
(ii) Protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems;
(iii) Deep-sea fisheries; and
(iv) Annual regulations on a series of fish stocks.