

Report of the Meeting of the Management Committee on Inspection and Observation

Copenhagen, Denmark, 31 January 2003

The Management Committee on Inspection and Observation met in the Office of the Faroe Islands Government in Copenhagen, 31 January from 09:00 - 1300. Present were Egil Ole Øen, chair, (Norway), Jústines Olsen (Faroe Islands), Kristjan Loftsson (Iceland), Amalie Jessen and Kim Mathiasen (Greenland), Grete Hovelsrud-Broda and Charlotte Winsnes from the Secretariat.

1. Election of Chair

Egil Ole Øen was elected as chair of the Committee.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted with the following amendment: Item 4. Terms of Reference

3. Appointment of Rapporteur

Charlotte Winsnes was appointed as rapporteur.

4. Terms of Reference

This was the first meeting of the Committee since it was formally constituted at the Management Committee meeting in Ilulissat in February 2002.

Terms of Reference for the Committee:

- *The working group shall function as a standing review body to monitor the implementation of the Observation Scheme and provide recommendations for improvements.*
- *The working group shall upon request from the Secretariat provide advice on the Observation Scheme.*
- *The Working Group shall report annually to the Management Committee*

The Terms of Reference is open for future adjustments and additions.

The Committee reviewed the terms of reference and agreed on the following understanding:

The Committee is free to discuss and make recommendations for improvements /alterations to the Inspection and Observation Scheme whenever it sees a need for this. If more background information is needed in a given case, it is the responsibility of the Committee to ask the Secretariat to provide all necessary information.

The Committee will function as an advisory body for the Secretariat. If the Secretariat seeks the advice of the Committee it is the responsibility of the Secretariat to provide all necessary background information.

The Committee will not intervene in the daily operation of the Scheme.

5. Experiences with the Inspection and Observation Scheme

The Secretariat had prepared the document NAMMCO/IO-1/2003-4, outlining its experiences with the Observation Scheme. The document was two-folded, and part one gave statistical data such as where and for which period observations have taken place, observation targets, and land of origin of the observers.

The Scheme came into force in 1998 and has been in operation for five seasons. No violation of national or hunting related regulations has occurred during these five seasons. In 2001 there was a violation of the regulations laid down by the NAMMCO Inspection and Observations Scheme when the observer was denied access to one vessel in Norway. However, the national inspector reported no infringements or violations of the Norwegian laws and regulations on the same vessel.

Except for the seasons 1998 and 2002, observations have taken place in the three member countries engaged in hunting activities (the Faroe Islands - pilot whaling, Norway - sealing and minke whaling and Greenland - sealing and whaling). In 1998 observations did not take place in the Faroe Islands, and in 2002 there was no observation of sealing in Norway.

The Committee noted that as a rule the observation period referred to should be the active observation period excluded travelling time to and from the country in question.

Part two of the document NAMMCO/IO-1/2003-4, summarised earlier recommendations made by the Working Group on Inspection and Observation in 1999, in addition to some points made by the Secretariat. Most of the recommendations have for various reasons not been followed up, but it was the general consensus that given a relatively small effort most of the problems could be solved.

- The Committee noted that the procedures governing the nomination and appointment of observers might seem somewhat time-consuming and bureaucratic. It is however very important that these procedures are followed in order to secure the legitimacy of the process. The member countries have mainly been the "weak point" here, but this seems to have changed based on the experiences so far related to the upcoming season.
- The Committee recommended that the Secretariat produce a one- page information sheet describing the Inspection and Observation Scheme and NAMMCO in general. The information must be translated into all NAMMCO languages, and will be used both by the Secretariat, the member countries and the observers. It will mainly be aimed at the local authorities and hunters but also at the general public. It seems to be a general problem that the Scheme is not as well known as was anticipated. The Committee also recommended that information on the Scheme be placed on the NAMMCO web site.
- The Committee recommended that each member country provides the Secretariat with detailed information on hunting statistics, quotas and time frames and places for the most optimum areas of observation, and names of contact persons in each

region. As a routine the Secretariat will be responsible for reminding the member countries to provide this information.

- In the future the Secretariat will send the observers' report to the country in question for comments. This condition is outlined in provision B2.4 of the Scheme, but has not been followed up by the Secretariat.
- In connection with the 2002 season, one observer reported that based on his interpretation of the Scheme as to when observation can take place, he chose not to submit a report in two cases. After having consulted the guidelines and read the observers report the Committee concluded that the guidelines are not ambiguous on this point and the observer was in a situation where observations could have taken place. In the future, as part of the preparation process, observers should be instructed to seek advice from the Secretariat if they have questions about the provisions of the Scheme or its guidelines.

The remaining points in document NAMMCO/IO-1/2003-4 were dealt with under the next agenda item.

6. The future of the Inspection and Observation Scheme

The Committee agreed that the Inspection and Observation Scheme is working according to the intentions laid down in the provisions of the Scheme. It is important to realise that the Scheme is still "young" and it is therefore too early to fully evaluate the Scheme. The Secretariat's routines for implementation are in place. The problems encountered in the past with this part of the Scheme were mainly related to member countries failing ability to meet deadlines, but this seems to be functioning now. Furthermore, when the observers are out in the field, it is the Committee's impression that the Scheme is working well. In general after having discussed the experiences under item 5., the Committee sees no serious obstacles as to upgrading the routines and making the implementation process run more smoothly.

The Committee underlined that NAMMCO in fact is the only organisation that has a well functioning international Inspection and Observation Scheme on whaling and sealing. However, in order to further strengthen the Scheme the Committee asked the Management Committee to consider the following:

- To increase the budget. In order to fully accomplish the intentions laid down in the Scheme it is necessary with a larger budget. Today the active observation periods have been maximum three weeks, but usually between 8 to 14 days. This is a comparatively short period of time. It has also been the pattern to place one observer in Greenland and the Faroe Islands each and two observers in Norway.

- in some years, to focus the observations on one activity and/or one region. This is not intended to be the rule, but to help expand the experience in a field, given the present budget level.

- to recommend the member countries to nominate more than one observer candidate. The last years there has been a tendency for some member countries to nominate only one candidate. This makes the implementation difficult and very fragile, but also decreases the possible observation periods, places and focuses. It is therefore important to increase the pool of observers, and in that connection remind member

countries that it is possible to nominate candidates coming from countries outside of NAMMCO.

7. Any other business

The Chair thanked the Committee members and secretariat for their efforts and especially thanked the Faroe Islands for their kind hosting of the meeting of the Committee.

8. Adoption of the Report

The final report of the meeting was approved by correspondence on 18 February 2003.