



Opening statement by Greenland to NAMMCO 36th Annual Meeting 2023, Tromsø, Norway

Mr Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

What a wonderful food event NAMMCO arranged in October 2022 in Tromsø. It was a success thanks to the host and the Secretariat and the chefs that made the delicious dishes.

We are in the middle of winter in Greenland, so what we need is a couple of positive stories. I read recently in a magazine which says: "Researchers in Greenland have discovered an unusually high number of fin whales and humpback whales in the waters off the coast of East Greenland. This could indicate a turning point in the eco-system of the ocean. The whales are lured there, because global warming has resulted in less sea ice and warmer water. This helps to change the food chain."

The reaction I heard from the hunters in East Greenland to the news is: "This is not a new for us. We have observed large numbers of large whales, including bowhead whales and other small cetaceans in our waters the last 10-15 years, so we cannot call it for a discovery. But it is true that the numbers of large whales seem to increase and coming closer to the coast."

There are several good examples of successful science-based management over 30 years with NAMMCO that we should be proud of. Negative trends in populations of species such as walrus, narwhals and belugas have been stopped and even reversed due to good management based on advice from the NAMMCO SC.

NAMMCO has also succeeded its work on animal welfare issues through the Committee on Hunting Methods. There have been important works such as Hunting manuals, video-based instructions regarding the use of harpoon cannons and whale grenades. It is very important work, which has been done in good cooperation with hunters and other experts.

Another good information is that the University of Greenland has introduced a new curriculum called "SLA Curriculum", a study of biology on bachelor level - based on Greenlandic wild animals, the nature and the weather. Indeed, a study curriculum we certainly need in Greenland to better understand the animals and the effects of changing climate.

We are in Greenland facing very serious challenges with narwhals and belugas in East Greenland. This is a very sensitive issue. The Government of Greenland initially has stopped transport and