

UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL

ASSEMBLY

DOCUMENTS
INDEX UNIT



Distr.
LIMITED
A/CONF.10/L.34
7 May 1955
ENGLISH ONLY

INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL CONFERENCE ON THE CONSERVATION
OF THE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE SEA

Rome - 18 April 1955

INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL CONFERENCE ON THE CONSERVATION
OF THE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE SEA

REPORT OF THE GENERAL
COMMITTEE ON THE CONSENSUS OF THE CONFERENCE ON ITEM 12(a)
OF THE AGENDA

Principal specific international fishery conservation problems of the world
for the resolution of which international measures and procedures have been
instituted

- a. Problems for the resolution of which agreed international measures
and procedures have been instituted in the following areas:

- (1) North Atlantic
- (2) South Atlantic
- (3) Mediterranean
- (4) Indo-Pacific
- (5) North Pacific
- (6) South Pacific
- (7) Antarctic and other Whaling Areas

PART I. REVIEW OF EXISTING INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

1. International arrangements for the conservation of particular resources or for the conservation of resources in a particular area, have been made in many parts of the world. Some of these arrangements provide only for required research, while others provide also for the recommendation and/or application of conservation measures. There is a total of eleven such councils and conventions involving 42 different States. Some of the States are members of more than one council or convention so that membership of the eleven organizations totals 78 (A/CONF.10/L.4).

(1) North Atlantic

2. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea provides for the co-ordination of the scientific research of most countries in Northern and Western Europe on the fish stocks of the North Sea, in the North East Atlantic and the Greenland waters. Membership is open to all nations having an interest in the area.

UN/SEA 417

5A: 5B

3. The 1946 Convention for the Regulation of the Meshes of Fishing Nets and the Size Limits of Fish is an arrangement among 13 nations of Western Europe for the application of specific conservation measures. These measures are based on the scientific advice of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, which is given through a liaison committee appointed by the Council.

4. Canada, Newfoundland, United States and France organized the North American Council on Fishery Investigations, which was active from 1920 to 1938, to co-ordinate their scientific research in the Northwest Atlantic, operating on the pattern of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. This North American Council provided a background for the subsequent establishment of the International Convention for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries.

5. The International Convention for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries covers the sea fisheries of the Northwest Atlantic Ocean, and is open to all nations who participate in the Fisheries of this region and to the adjacent coastal States. Since some nations are not concerned with problems in the entire region, it is divided into sub-areas, the investigation and conservation of the fish resources within which is the concern of panels consisting of those nations having an interest in the corresponding sub-areas, that is States fishing in the sub-area and the adjacent States. The Commission develops necessary programmes and co-ordinates the research which is done by member governments. Recommendations for regulations are made by the Commission on the basis of proposals from the appropriate panels, and become effective for a given sub-area when accepted by the government members of the panel for such sub-area.

(2) South Atlantic

6. There are no international arrangements in this area, except for whaling, discussed separately below.

(3) Mediterranean

7. The International Commission for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean was organized in 1919. Its function is to co-ordinate the scientific research in this sea, both oceanographical and biological, but not with particular reference to fisheries.

8. The General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean organized in 1952 and sponsored by FAO, is an association of Mediterranean States for the purpose of co-ordinating research and development activities related to the fisheries of this sea. It has at present 11 members. There is a liaison committee between this Council and the International Commission founded in 1919.

(4) Indo-Pacific

9. The Indo-Pacific Fisheries Council is another FAO sponsored council for the co-ordination of research, conservation and development of the fisheries (both inland and marine) of this region. It was founded in 1949 and is open to all nations of the region; it has at present 16 Members.

(5) North Pacific

10. The Fur Seal Treaty of 1911 between Japan, Russia, Canada and the United States of America is the earliest example of a Convention for the conservation of a single resource. This Convention, which has resulted in rebuilding and management of the fur seal herds of the North Pacific, provided particularly for the cessation of pelagic sealing. Although the treaty was terminated in 1941, following the withdrawal of Japan, the U.S. and Canada have continued the management of the herds in the Eastern North Pacific, and the USSR has continued to manage those to the West. Negotiation of a new convention is expected in the near future.
11. The International Pacific Halibut Convention negotiated between the United States and Canada in 1923, established a Commission which, with its own research staff, undertook the necessary investigations of their halibut fisheries in the Northwest Pacific. In 1930 the Commission was given authority to regulate the fishing on the basis of its scientific findings as well as to continue the research necessary for a continuing conservation programme, to make possible the attainment of the maximum sustainable catch.
12. The International Sockeye Salmon Convention between the United States and Canada provided for a Commission which, with its own research staff, should investigate the sockeye salmon spawning in the Fraser River watershed. After some years of investigation the Commission recommended the construction of certain fishways and after eight years of such investigations had authority to regulate and to take action to conserve and rebuild those salmon populations. It is now in its eighteenth year of operation, and currently conducts both research and management of the fishery.
13. The International North Pacific Fisheries Convention, recently negotiated between Japan, Canada, and the United States, covers stocks of fish in the convention area under substantial exploitation by two or more contracting parties. It does not include salmon stocks of the Northwest Pacific since neither Canada nor the United States fish such stock. Research is conducted by the national research agencies, being co-ordinated by the Commission established by the Convention, but the Commission may employ its own scientific staff if necessary. Decisions and recommendations for regulations are confined to these contracting countries engaged in the exploitation of a given stock on a substantial scale. Under this Convention States which have not engaged in substantial exploitation of certain stocks of fish agree to abstain from fishing those stocks where it can be shown that all the following conditions are satisfied (1) the stock is being fully utilized, (2) is under conservation regulations and (3) is subject to extensive scientific study designed to discover whether the stock is being fully utilized and the conditions necessary for maintaining its maximum sustained productivity.
14. The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Convention operating in the tropical and sub-tropical Eastern Pacific was negotiated in 1949 between Costa Rica and the United States to obtain scientific information respecting the yellow fin and skipjack tuna and tuna-bait fishes in the tropical and sub-tropical Eastern Pacific required as a basis of maintaining the populations of those fishes at levels which will permit maximum sustainable catches. The treaty is open to adherence by all nations having an interest in the fishery. Panama adhered

in 1953. The Commission established by this Convention conducts scientific investigation by means of its own staff, and makes conservation recommendations based on the research results.

(6) South-Pacific

15. The Permanent Commission on the Exploitation and Conservation of the Maritime Resources of the South Pacific, which was inaugurated in 1954 between Peru, Ecuador and Chile, has broad terms of reference. It proposes to (a) unify fishing and whaling regulations of the three countries, (b) promote scientific investigations, (c) compile statistics and exchange information with other agencies and (d) co-ordinate the work of the three countries in all matters pertaining to the conservation of the living resources of the sea.

(7) Antarctic and other whaling areas

16. The International Convention of 1946 for the regulation of whaling to which 17 nations now adhere, established a Commission in 1949 which co-ordinates and reviews research of member governments, reviews and evaluates scientific findings, and makes conservation regulations on the basis of those findings. It is concerned with the conservation of whales in all the areas where whaling is conducted.

17. The Permanent Commission on the Exploitation and Conservation of the Maritime Resources of the South Pacific, already mentioned in paragraph 15, regulates whaling and the conservation whales in the Southeast Pacific.

PART II. PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

18. The older of the research and management conventions operating with permanent commissions have been highly successful in restoring and maintaining the productivity of international resources. In general, the newer conventions are making encouraging progress in this direction. Experience in international conservation of living marine resources reflected in the foregoing organizations has led increasingly to the incorporation in conservation conventions of certain basic provisions in the application of conservation programmes. The more important of such provisions are:

- (a) Sufficiently large geographical area within which research and regulation is to be done to encompass the entire range of the populations constituting the resource or resources with which the convention is concerned.
- (b) All interested nations, both the fishing nations and the adjacent coastal States, are included in the international organizations responsible for conservation of a given resource, or in a given region.
- (c) Adequate scientific research, carefully evaluated as outlined in the report on items 10 and 11 of the agenda for determination of the need for conservation measures, and the formulation of particular measures to be applied.
- (d) Continuing research and review.

- (e) Where international organizations are granted regulatory powers, these powers are sufficiently broad to enable the full application of all suitable conservation measures which have been arrived at on the basis of adequate scientific investigations.
- (f) Facilities for adjustment and revision of the convention to meet changing conditions in the fishery and take advantage of advancing technical and scientific knowledge.
- (g) Clear rules conveying the rights and duties of the member States, the conservation measures to be recommended, the functions of the commissions set up under the convention and the authority of these commissions to regulate or recommend regulations, and how these recommendations shall be handled.
- (h) Facilities through advisory committees from the interested public or otherwise to obtain advice regarding the applicability and practicability of management programmes and measures and to inform the public concerning the work of the Commission, its objectives and accomplishments.

