



MINUTES SSC/2016/11
10 November 2016
10:00 am EST - Via Conference Call

Participants:

Dr. Tammy Trott, Commission Acting Chair
Dr. Billy Causey, Commissioner
Prof. Howard Roe, Commissioner
Mr. Mark Spalding, Commissioner
Dr. David Freestone, Executive Secretary
(apologies, Prof. Ricardo Santos and Prof. Stephen de Mora, Commissioners)

1. Minutes of 21 September 2016 Meeting (SSC/2016/10)
TO BE CIRCULATED FOR APPROVAL, as discussed after adopting revised format.

2. Executive Secretary presented an update of Work Programme implementation to-date:
 - 2.1 Signatories
 - The Canadian Government is moving forward rapidly with procedural steps to become a Signatory to the Hamilton Declaration within the next month, if possible.
 - The possibility for other governments to sign was discussed. The Government of Cayman Islands has expressed interest in the Declaration.
 - There was general agreement among the Commissioners that increasing the number of Signatories is a welcome development.

 - 2.2 Commission
 - The Commission spent 1.5 days reviewing the lengthy draft Stewardship Plan at a technical consultation in Galway focusing on important edits and big picture modifications. Revisions will be finished by late November for review by **Executive Secretary** and **Commissioner Spalding**, followed by circulation to a small group of reviewers including the rest of the Commission. The draft will then be circulated to a larger group of advisors, including Signatory focal points and specific experts expressly recommended by the initial group of reviewers.
 - Revisions will ensure that the plan is cast as advice from the Commission to the Signatories and as direction from the Commission to the Executive Secretary; the **Executive Secretary** indicated approval of this approach as representing a strategic plan needing Signatory approval.

- Executive Secretary thanked **Commissioner Roe** for submitting his extensive comments, and the Commissioners (**Causey, Trott, and Spalding**) who personally attended and contributed to the technical review of the plan in Galway.
- Approval and support for the plan will be achieved through utilization of “concentric circles of consensus” a process that expands the circle of reviewers outward from a small initial group. The draft should be available for Signatories to consider by early January, leaving adequate time before the anticipated next Joint Meeting of the Signatories and the Commission planned for April 2017 in the Azores.

2.3 Collaborating Partners

- **Commissioner Causey** chaired the 7th SPAW STAC Meeting Miami 1-4 November 2016 and **Faith Bulger** attended on behalf of the Commission.
- The Commission co-sponsored a side event on *Sargassum* at the Gulf Coast and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) Annual Meeting in Grand Cayman on 10 November 2016.
- The Commission is also sponsoring **Commissioner de Mora’s** attendance with the goal of identifying potential industrial interest or contacts at the World Ocean Council (WOC) Meeting the first week of December.
- IUCN delegation is focusing on the BBNJ Prep Com 3, which is the last week of March and first week of April 2017.

2.4 Fisheries

- The Commission is sponsoring a delegation including **Commissioner Trott** and Dr Brian Luckhurst to the ICCAT Meeting in November 2016. **Commissioner Trott** has prepared a draft resolution forwarded for review to the US and the UK as well as others delegations.

2.5 Shipping

- **Executive Secretary** noted the need to follow up on efforts to advance an MOU with the cruise industry and the Government of Bermuda.

2.6 Sea Bed

- Nothing noted.

2.7 Migratory Species

- The Commission co-sponsored with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) a successful First Range States Workshop on the European Eel from 13-14 October 2016 in Galway. Funding was contributed by the Government of the Netherlands and the Marine Institute of Galway, as well as the National University of Ireland, Galway School of Law. Forty participants attended, including both renowned eel experts and Range State representatives. Participants expressed interest in exploring further the possibility of developing an MOU under the CMS that would extend collaborative management efforts for the European Eel beyond the EU Range States and also apply to the migration, spawning and larval stages of the European Eel.
- The next steps would include holding a second European Eel Range States meeting that ensures participation of more Range States, particularly those from North Africa. The importance of continuing to collaborate with the Canadians and the

United States was noted, as well as the possibility of extending a CMS MOU to cover the American Eel Range States.

2.8 Finance Report

- **Executive Secretary** noted with gratitude the receipt of \$175,000 for the third year of the Helmsley's operating grant.
- Helmsley will be closing its conservation programme but a Commission request for one more year of transitional funding may also be entertained by Helmsley. **Commissioner Spalding** will be following up on these proposals.

2.9 Mapping and Monitoring

- The Sargasso Sea COVERAGE mapping pilot project was considered favourably at the recent meeting of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS). As a result, NASA indicated its intent to continue supporting the Sargasso Sea project at least until the CEOS meeting in April 2017. The Commission noted the significance of CEOS approval.

2.10 Communications

- Recent initiatives included a four-page full colour brochure on "Lessons Learned from the Sargasso Sea" distributed at the UN BBNJ meetings and prominent focus on the Sargasso Sea in another brochure in development on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP 13.
- Another edition of the Commission electronic newsletter should be ready for distribution before the end of the year.

3 Any Other Business

- None noted.

4 Date of Next Meeting

- The next call was set for **Thursday, 5 January 2017**, at 10 am EST.