

On behalf of the International Whaling Commission, I would like to thank you for the invitation to join this 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission. Our two organisations share a common mission of cetacean science and stewardship and I would like to thank the NAMMCO members who participated in the recent IWC Commission meeting IWC68 and those who will join us for the IWC Scientific Committee meeting in Bled, Slovenia next month.

Both our organisations rely on high quality scientific research and it is these endeavours that are the focus of our collaborations. Indeed IWC and NAMMCO both maintain tables of approved abundance estimates that are used to inform our work and decisions. I am pleased to note the increased communication between our two organisations to ensure consistency in these.

In our role of overseeing aboriginal subsistence whaling the IWC maintains records of historical and modern whaling catches. This database relies on contributions to keep it up to date and maintain its efficacy and we thank the NAMMCO members for their help in this.

The threats to whale stocks, such as ship strikes, pollution and climate change, are increasing and are often outside of the immediate influence of our organisations. As such they rely on us working with others across different fora to ensure that the health of our oceans and their cetacean populations are part of any decision making. Critically bycatch is the greatest single threat and both NAMMCO's BYCELS and IWC's Bycatch Mitigation Initiative seek to expand efforts to monitor and mitigate bycatch through collaborative work with the fishery sector.

I hope that our collaborative work continues and I look forward to fruitful discussions over the next two days. Thank you Chair.