

**21<sup>st</sup> North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers Conference  
8-11 June 2016, Saint-Petersburg, the Russian Federation**

**Communiqué**

**North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers recognize the importance of scientific research as a tool for ensuring sustainable fisheries and environmental stability of marine ecosystems**

Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation – Head of the Federal Agency for Fisheries Ilya Shestakov hosted the 21st North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers Conference in Saint-Petersburg, the Russian Federation, on 8-11 June 2016. Fisheries Ministers and senior representatives from Canada, European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway participated in the Conference.

The participants emphasized the importance of scientific research in support of sustainable fisheries and marine ecosystems conservation and management as demonstrated by the combined experience of international and national fisheries management in different areas of the World's Oceans.

The participants agreed that excellent marine research that focuses not only on the study of fish stocks, but also the level of climatic and anthropogenic impact on them, and interspecies relationships in an ecosystems context is the cornerstone for responsible fisheries management and other oceans uses. They noted that it is important to take management decisions based on the best available scientific advice.

Sustainable use and conservation of marine resources are two sides of the same coin; they call for constant enhancement of knowledge for sustainable management. Sustainable management of the oceans requires cooperation between states and the collection and sharing of scientific data for the sound assessment of shared stocks. Common problems call for common research and common solutions.

The participants committed to continue both bilateral and multilateral engagement for the further development and strengthening of scientific cooperation.

Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation – Head of the Federal Agency for Fisheries Ilya Shestakov urged the inclusion in the agenda of future meetings of the Conference of proposals on strengthening cooperation on joint research of North Atlantic marine ecosystems.

The participants stressed that illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing globally represents a key challenge to sustainable fisheries and poses a serious threat to those who engage in the legal harvest and trade of fish and seafood products.

The participants also urged that effective measures to address IUU fishing should be developed, consistent with international obligations.

Canada will host the 22<sup>nd</sup> North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers Conference in 2017.