



# NORTH ATLANTIC FISHERIES MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

# LA CONFÉRENCE DES MINISTRES DES PÊCHES DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD

**North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers Conference**  
**August 28 to 30, 2017, Shediac, New Brunswick, Canada**

## **Communiqué**

The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, hosted the 22nd annual North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers' Conference in Shediac, New Brunswick, Canada from August 28 to 30, 2017. Minister LeBlanc welcomed ministers and senior representatives from the European Union, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Russia.

The delegations discussed the challenges they face in managing fisheries in their jurisdiction and shared best practices. Common issues across the North Atlantic include the effects of climate change on living marine resources, including marine mammals, and the effect of global illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing on industry and the environment. There was also an emphasis on the necessity for regional cooperation in the North Atlantic, and also globally, to address the challenges faced by fisheries and oceans.

Discussions then proceeded to the theme of the conference, Marine Conservation Targets: How do we get there? The delegations emphasized that the conservation of our oceans is an important commitment for all North Atlantic fisheries ministers. They asserted that protecting marine ecosystems is integral to ensuring the continued benefit of marine living resources for future generations.

Minister LeBlanc reiterated Canada's commitment to increase the proportion of Canada's marine and coastal areas that are protected to 5% by the end of 2017, and 10% by 2020, and spoke of other effective area-based conservation measures as helpful tools to achieve global marine conservation objectives and targets.

Delegations emphasized the importance of science-based decision making, transparency and partnering with the fishing industry, environmental organizations, and Indigenous peoples, to advance our marine conservation and management goals.

Delegations underlined that marine protection goes hand in hand with sustainable use of marine resources, and highlighted the role of fisheries managers and the long

experience in protecting the marine environment, including through the use of long term fisheries closures.

Delegations agreed that science-based other effective area-based conservation measures can contribute to achieving the international target of ocean protection and sustainable ocean use. They spoke to the importance of participation, fairness, transparency and accountability in their decision making processes to achieve marine conservation.

Delegations also underlined that, to provide biodiversity conservation benefits, decisions on area-based management measures should be based on scientific advice, take into account Indigenous peoples' rights, and take into account local and traditional knowledge.

The members of the North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers' Conference look forward to continuing the discussion on achieving marine conservation targets at various international fora, including the upcoming *4th International Marine Protected Areas Congress* in La Serena-Coquimbo, Chile, from September 4 to 8, 2017; the *World Seafood Congress*, in Reykjavik, Iceland from September 10 to 13, 2017; the *Global Fishery Forum* to be held in St. Petersburg, Russia from September 14 to 16, 2017; the *Our Ocean Conference* in Malta from October 5 to 6, 2017; a Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) workshop on marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures hosted by the CBD and Canada from February 6 to 9, 2018; and the *2018 Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of the Parties* where guidance on other effective area-based conservation measures is expected to be adopted.

The Conference concluded with the Faroe Islands announcing it will host the 23rd North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers' Conference in 2018.