

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,
Palais des Nations,
CH-1211 GENEVE 10,
SWITZERLAND

Reykjavík, 23 June 2008.

Concerns: Views, adopted by the Human Rights Committee on 24 October 2007, concerning communication No. 1306/2004.

From: Members of the Icelandic Group „Resources for Public Benefit“

Dear Sirs/Madams

This letter follows a letter on the same issue from Mr. Einar Kristinn Gudfinnsson, Icelandic Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture. We represent a group that shares an interest in the management of fish stocks in Icelandic waters. We have worked together on this issue for over ten years now. None of us has any vested interest in Icelandic fisheries. Our motivation is political, academic and democratic; we feel that Iceland deserves a system that honours the principles of human rights, equal opportunity and freedom of occupation.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you about our discontent with the reaction of the Minister to your views. We believe that our discontent is shared by a large part of the Icelandic population.

The letter from the Minister suggests that it may be impossible to construct a system of fisheries management that would meet all demands, including those for human rights and equality before the law. This presentation of the matter is, in our view, misleading.

In year 2000 our group put forward in public a law proposal designed to solve the problems that the Minister seems to consider insurmountable, and which would be compatible with the views adopted by your committee. The key point of this proposal consists in depreciating the quotas of each fishing vessel by a given percentage each year, say 10-20%. The quotas thus released should fall to the state which would offer them for sale at an annual auction, open to anyone owning a fishing vessel and carrying a general licence to fish. In the long run, this will ensure equal rights in the access to the resource.

We believe that this proposed system would, in principle, fulfil all the requirements of human rights and equality in modern law, national as well as international, without endangering any of the legitimate objectives of the current system. We believe that our proposal nullifies the arguments of the Minister on the problems of replacing the present system, even if the end result might not be identical the proposed system.

Our law proposal is at present only available in Icelandic. If you are interested, we could easily have it translated into English.

With respect,

Jónas Bjarnason

Retired Research Officer

Tryggvi Agnarsson

Lawyer

Jónas Elíasson

Professor emeritus of Civil Engineering

Thórólfur Matthíasson

Professor of Economics

Markús Möller

Economist

Thorsteinn Vilhjálmsson

Professor of Physics and History of Science

Sigurður Björnsson

MPA

Thorvaldur Gylfason

Professor of Economics