

A proposal from the Chair on a way forward

Despite the enormous amount of effort and resources used in recent years, the Commission was unable to accept the proposed consensus decision at this meeting. Deep differences remain on important issues and the Commission has agreed that a period of reflection is warranted prior to the 2011 Annual Meeting.

However, the Commission recognises the positives that have come from this process. The increased trust amongst members and the improved understanding of the different viewpoints suggests that continued dialogue on how to improve the governance of the organisation and improve the efficacy of its conservation and management decisions is warranted.

The Commission wishes to build upon this increased trust and dialogue during this period of reflection.

The Chair suggests a twofold approach:

- (1) member countries work together to take initiatives on particular matters of importance but which have not received general support; and
- (2) an agreement to minimise Plenary discussions on certain contentious matters for which it is clear that no progress will be made.

Under (1), suggested topics are:

- follow up the recommendation from successful Maui workshop (IWC/61/15) to develop plans for a workshop on efforts to prevent entanglement;
- examine the possibility of broadening international regional co-operation in scientific research, (cf SORP and the forthcoming North Pacific programme);
- taking forward discussions on capacity building in developing countries in terms of expanding upon the types of assistance that might be required and possible ways to achieve it;
- promote sharing of information on killing methods in subsistence hunts and, where appropriate, assisting with or developing approaches for improvements.

Under (2), I propose that for next year only, the Commission:

- receives the report from the Scientific Committee on special permit whaling but refrains from making general comments on the programmes or Article VIII;
- receives the reports from the Scientific Committee on all whale stocks but refrains from making general comments on whaling under objection or reservation;
- receives reports from the relevant Committees on whalewatching and small cetaceans without making general verbal comments on competence;
- receives national reports concerning animal welfare information but focuses discussions of the issue on the report of the working group established to develop plans for a workshop.

In addition, the Commission will continue consultations in the intersessional period, taking into account work done this far, and may hold an informal meeting to develop an approach to take the issue of the Future of the IWC further just prior to the Plenary session, should the Chair believe that is worthwhile.