

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON INSPECTION AND OBSERVATION

The Committee on Inspection and Observation met in the Office of the Faroe Islands representation in Copenhagen, 14 February 2008 from 09:00 – 13:00. Present were Ole Heinrich, Chair (Greenland), Egil Ole Øen and Hild Ynnesdal (Norway), Jústines Olsen (Faroe Islands), Kristjan Loftsson (Iceland), Christina Lockyer, Mario Acquarone and Charlotte Winsnes from the Secretariat.

1. OPENING PROCEDURE

The Chair of the Committee, Ole Heinrich, welcomed the Committee members to the meeting. The draft agenda was adopted and Charlotte Winsnes was appointed as rapporteur.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE COMMITTEE

At its last meeting the Council decided that the existing Sub-Committee should now report directly to Council rather than the Management Committee; it would therefore no longer be a Sub-Committee but rather a self-standing one. Document NAMMCO/I&O-February/2008-2 containing the revised terms of reference for the former Sub-Committee was presented to the Committee. In addition to the editorial changes with respect to the reporting body the text of paragraph 3 had also been revised by deleting the word annually to accommodate those years when the convening of the committee is not required or called for. The Committee took note of the revisions.

3. REPORT FROM THE 2007 SEASON

Document NAMMCO/I&O-February/2008-3 contained the report from the Secretariat of the Observation Season 2007. The document was presented as an information item and the Committee was not asked to revise or approve the report.

4. REVISION OF THE TEXT OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE INSPECTION AND OBSERVATION SCHEME

The Observation Scheme has been operative since 1998. Before 2002 only land based observations were carried out. However the tendency during the recent years has been to have observers out at sea. Being out at sea requires other kinds of safety measures than when operating on shore. Furthermore Norway has developed and implemented a new automatic monitoring system for its whale hunt operations. The Provisions do not take sufficient account of this new situation, and Council had at its last meeting recommended that amendments to the provisions be made to:

- integrate requirements for observer training to ensure observer safety onboard vessels, and
- take account of recent technological developments in automated monitoring in the Norwegian whale hunt.

The Committee was presented with a revised text of the Provisions that had incorporated the editorial changes with respect to the reporting body (see agenda item 3 above). The Secretariat also presented an overview of some of the safety requirements for out at sea operations in member countries.

It was generally agreed that it was important to differentiate between the observer and the ship crew. The observer is more akin to passengers on a boat and hence he/she must have information/knowledge on how to take care of themselves in an emergency situation i.e. where

the survival suits are, how to get dressed, how they work, where to evacuate, emergency exits, life boats, etc.

During the discussions under this agenda item it was clear that the Committee needed more time to suggest amendments with respect to safety requirements and also the automated monitoring system. It was generally acknowledged that this represented a good opportunity to revisit the text of the Provisions with respect to necessary adjustments it being more than a decade since it was first adopted. The Provisions Section A, B, C and Appendix 1 were adopted in 1996 and Appendix 2, Guidelines to Section B was adopted in 1997 with a minor amendment in 1999. As a starting point Appendix 1 and section C will be revised by correspondence before the next Council meeting. In addition new issues had surfaced (see agenda item 5.1 below) and it was recommended to revisit the standard reporting forms that the observers use in order to see if there were possibilities for improvements.

4. EXPERIENCES WITH USING AUTOMATED MONITORING OF WHALE HUNTING IN NORWAY

The Committee had been asked to provide a report to the next Council meeting on experiences in using automated monitoring in whale hunting in Norway. However the Committee choose to postpone one year in anticipation of the announced evaluation of the system that Norway will carry out after the 2008 season.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Training of observers

In connection with discussion under agenda item 4. above the Committee recommended that the Secretariat establish a more formalised system of guidance and preparation of observer candidates prior to their assignment. The system is functioning today but it was thought that a more formalised frame would be beneficial for all concerned. Based on the guidelines to Section B of the Observer Scheme the Secretariat should formalise the training both with respect to the general information supplied by the Secretariat and the activity-specific preparation that are carried out by the national authorities with regards to interpretation of laws and regulations and duties of national inspectors.

6. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The final report of the meeting was approved by correspondence on 7 March 2008.