



SOUTH EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES ORGANISATION
REPORT OF THE 22nd ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

26th & 27th November 2025

Virtual and Swakopmund Sands Hotel
Swakopmund
NAMIBIA

The Secretariat

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1. Opening of the meeting

The 22nd Annual Commission Meeting was convened virtually and in-person at the Swakopmund Sands Hotel in Swakopmund, Namibia from 26th to 27th November 2025. The Chairperson, Mr. Joji MORISHITA (Japan), welcomed delegates and observers to the meeting.

2. Appointment of Rapporteur

The Secretariat was appointed as the rapporteur for the meeting.

3. Adoption of Agenda and Meeting Arrangements

The Commission adopted the agenda ([DOC/COM/01/2025](#)) after Agenda Item 14 was removed (Election of Chair and Vice Chair).

The Commission is requested to note the challenge at the start of this Annual SEAFO Hybrid Meetings where, unlike Contracting Parties who may join hybrid sessions virtually or in person, SEAFO Secretariat staff are required to attend all Annual Meetings (SC, CC, SCAF, and Commission) physically.

4. Introduction and Admission of Observers

Observers present were:

- Mr. Jonathon BARRINGTON the Executive Secretary of ACAP.
- Ms. Eszter Hidas: Manager/Technical Advisor Common Oceans Program, Deep-Sea Fisheries Project (FAO), General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean of the FAO.
- Ms. Merete Tandstad: Manager of the EAF Nansen Program.

The Commission admitted and welcomed the observers at the meeting. The observers introduced themselves.

5. Opening Statements by Contracting Parties and Observers

Five Contracting Parties were represented at the meeting. Angola was not represented. The list of participants is in [Appendix II](#). Contracting Parties introduced their delegations with short opening statements. The full opening statements received are available in [Appendix III](#).

6. Status of the Convention in Respect for Membership

The ES informed the meeting that no new notification for accession to the Convention was received since the last Commission meeting, by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

7. Report of the 2025 Scientific Committee (SC) Meeting

The Chairperson of the 21st Scientific Committee, Ms. Zimasa JIKA (South Africa), presented the 2025 SC meeting report ([DOC/COM/03/2025](#)) to the Commission for adoption.

The Commission noted that twelve Scientific Committee members from four Contracting Parties attended the Scientific Committee meeting. No scientific members from the Republic of Korea and Angola attended the meeting.

Each agenda item was presented by SC Chair and opened for questions/comments. Focus was on items requiring Commission action or advice.

SC 7.1 Historical Catches from EEZs

The Commission noted completion of work by SC with no contracting party comments required.

SC 7.2 CPUE Standardization

The Commission noted the ongoing work.

SC 7.3 Standardized SEAFO Maps

Mr. Maletzky committed to fast-tracking the process targeting 2026 completion. The Commission noted this commitment.

SC 7.4 VME Indicator Species and EAF Nansen surveys

Namibia emphasized the importance of conducting surveys, particularly given BBNJ agreement requirements. The Commission noted the Dr. Fridtjof Nansen unavailability in 2026 and welcomed a possible opportunity for a survey in the SEAFO CA during 2027.

The SC recommends that the Commission keep working with the EAF Nansen Programme.

ACTION: The Commission adopted the recommendation.

SC 7.5 Conservation Measure CM25-12

The Commission observed that overall intercessional discussion arrangements are in place with clear timeline (comments due April 13, 2026, virtual meeting May 13, 2026) and noted support from contracting parties.

SC 7.6 Alignment of Observer Data Form and Captain Logbooks for Long Lines

The Commission noted completion of work by SC with no contracting party comments required.

SC 7.7 VME Bycatch Summary Table Update

The Commission noted completion of work by SC with no contracting party comments required.

SC 7.8 VME Bycatch Hotspot Maps in Stock Status Reports

The Commission noted completion of work by SC with no contracting party comments required.

SC 7.9 Confidence Intervals for Orange Roughy CPUE

The Commission noted completion of work by SC with no contracting party comments required.

SC 7.10 HCR Review (Harvest Control Rule)

The Commission noted concerns expressed by Namibia and South Africa about virtual meeting limitations, recognized SC Chair's explanation of challenges, but could not agree on holding physical meetings annually. Nonetheless the Commission supported the Scientific Committee to continue this important work.

SC 7.11 Patagonian Toothfish Tagging Protocol

All contracting parties recognized the importance of the tagging protocol issue and agreed to continue discussions at the next SC meeting. The Commission expressed support for the SC's approach to analyzing current recapture statistics before determining any increase in tagging rates.

SC 8 Report by the Executive Secretary presenting landing tables updated to the end of August 2025

All contracting parties shared the SC's concern about high *macrourid* bycatch and supported the suggested action to explore possible measures to reduce or mitigate it. The SC Chair clarified that exploring mitigation measures would be discussed at the next SC meeting in 2026. The Commission expressed support for this action.

SC 9 Review spatial and temporal distribution of fishing activity and biological data

The Commission noted the presentation without any questions or comments from contracting parties.

SC 10 Review spatial distribution of reported catches of benthic organisms (corals, sponges etc.)

The Commission noted that no VME encounters (as per Article 8 of CM 30/15) have been recorded to date in the SEAFO Convention Area.

SC 11 Review Stock Status Reports

The Commission noted this was not a stock assessment year, as TACs were already set for 2025-2026. Major stock status and assessment updates will be conducted at the in-person meeting in 2026.

The updated stock status reports serve as repositories for current information and are published on the SEAFO website and shared with FAO's FIRMS program.

SC 12 Review research activities in the SEAFO CA from October 2024 to date

The Commission noted the presentation without requiring any further discussion or action.

SC 13 Examine, where appropriate, assessments and research done by neighbouring States and other organisations

The Republic of South Africa thanked the DSF project for scientific work in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, acknowledging its significant contribution to SEAFO's scientific components and cooperation with the Executive Secretary. Namibia appreciated SEAFO's involvement in the DSF project and requested support for SEAFO scientists to participate in upcoming workshops, particularly February 2026 and August 2026 meetings, to gain knowledge in data-limited assessments.

The Commission noted the collaborative research efforts as valuable for improving regional stock assessment capabilities.

SC 14 Data Requests and Research Proposals

The ES clarified that there is a document ([DOC/COM/13/2025](#)) prepared on RFMO protection of commercial confidentiality, which directly relates to the matter of data confidentiality in this agenda point of the SC. The Commission will provide directions to the Scientific Committee on handling confidential information in stock status reports.

Namibia raised concerns that the issue of data confidentiality would be impacted by the BBNJ (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction) agreement coming into force in January 2026.

The Commission noted the request from Parties to add the BBNJ implementation as a future agenda point for the Commission.

SC 15 Any Other matters**SC 15.1 CORDAP Cartography Project**

Japan expressed interest in the CORDAP project while drawing attention of the Commission on possible implications for existing fishing grounds.

The Executive Secretary confirmed the project will provide capacity-building opportunities and communication to contracting parties regarding any activities to happen under this project.

SC 15.2 ACAP Update

Namibia supports the work done by ACAP on the conservation of seabirds and announced plans to accede to the ACAP agreement and host ACAP meetings in May-June 2026. South Africa, as a long-standing ACAP member, supported the work of ACAP. Japan noted that seabird mortality has rarely been observed in the fisheries in SEAFO and requested that this point be taken into consideration when considering amendments to bycatch mitigation measures.

The SC recommends that the Commission keep working with ACAP on seabird bycatch mitigation best practices.

ACTION: The Commission adopted the recommendation.

SC 15.3 FAO Deep Sea Fisheries Project Observer Training

South Africa thanked the DSF project for the upcoming observer training and expressed interest in additional capacity-building opportunities for inspectors.

The SC recommends that the Commission keep working with the FAO DSF Project on various projects.

ACTION: The Commission adopted the recommendation.

ACTION: The Commission adopted the 2025 SC meeting report with appreciation for the chair's first-term leadership and all scientists' contributions.

8. Report on the 2025 Compliance Committee (CC) Meeting

The Chairperson of the Compliance Committee, Mr. Beau Tjizoo (Republic of Namibia), presented the 2025 Compliance Committee Report ([DOC/COM/04/2025](#)) to the Commission for adoption.

CC 6 Executive Secretary's Report on Compliance

The Republic of South Africa apologized for late submissions of port inspection reports and committed to timely compliance in the future, while requesting assistance for capacity building. The EU stressed the importance of fulfilling SEAFO obligations and appreciated Namibia's follow up response regarding fishing outside designated areas.

CC 7 Annual Review of the "SEAFO System of Observation, Inspection, Compliance and Enforcement"

Both issues (CM25-12 review and toothfish tagging protocol) were extensively reviewed in the Scientific Committee report with clear next steps proposed by the Scientific Committee. The Commission endorsed the proposal by adopting the SC Report.

CC 8 Consideration of the provisional SEAFO IUU Vessel list for 2026

The CC recommends to the Commission to adopt the SEAFO IUU vessel list for 2026 presented in ([DOC/CC/04/2025](#)).

ACTION: The Commission adopted the recommendation.

ACTION: The Commission adopted the 2025 CC meeting report.

9. Report on the 2025 Standing Committee on Administration and Finance (SCAF) Meeting

The Chairperson of SCAF, Mr. Wickness Rooifontein (Republic of South Africa), presented the 2025 SCAF Report ([DOC/COM/05/2025](#)) to the Commission for adoption.

SCAF 5 Approval of the 2024 Draft Annual Financial Statement (AFS)

The SCAF recommends the Commission to approve the Audited Annual Financial Statements for 2024.

ACTION: The Commission approved the Audited Annual Financial Statements for 2024.

SCAF 6 Presentation of the Executive Secretary's Report on Administration and Finance

The Chairperson noted this agenda item had an action sentence but recognized the action was only noted by SCAF with no specific request to the Commission.

After discussion among parties (with support from EU, Japan seeking clarification, and Namibia supporting), the Commission concluded that the Commission would ask the Executive Secretary to provide 1-2 page summaries to formally record the "behind-the-scenes activities" engaged by the ES for institutional memory. The Chairperson indicated the Commission could trust the Executive Secretary's good judgment on the specific format of the summaries to create formal documentation that would form part of the organization's positive institutional memory.

SCAF 7 Any other matter

SCAF 7.1 Review of the 2016 Performance Review (PR) report relevant to SCAF

The Commission noted its preference for a well-targeted rather than general PR to ensure tangible value. Namibia requested careful selection of consultant for conducting performance review.

Namibia emphasized that while current salaries are adequate, there's no cap to prevent unsustainable escalation and stressed the need for workload assessment for considering appropriate level of salaries. The EU reinforced that adjustments should follow inflation rates and account for SEAFO's size and two-employee structure. Namibia noted that currently the Executive Secretary performs both ES and data manager functions, but future appointees may not have both capacities.

ACTION: The Commission agreed that ES will prepare ToR and budget for a new Performance Review of SEAFO. Contracting parties will provide input on possible items to be included and amendments in the ToR to ES before the next SCAF meeting.

SCAF 7.2 Review of the RFMO support of developing countries to attend intersessional and annual meetings.

The Commission simply noted the report from SCAF without any specific decisions or actions needed.

SCAF 7.3 Capacity Building for Contracting Member States

The Commission noted the report from SCAF for agenda item 7.3, with the understanding that the Executive Secretary will proceed with the facilitation of capacity building as part of regular duties.

SCAF 8 Approval of the 2026 Budget and 2027 forecast Budget

The SCAF Chairperson presented the provisional budget for 2026 of NAD 3,270,656.99 and the forecast budget for 2027 of NAD 3,390,113.31.

SCAF recommends that the Commission approves the budget.

ACTION: The Commission approved the budget of NAD 3,270,656.99 for 2026 and the forecast budget for 2027 of NAD 3,390,113.31.

SCAF 9 Contracting Party Contributions

SCAF recommends that the Commission approves the Contributions by Parties ([DOC/SCAF/08/2025 \(25 Nov 2025\)](#)).

ACTION: The Commission approved the Contributions by Parties for 2026.

ACTION: The Commission adopted the 2025 SCAF meeting report.

10. Report on meetings attended by the Secretariat

The ES submitted a document ([DOC/COM/06/2025](#)) to the Commission in which a synthesis of the meetings she attended since November 2024 was presented.

The Commission took note of the report with appreciation to the ES and encouraged the participation of the ES in relevant meetings and to network with other RFMOs and projects.

11. Reports of SEAFO Representatives at meetings of other Intergovernmental Organisations

The Commission noted the reports submitted by the CPs as Observers to other intergovernmental organisations and thanked them for representing SEAFO and providing necessary feedback relevant to SEAFO ([DOC/COM/08/2025](#); [DOC/COM/09/2025](#); [DOC/COM/10/2025](#); [DOC/COM/11/2025](#); [DOC/COM/12/2025](#)).

12. Nominations of Parties to represent SEAFO at 2026 meetings of other International Organisations

The Commission adopted the following nominees to represent SEAFO as observers at the following meetings, similar to 2025:

- CCAMLR – Republic of Korea
- ICCAT– Republic of South Africa
- NAFO – Japan
- NEAFC – EU
- SIOFA – Japan

13. Any other matters

13.1. Report on RFMO protection of Commercial Confidentiality

The ES was tasked during the 2024 Commission meeting to investigate how other RFMOs protect their Commercial confidentiality in order for the Commission to give directives to the SC regarding this matter for future application when needed. The ES presented her findings on how other RFMOs deal with this matter ([DOC/COM/13/2025](#)).

Specific Recommendations:

The Scientific Committee should submit specific questions to the Commission when uncertain about data confidentiality in stock status reports.

Consider national data policies when developing SEAFO guidelines.

Ensure consistency with other international projects and organizations SEAFO collaborates with.

The discussion emphasized balancing transparency for scientific purposes with protecting commercially sensitive information.

The Commission agreed on a case-by-case approach for handling data requests while working toward longer-term solutions:

Short-term: Continue evaluating specific data requests individually.

Long-term: Develop comprehensive data confidentiality guidelines similar to other RFMOs.

13.2. FAO Deep-Sea Fisheries (DSF) project feedback

Ms. Eszter Hidas, project manager presented an update of the FAO DSF Project ([DOC/COM/14/2025](#)).

The Republic of South Africa acknowledged benefits from capacity-building initiatives and asked for additional DSF supported workshops in South Africa and Angola, specifically for inspectors and MCS officials. Early notification of upcoming DSF meetings will be appreciated due to quarterly travel approval cycles.

The DSF Project manager committed to work with SEAFO Secretariat to assess feasibility of additional capacity building requests.

The Commission expressed its appreciation to the DSF project support and thanked the Project for global and regional work. The strong partnership between SEAFO and the project is reaffirmed.

14. Venue and Date of next meetings

The dates for the 2026 Scientific Committee meeting will be 23-27 November 2026 in physical format in Namibia.

The dates for the 2026 Annual Commission meeting (including SCAF and CC) will be 30 November to 3 December 2026 in physical format in Namibia.

Next year's venue remains in Swakopmund, Namibia with no alternative hosting offers received. Consensus was not reached on the Republic of South Africa's proposal for a rotational hosting system. The rotational hosting proposal remains unresolved and may be revisited in future meetings.

15. Adoption of the 2025 Commission report

The Commission adopted the report.

16. Closure of the Meeting

The Chairperson closed the meeting at 15h35 on Thursday 27th November 2025 and he commended the Contracting Parties for their efficient and effective conduct during the meeting. He thanked the Secretariat for the preparations.

APPENDIX I: List of Documents (DOC/COM/00/2025), Agenda (DOC/COM/01/2025) and Annotated Agenda (DOC/COM/02/2025) of the 2025 Commission Meeting

DOC/COM/00/2025



LIST OF DOCUMENTS FOR THE 22nd ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COMMISSION (COM) – 2025

CHAIRPERSON: Mr. Joji MORISHITA (JAPAN 2025 - 2026)

VICE-CHAIR: (REP. KOREA 2025 - 2026)

VENUE: Virtual & Sands Hotel, Swakopmund

DATE: 26-27 Nov 2025

Document Number	Agenda Item	Document Title	Provider	Availability of Document
DOC/COM/00/2025	All	List of documents	Secretariat	Available before meeting
DOC/COM/01/2025	3	Provisional Agenda for the 22 nd Meeting of the Commission	Secretariat	Available before meeting
DOC/COM/02/2025	3	Provisional Annotated Agenda for the 22 nd Meeting of the Commission	Secretariat	Available before meeting
DOC/COM/03/2025	7	Scientific Committee Meeting Report for 2025	SC	Available on 21 Nov 2025
DOC/COM/04/2025	8	Compliance Committee Meeting Report for 2025	CC	Available on 24 Nov 2025
DOC/COM/05/2025	9	Standing Committee on Admin & Finance Meeting Report for 2025	SCAF	Available on 25 Nov 2025
DOC/COM/06/2025	10	Report on meetings attended by the Executive Secretary during 2025	Secretariat	Available before meeting
DOC/COM/07/2025	16	Commission Meeting Report for 2025	COM	Available after the meeting
DOC/COM/08/2025	11	Rep South Africa Observer Report ICCAT 29 th Regular Meeting Nov 2025	Rep South Africa	Available before meeting
DOC/COM/09/2025	11	Japan Observer Report SIOFA 12 th Meeting of the Parties Jun 2025	Japan	Available before meeting
DOC/COM/10/2025	11	EU Observer Report NEAFC 44 th Annual Meeting Nov 2025	EU	Available before meeting
DOC/COM/11/2025	11	Japan Observer Report NAFO 47 th Annual Meeting Sep 2025	Japan	Available before meeting
DOC/COM/12/2025	11	Rep Korea Observer Report CCAMLR 44 th Annual Meeting Oct 2025	Rep Korea	Available before meeting
DOC/COM/13/2025	13.1	Report on RFMO protection of commercial confidentiality	Secretariat	Available before meeting
DOC/COM/14/2025	13.2	Feedback Report - FAO Deep-sea Fisheries Project	FAO-DSF Project	Available before meeting

DOC/COM/01/2025



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South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE 22nd ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COMMISSION (COM) – 2025

CHAIRPERSON: Mr. Joji MORISHITA (JAPAN 2025 - 2026)**VICE-CHAIR:** (REP. KOREA 2025 - 2026)**VENUE:** Virtual & Sands Hotel, Swakopmund**DATE:** 26-27 Nov 2025

Item	Agenda Item	Working Document
1	Opening of meeting by Chairperson	
2	Appointment of Rapporteur	
3	Adoption of Agenda and meeting arrangements	DOC/COM/00/2025 DOC/COM/01/2025 DOC/COM/02/2025
4	Introduction & Admission of Observers	
5	Opening statements by Contracting Parties	
6	Status of the Convention in respect of membership	
7	Report on the 2025 Scientific Committee meeting	DOC/COM/03/2025
8	Report on the 2025 Compliance Committee meeting	DOC/COM/04/2025
9	Report on the 2025 Standing Committee on Administration & Finance meeting	DOC/COM/05/2025
10	Report on meetings attended by the Secretariat	DOC/COM/06/2025
11	Reports from SEAFO's representatives at other intergovernmental organization meetings 11.1 ICCAT – Rep. South Africa 11.2 SIOFA - Japan 11.3 NEAFC – EU 11.4 NAFO – Japan 11.5 CCAMLR – Rep. Korea	DOC/COM/08/2025 DOC/COM/09/2025 DOC/COM/10/2025 DOC/COM/11/2025 DOC/COM/12/2025
12	Nomination of Parties representing SEAFO at intergovernmental organizations	

DOC/COM/01/2025

13	Any other matters 13.1 Report on RFMO protection of commercial confidentiality 13.2 FAO Deep-sea Fisheries Project Feedback	DOC/COM/13/2025 DOC/COM/14/2025
14	Venue & date of next meeting	
15	Adoption of the 2025 Commission Report	DOC/COM/07/2024
16	Closure of meeting	

DOC/COM/02/2025



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South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO)

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA FOR THE 22nd ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COMMISSION (COM) – 2025

CHAIRPERSON: Mr. Joji MORISHITA (JAPAN 2025 - 2026)**VICE-CHAIR:** (REP. KOREA 2025 - 2026)**VENUE:** Virtual & Sands Hotel, Swakopmund**DATE:** 26-27 Nov 2025

NR	AGENDA ITEM	DESCRIPTION
1	Opening of meeting	The Meeting will officially be opened by the Chairperson of the Commission
2	Appointment of Rapporteur	The Chairperson will ensure the appointment of a rapporteur to draft the Meeting Report
3	Adoption of Agenda and meeting arrangements	Members will review and adopt the agenda. The Executive Secretary will inform the Delegation of any practical arrangements for the meeting
DOC/COM/00/2025, DOC/COM/01/2025, DOC/COM/02/2025		
4	Introduction and admission of Observers	The Chairperson will announce Observers present as indicated by the Executive Secretary
5	Opening Statement by Contracting Parties and Observers	The Heads of Delegations will introduce their members and make opening statements. Written opening statements should be provided to the Secretariat before the meeting to be included in the meeting report. Observers who wish to make opening statements will do so after the opening statements of the Contracting Parties
6	Status of the Convention in respect of membership	The Chairperson will inform members of the current status of accession to the Convention
7	Presentation of the 2025 Scientific Committee Report	The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee will present a summary of the Scientific Committee Report including scientific advice and recommendations to the Commission. The Commission will discuss the Scientific Committee Report and take appropriate decisions on the recommendations made
DOC/COM/03/2025		

DOC/COM/02/2025

8	Presentation of the 2025 Compliance Committee Report	The Chairperson of the Compliance Committee will present a summary of the Compliance Committee Report including recommendations to the Commission. The Commission will discuss the Compliance Committee Report and take appropriate decisions on the recommendations made
DOC/COM/04/2025		
9	Presentation of the 2025 Standing Committee on Administration and Finance Report	The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance will present a summary of the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance Report including recommendations to the Commission. The Commission will discuss the report and take appropriate decisions on the recommendation made
DOC/COM/05/2025		
10	Report on meetings attended by the Secretariat	The Executive Secretary will provide a report on meetings attended during since the last meeting.
DOC/COM/06/2025		
11	Reports of SEAFO Representatives at the 2023/2024 meetings of other Intergovernmental Organisations	<p>SEAFO representatives at the 2025 meetings of the other Intergovernmental Organisations will report back to the Commission on meetings attended. SEAFO representatives will bring to the attention of the members specific issues(s), if any, arose from the meetings.</p> <p>11.1 ICCAT – Rep of South Africa (DOC/COM/08/2025)</p> <p>11.2 SIOFA – Japan (DOC/COM/09/2025)</p> <p>11.3 NEAFC – EU (DOC/COM/10/2025)</p> <p>11.4 NAFO – Japan (DOC/COM/11/2025)</p> <p>11.5 CCAMLR – Rep Korea (DOC/COM/12/2025)</p>
12	Nominations of Parties to represent SEAFO at other International Organisations in 2026	<p>ICCAT</p> <p>SIOFA</p> <p>NEAFC</p> <p>NAFO</p> <p>CCAMLR</p>
13	Any other matters	<p>The Commission will discuss the matter below and any other matters raised that was not previously included in the agenda</p> <p>13.1 Report on RFMO protection of Commercial Confidentiality (DOC/COM/13/2025) – The ES to present the Report to the Commission for discussion</p>

DOC/COM/02/2025

		13.2 FAO Deep-sea Project feedback (DOC/COM/14/2025)
14	Venue and date of the next Commission meeting	The members will agree on a date for the next Commission meeting which should be a physical meeting according to the Commission decision in 2021 <i>"The Commission concluded in 2021: To continue to have annual meetings. On the principle of having biennial physical meetings"</i>
15	Adoption of the 2025 Commission Report	The meeting report will be adopted
DOC/COM/07/2025		
16	Closure of meeting	The Chairperson will close and adjourn the meeting after all items have been concluded

APPENDIX II – List of Participants 2025 Commission Meeting**CHAIRPERSON****Joji MORISHITA (Japan)**

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Appendix III: Opening Addresses

European Union

Opening Statement by the Delegation of the European Union

Mister Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The European Union is pleased to be part of the 22nd Annual Meeting of the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation.

We would like to express our appreciation for the efforts made by the SEAFO Secretariat to organize this meeting.

The European Union would also like to reiterate its support to the sustainable use of living marine resources, based on scientific evidence, the precautionary approach and considerations of its ecosystem impacts. And in this regard, we note that SEAFO has been playing an important role in ensuring the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources in the Convention Area.

Finally, the EU delegation looks forward to working with all SEAFO Parties to achieve the best possible results and to make this Annual Meeting a joint success.

Thank you very much.

JAPAN

On behalf of the Japanese delegation, I would like to thank the Executive Secretary, Dr. Lizette Voges and the staff of the SEAFO Secretariat for their tireless efforts in organizing this meeting in this hybrid format. We are delighted to take part in discussion about sustainable management of fishery resources in the Convention Area with every participating member.

This year, the Commission needs to discuss and share the common view of the foundations for next year's discussion. One of the most important topics for the next year will be setting Total Allowable Catches for SEAFO fishery stocks for 2027 and after. We expect that the constructive discussion at this meeting will constitute the basis for the fruitful outcomes next year.

In addition, global discussions on climate change and biodiversity conservation are progressing rapidly in many fora and institutions, and RFMOs must deal with much wider range of challenges in the context of the conservation and management of fisheries resources. Japan believes this meeting will be a good opportunity to exchange views on how SEAFO will address these emerging challenges, taking stock of its experience in bottom fishery management.

At this juncture, Japan would like to share that it is considering submitting a Notice of Intent for the 2026 exploratory fisheries after this meeting, with a view to promoting sustainable use of the marine living resources based on scientific evidence in the SEAFO Convention Area. Japan cordially asks the members of the Scientific Committee and the Commission to assess proposed exploratory fisheries during the intersessional period in accordance with the provisions of the relevant conservation and management measure. As before, the assessment of Japan's exploratory fisheries plan would be thus conducted on a correspondence basis.

Finally, I would like to conclude my remarks by hoping constructive discussions to be held so that SEAFO will be able to demonstrate itself as a very effective organization.

Thank you very much.



**forestry, fisheries
and the environment**

**Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Republic of South Africa

South Africa is honoured to join you in person at this 22nd Annual Meeting of the SEAFO Commission in the beautiful city of Swakopmund, Namibia. We extend our sincere gratitude to the Government of Namibia for graciously hosting us in the “land of the brave,” and to the SEAFO Secretariat for their meticulous preparation in organizing this important gathering.

It is a privilege to address this 22nd Annual Meeting on behalf of the Republic of South Africa. I have the honour of leading our delegation as Head of Delegation, accompanied by Ms Marisa Kashorte, serving as Specialist Advisor. Together, we remain committed to advancing SEAFO's shared objectives and promoting the sustainable management of our valuable fisheries resources. We congratulate Mr Joji Morishita of Japan on assuming the Chair of the Commission for the 2025–2026 term, and we extend our appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson for their leadership. We also acknowledge the continued guidance of the SEAFO Secretariat, particularly Dr Lizette Voges, Ms Monika Hambinga, and the Secretariat team, for their unwavering dedication and professionalism.

South Africa would like to express sincere appreciation for the support and collaboration we have received from SEAFO, FAO, and other international partners in strengthening our fisheries management and compliance capacity. Over 2024–2025, our officials benefited from invaluable training and capacity- building opportunities, including the International Advanced

Course on Promoting Decent Working Conditions in Fisheries in Spain, the Workshop on Cross-Sectoral Interactions with Deep-Sea Fisheries in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction in Rome, and our upcoming participation in the FAO Deep-Sea Fisheries Project Observers Training Workshop in Walvis Bay, Namibia, in January 2026. These engagements have enhanced our understanding of sustainable fisheries governance, occupational safety, cross-sectoral coordination, and observer programme standards, contributing directly to South Africa's strategic priorities in the blue economy, labour compliance, and ocean governance.

We also acknowledge the tireless efforts of our MCS inspectors, who continue to uphold South Africa's obligations under SEAFO and other RFMOs despite significant resource and operational constraints. While structural and operational challenges have led to delays in the submission of certain Port State Inspection Reports, corrective measures are being implemented:

- Administrative support is being strengthened through targeted appointments via the WfF/EPWP programme, ensuring timely submission of RFMO reports in the future.
- We recognize the importance of training and capacity-building. While some Member States have recently benefited from FAO-supported programmes more extensively, South Africa is actively engaging FAO, DSF, and other partners to facilitate local training for our inspectors. This will ensure equitable access to essential skills and support compliance standards.

Chairperson and honourable members, South Africa remains committed to transparency, accountability, and constructive engagement to strengthen our compliance and reporting discipline.

South Africa remains fully committed to SEAFO and is proud to highlight our contributions. We have accepted the Chair of the Scientific Committee for 2025 - 2026 and continue to chair the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance (SCAF) for a second term. Beyond Chairship, we actively contribute to the work of the Scientific Committee (SC), Compliance Committee (CC), and SCAF and Commission Meetings of SEAFO, strengthening scientific advice, promoting compliance, and supporting the overall effectiveness of SEAFO's governance. Our engagement reflects a broader commitment to regional cooperation, sustainable fisheries management, and the protection of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Looking ahead, South Africa will continue to focus on:

- Strengthening IUU measures and promoting sustainable fisheries management.
- Ensuring transparency and equity in RFMO processes.
- Enhancing capacity-building opportunities and ensuring parity in training access for our inspectors.
- Aligning MCS, VMS, and observer programmes across RFMOs.
- Advancing climate change adaptation and ecosystem-based management approaches.

- Promoting budget sustainability, cost efficiency, and fair application of conservation and management measures.
- Strengthening regional solidarity and South–South cooperation.

In closing, South Africa reaffirms her sovereign commitment to sustainable fisheries and responsible stewardship of marine resources. We value our engagement with SEAFO, the Secretariat, and our fellow Contracting Party Members, and we look forward to continued collaboration in 2025 - 2026 to achieve our shared objectives.

We thank you, Mr Chairperson, and the Secretariat, for your continued guidance and support, and we reaffirm our full commitment to advancing the work of SEAFO in the year ahead.