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Regional Fisheries Management Issues, including in the Arctic

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Seminar*, 12 November 2014, at the Fridtjof
Nansen Institute, Oslo

Overview of presentation

- Allocation of fishing opportunities
- New and exploratory fisheries

Allocation of fishing opportunities

- Transboundary fish stocks (international dimension)
 - No attention to access to high seas fishing
 - Broader concept: distribution of 'burden of conservation'
- Treaty law
 - UNCLOS: merely acknowledges entitlements for coastal or flag States
 - Fish Stocks Agreement: only non-exhaustive and non-prioritized/non-weighted list of allocation criteria without overarching objective (e.g. equity); e.g.
 - Historic track records
 - Geographical distribution of the stock (zonal attachment)
 - Dependence on the stock (coastal, flag or developing State)

Allocation of fishing opportunities (cont.)

- Practice by regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs)
 - Generic provisions or dedicated (but general) instrument
 - Incorporation of (selected) provisions of the Fish Stocks Agreement (e.g. WCPFC, SEAFO, SPRFMO)
 - Dedicated instrument on allocation (e.g. ICCAT; underway in IOTC)
 - Application to specific stocks
 - Often: lack of transparent and robust (science-based) processes that lead to operational and predictable outcomes (exception: CCSBT; possibly underway in IOTC)

Allocation of fishing opportunities (cont.)

- Implications of climate change
 - Changes in abundance & distribution of fish stocks: potentially more frequent, less predictable and larger
 - Disputes on, among others, mackerel, herring and haddock in North-East Atlantic Ocean
 - More urgent need for allocation processes that are
 - transparent and robust (science-based) and lead to operational and predictable outcomes
 - flexible to account for significant changes in abundance & distribution
 - stable (e.g. multi-annual, with no ability to opt-out or only subject to dedicated dispute settlement procedures)
 - New initiatives in the North-Atlantic or Arctic? E.g.
 - within formal arrangements like NAFO, NEAFC or the Joint Norwegian Russian Fisheries Commission;
 - within informal species-specific (N-E Atlantic) coastal State arrangements;
 - new pan-North Atlantic arrangements (separate from RFMOs and arrangements)?

New and exploratory fisheries

- Various scenarios, e.g.
 - New geographical area; and/or
 - New target species; and/or
 - New fishing technique
- Concerns
 - Impacts on target species, non-target species (e.g. by-catch or predator-prey relationships) or the broader marine environment (e.g. benthic ecosystems)
 - concerns caused by a lack of adequate scientific and fisheries data to apply an ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAF)
 - Competition with 'existing fisheries', including subsistence fisheries

New and exploratory fisheries (cont.)

- Past experiences
 - ‘Boom and bust’ on all kinds of fisheries in the Southern Ocean
 - ‘Boom and bust’ of fisheries for deep-sea fish species in Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans & benthic destruction due to fishing techniques used
- Recent developments
 - Fishery for snow crab in Barents Sea
 - Other under-utilized fish stocks around the world, including in the marine Arctic
- Regulatory responses?
 - Workshop on New and Exploratory Fisheries, Tromsø, 3 or 4 February 2015

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Thanks for your attention!

Questions?