

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **NAMMCO MINISTERIAL MEETING Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2012, Svolvær, Norway**

On the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO), a meeting of Ministers and high officials from the member countries – Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway - convened by Greenland has taken place in Svolvær, preceding the 21st annual council meeting of NAMMCO.

Official observers representing Canada, Denmark and Japan also participated in the meeting.

Dr. Richard Caddell from Swansea University gave a well-received presentation on “NAMMCO as a regional body: Legal aspects and implications”. In his presentation, Dr. Cadell analyzed the legal position of NAMMCO with respect to the Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS) and compared it with other similar, international organisations.

The Ministers concurred that NAMMCO fulfills its role as a regional management organisation in accordance with UNCLOS.

The Ministers agreed that NAMMCO has stood the test of time and that it has carried out its mission as a management organisation operating on a sound scientific basis.

The Ministers commended NAMMCO on the quality of its work within the Scientific Committee, its constructive efforts on animal welfare issues and on the international inspection scheme covering the hunting activities of member countries.

Consequently, the Ministers concluded that NAMMCO is well prepared to meet future challenges within international cooperation on the management of marine mammals.

Looking ahead, and turning to the topic of global food security, they pointed out the underutilized potential of marine mammals as a source of environment-friendly food. In a protein-deficient world one should not ignore abundant resources that can be harvested sustainably and provide highly nutritious food for a great number of humans. NAMMCO members should increase efforts to make the public aware of this fact.

Finally, the Ministers urged the observer countries to NAMMCO to become full members of the organisation.