

# **Report of the Working Group on the Role of Observers at Meetings of the Commission**

Wednesday 27 June 2012, Panama City, Panama

## **1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

The list of participants is given as Appendix 1.

### **1.1 Appointment of Chair**

Donna Petrachenko (Australia) was appointed Chair.

### **1.2 Appointment of Rapporteur**

Simon Brockington (Secretariat) was appointed rapporteur.

### **1.3 Review of documents**

The list of documents is given as Appendix 2.

## **1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

The Chair noted that Resolution 2011-1 *inter alia* requested the Secretary to convene a working group of Contracting Governments and observers immediately prior to IWC/64 to consider the role of observers at meetings of the Commission based on experience gained in that regard at IWC/63 in 2011.

The adopted agenda is given as Appendix 3.

## **2. ROLE OF OBSERVERS AT MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION**

### **2.1 Summary of recent Commission developments regarding the role of Observers**

The Secretary introduced IWC/64/OBS 3 which summarised the development of the Commission's procedures relating to the role of observers from 2004 onwards. Between 2004 and 2007 the Commission discussed and implemented changes to its procedures relating to the criteria for accreditation, the number of individuals per organisation allowed to access meeting rooms and also the fee structure and level applied to NGO observer groups. These resulted in an elimination of the requirement for NGOs to maintain international offices, a relaxation of the restriction allowing only a single observer into the meeting room at any one time and a more equitable fee structure.

From 2008-2010 the involvement of civil society organisations was discussed as part of the Future of the IWC process. During these years speaking rights for NGO observers were introduced in the form of a dedicated 30 minute 'NGO Session' during which six organisations comprising three from each side of the debate addressed the plenary meeting. These interventions were captured in the Chair's reports from the 61<sup>st</sup> and 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meetings in 2009 and 2010.

In 2011 the procedures surrounding the NGO session were further developed so as to allow six speakers (again comprising three from each side of the debate) a total of 30 minutes interventions spread over three specific agenda items.

IWC/64/OBS 3 noted that at IWC/63 in 2011 a number of Contracting Governments had suggested that a review of NGO speaking procedures was appropriate following on from the introduction of the trial in 2008. The issues with the 2008 trial included: (1) observers did not speak to a specific agenda item, and hence interventions lacked structure; (2) because of the absence of an agenda item for NGO interventions Contracting Governments were not

easily able to respond; and (3) on occasions, the number of groups speaking from each side of the debate was unequal. IWC/64/OBS 3 also proposed some possible solutions to these issues.

## **2.2 Working group discussion and recommendations**

There was an extensive and wide ranging discussion within the group to which several observer organisations contributed. At the end of discussions there was consensus that the Observer Working Group would make the following recommendations to the Finance and Administration Committee:

The thirty minute period for hearing NGO spoken interventions was **recommended** as a base time allowance for IWC/64. Furthermore the group recognised that the Chair would need to exercise discretion so as to allow the debate to flow smoothly, and therefore the group **recommended** that the NGO interventions would be specific to subjects that would be identified in advance through discussions between the Chair and NGOs. The group also **recommended** that the Chair should work to find a balance of representation in the NGO interventions, and recognised that this representation would need to consider both thematic and geographical contexts.

In recognition of a request made by the host government, the group also **recommended** that some flexibility be allowed in the implementation of the above proposal for involvement of NGOs. In particular, the group **recommended** that the 30 minute allowance should be considered as a minimum which could be slightly expanded upon as the meeting moves forward within the overall time allowance for the meeting as the Chair sees fit.

## **3. ADOPTION OF REPORT**

The report was adopted 'by post' at 20:00 on 1 July 2012.

## Appendix 1

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

#### **Argentina**

Victor Marzari  
Miguel Iniguez

#### **Australia**

Pam Eiser  
Stephanie Ierino  
Chris Schweitzer  
Victoria Wadley  
Alexia Wellbelove

#### **Austria**

Andrea Nouak

#### **Denmark**

Gitte Hundahl

#### **Chile**

Barbara Galletti

#### **Dominican Republic**

Peter Sanchez

#### **Costa Rica**

Eugenia Arguedas  
Ricardo Meneses

#### **Denmark**

Ole Samsing  
Amalie Jessen  
Nette Levermann

#### **Ecuador**

Gustavo Iturralde  
Jorge Samaniego

#### **Germany**

Karl-Hermann Kock  
Lutz Friedrichsen

#### **Ghana**

Mike Akyeampong

#### **Iceland**

Asta Einarsdottir

#### **Japan**

Akima Umezawa  
Akiko Muramoto  
Takaaki Sakamoto

#### **Netherlands**

Peter Bos

#### **Norway**

Einar Tallaksen  
Hild Ynnessdal

#### **Mexico**

Lorenzo Rojas-Bracho  
Yolanda Alaniz

#### **Panama**

Tomas Guardia

#### **Norway**

Kathrine Ryeng  
Truls Soløy

#### **South Africa**

Herman Oosthuizen  
Ed Couzens

#### **Sweden**

Bo Fernholm

#### **UK**

Nigel Gooding  
Jennifer Lonsdale  
Anju Sharda  
Mark Simmonds  
Jolyon Thomson

#### **USA**

Melissa Andersen  
Doug DeMaster  
Roger Eckert  
Brian Gruber  
Peter Jones  
Lisa Phelps  
Allison Reed  
Jonathan Scordino  
Ryan Wulff

#### **IWC Secretariat**

Simon Brockington

**NGO Organisations present:**

**Animal Welfare Institute**  
D.J. Schubert  
Kate O'Connell

**Centro de Conservacion  
Cetacea**  
Jose Truda Palazzo  
Elsa Cabrera  
Javier Figueroa

**ECCEA**  
Marlon Mills  
Paul Elliot Lewis

**Environmental Investigation  
Agency**  
Clare Perry

**Fluke Foundation**  
Mary Whitney

**Fundación Cethus**  
Marta Hevia

**Greenpeace**  
John Frizell

**Humane Society International**  
Kitty Block  
Grettel Delgadillo

**Instituto de Conservación de  
Ballenas**  
Roxana Schteinbarg

**Natural Resources Defense  
Council**  
Taryn Kiekow

**Society for the Conservation of  
Marine Mammals**  
Birgith Sloth

**Windstar**  
Nancy Azzam

**WDCS**  
Vanesa Tossenberger,  
Carolina Cassani,  
Laura Doehring

**WWF International**  
Aimee Leslie

## **Appendix 2**

### **LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

IWC/64/OBS

- 1 Draft Agenda
- 2 List of Documents
- 3 Summary of the Recent Development of Commission  
Procedures Regarding the Role of NGO Observers

## **Appendix 3**

### **AGENDA**

#### **1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

- a. Appointment of Chair
- b. Appointment of Rapporteurs
- c. Review of documents

#### **2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

#### **3. ROLE OF OBSERVERS AT MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION**

- a. Summary of recent Commission developments regarding the role of Observers
- b. Working group discussion and recommendations

#### **4. ADOPTION OF REPORT**