

The 66th meeting for the International Whaling Commission 20-28 October 2016 in Portoroz, Slovenia.

**Kingdom of Denmark - written opening statement**

Denmark aligns itself with the statement made by The Netherlands on behalf of the European Union. Denmark also represents the interests of the Faeroe Islands and Greenland, two countries parts of the kingdom not members of the EU.

The Kingdom of Denmark supports the sustainable use of all living marine resources, based on the best available scientific advice taking into account the precautionary principle. Marine mammals are valuable renewable food resources and form an integral part of the cultures and needs of the Faroe Islands and Greenland. We support regional cooperation on conservation and management of whales as a necessary and fruitful supplement to global cooperation and we engage actively with Nordic, Arctic as well as other partners.

We remain thankful to those who contributed positively to resolving the difficult situation at IWC-65 on catch limits for Greenland from 2015-2018. The failure of the IWC to effectively manage its ASW obligations prior to IWC-65 underlines the need for a more consistent, effective and science based ASW management, through a fair and transparent process in respect of governments having responsibility over needs of its people.

We welcome the outcome of the Maniitsoq expert workshop in 2015 and urge all IWC parties to actively contribute to ensuring follow up in an effective and constructive forward looking manner. It is important to keep momentum so the IWC can produce results both on the unresolved ASW issues and those identified in the 2011 report of the ASW Sub-Committee.

In particular, we are seriously concerned over expert recommendations that the IWC needs to stay informed of important and ongoing developments in international law and the growing body of norms protecting and entitling indigenous peoples and their distinct status and rights. We urge the IWC to ensure that its ASW actions are consistent with human rights obligations and international commitments of contracting governments in this regard. We seriously believe that this will contribute to building mutual trust and ensuring a less politicized ASW governance process.

We once again welcome the significant achievements by the Scientific Committee on developing SLA's for the ASW hunt of Greenland. The authorities and hunters of Greenland have invested vast resources in meeting the requests of the IWC and will continue to do so.

It is our sincere hope that a path can be followed that allows for the Kingdom of Denmark to remain a contracting government to the ICRW and active partner in the conservation and management of the world's large whales.