

## MEETING OF THE SMALL WORKING GROUP ON THE FUTURE OF THE IWC

8-10 December 2008, Cambridge, UK

### PRESS RELEASE – 11/12/08

As part of its [agreed process](#) to arrive at a consensus solution to the main issues faced by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to enable it to best fulfil its role with respect to the conservation of whale stocks and the management of whaling, a second meeting of the Small Working Group (SWG) on the Future of IWC has been convened. It took place in Cambridge, UK from 8-10 December 2008 and was again chaired by Ambassador Alvaro de Soto. The first SWG meeting was held in Florida in September.

The process, agreed by the IWC by consensus, comprises two components: one or more small, non-decision-making meetings of the SWG held without observers being present to allow the free exploration of ideas; and full meetings of the Commission which are open to observers. The SWG will report to an intersessional meeting of the Commission (which will be open to observers) scheduled to take place in Rome from 9-11 March 2009. The SWG report will be available in February.

The earliest formal decisions can be taken on the IWC's future will be at the Annual Meeting in Madeira in June 2009, which will be open to observers and the media.

*"I was delighted with the discussions we had at this meeting. As I've said before, this is a vital process for the future of whale conservation and the management of human activities that can affect their status. All IWC members want healthy whale stocks, whatever disagreements may exist on how they should be used"* said the Chair of the IWC, Dr. Bill Hogarth.