Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, colleagues and friends,

I am honoured to represent the Russian Federation at the 37th Annual Meeting of NEAFC. On behalf of the Russian delegation, I would like to thank the NEAFC Secretariat for the preparatory work for this meeting.

Russia attaches great importance to multilateral cooperation in the management of the living marine resources in the North Atlantic, sustainable and resource-saving fisheries, conservation of biological diversity and the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems.

In this context, I would like to highlight the importance of agreed management measures for the pelagic stocks in the North-East Atlantic and the prevention of unregulated fishing.

In view of the expected decline in pelagic stocks in the coming years, we should emphasize the need to adopt a coherent strategy for the long-term management of herring fisheries and the importance of obtaining reliable scientific data on mackerel.

ICES plays an important role in providing scientific advice on the management of fish stocks in the NEAFC Convention Area, and the reliability of scientific advice is key to achieving sustainable fisheries for stocks managed by NEAFC.

Unfortunately, in the past few years, the ICES advice is increasingly at odds with the real state of stocks and actual fishing, and often change several times over the year. Above all, it indicates a lack of analysis of all available scientific data and methods of stock assessment. The application of the rules of procedure in stock assessment and regular specialized workshops have undoubtedly improved the quality of ICES advice. However, on the other hand, the lack of flexibility when considering alternative methods does not allow ICES to carry out additional analysis and work out probable scenarios in a short time.

In this regard, it is essential to eliminate methodological errors in the assessment of mackerel and Irminger Sea redfish stocks, because the relevant ICES advice clearly does not take into account the real state of these stocks.

Four meetings of the Working Group on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems were held in 2018. Russia is well aware of the importance of protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems and is ready to participate in the discussion of the NEAFC recommendation on the VME and initiatives related to their protection.

We note with satisfaction the results of the work done by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Electronic Reporting. The adoption of a new concept of the electronic reporting system is an important element in ensuring transparency and efficiency of fisheries management. I would also like to thank the members of PECMAC for their work on considering amendments to the NEAFC Scheme of Control.
The Russian Federation is ready for a productive dialogue on the implementation of NEAFC-OSPAR Collective Arrangement to ensure the long-term protection and rational exploitation of biological resources in the NEAFC Convention Area.

We have many issues to discuss, we are open to cooperate and wish you a successful and productive meeting.

Thank you for your attention.