AGENDA ITEM 7: EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NAMMCO COUNTRIES

NAMMCO manual on whaling

NAMMCO has developed instruction manuals on weaponry and killing for all whale hunts in the member countries. The manuals give basic and vital information on the use and maintenance of weapons and ammunition deployed in whale hunting. The text is descriptive, sometimes giving step by step instructions with corresponding illustrations.

The aim

- Improve the safety for hunters and hunting crew
- Improve the hunters' knowledge and skill regarding use and maintenance of weapons
- Improve animal welfare

Target groups are whalers, gunners, riflemen, whaling inspectors, wildlife officers and international observers, and administrators and others engaged in whaling. See document 18 which contains the full manual on baleen whales.

Regulation

Whaling in all three member countries is subject to strict and detailed regulations concerning all aspects of the hunting activities. There are rules pertaining to hunting season, quotas, equipment and monitoring. The permission to go whaling is given on an annual basis, and certain requirements must be met in order to get a licence.

Norway

Training courses

It is an unconditional requirement for licence holders and gunner to have passed the obligatory training courses arranged by the Directorate of Fisheries.

In these courses professional and technical personnel lecture on laws and regulations governing the hunt. Thorough information is given on all aspects of the hunting activity like weapon maintenance and correct use (rifle, harpoons, harpoon guns), hunters safety and animal welfare, anatomy and physiology of relevance for the killing and the understanding of the behaviour of the whales, and slaughtering and processing of the products from the whale. In addition, hunters are trained in how to report to the authorities and how to take biological samples of the catch for the DNA-register.

The courses are arranged whenever there are new regulations concerning the hunt or new licence holders. However, on a yearly basis prior to the beginning of each hunting season, the hunters (the gunners) are required to pass obligatory shooting tests, both with rifle and harpoon guns. The shooting tests with the harpoon guns take place from the boat at sea and is overlooked and approved by inspectors from the Directorate of Fisheries. The rifle test (identical to ordinary tests required for big game hunters) are done at a shooting range and must be approved by authorised personnel from a gun club.

From 2014 all whaling vessels have received the NAMMCO manual with a request that it is made available on-board and that all hunters familiarise themselves with the manual prior to the actual hunting.