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NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES ORGANIZATION (NAFO)

The Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Minister of Fisheries announced today the outcome of a meeting of experts, held in Ottawa, May 1-2, to prepare the text of a multilateral convention establishing a Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO). Experts attending the meeting were from all ICNAF countries, as well as the USA and the European Community.

Experts undertook to refer to their respective authorities a draft Convention providing for a successor organization to ICNAF, to be known as NAFO. The draft Convention discussed in the experts' group would provide for the efficient management and control of fisheries in areas of the Northwest Atlantic beyond national jurisdiction, including the continuation of the ICNAF scheme of joint international enforcement, to ensure that all agreed measures are effectively carried out by the vessels of the contracting parties.

Canadian fishermen would be given special consideration in the allocation of fish stocks for areas of the Grand Banks beyond 200 miles, and for Flemish Cap, in recognition of the extensive efforts Canada has undertaken over the years with respect to surveillance and inspection in these areas, and the dependency of Canadian coastal communities on these stocks. Canada's special interest in these stocks has also been recognized in a number of bilateral agreements concluded since the extension of fisheries jurisdiction.

Approval of these efforts by participating governments would provide the best evidence of cooperation and understanding between coastal and long-distance fishing nations in areas of international management such as the rich fishing grounds found immediately beyond Canadian fishing limits off the East coast.