

Chair, Delegates, Observers and Guests - dear friends

First of all, congratulations on 30th council meeting. We certainly are pleased to see you here in beautiful Tromsø in such a lovely weather.

After 31 years NAMMCO is a well-established organisation, constructive in its work and forward looking. Norway would like to express its sincere gratitude to all the Parties, and the Secretariat, for contributing to this unique environment of cooperation.

NAMMCO leans heavily on science and research. The Scientific Committee in NAMMCO is central in giving the organisation legitimacy and direction with regard to which direction it should move. The scientific committee provides advice based on the best available science and the work done in the committee has been of great importance to the member countries during the last three decades. Although we do not always appreciate the advice given, it is our belief that NAMMCO needs to stay faithful to the results from science and research. This is essential for maintaining the high credibility of NAMMCO as responsible management organization.

In light of this we look forward to discussing how to strengthen the implementation of the precautionary approach, linking responsibility and precautionary management.

Of great importance is also the work done in the committee of hunting methods and NAMMCO must continue to focus on animal welfare to make sure that the highest standards possible are laid as a basis when euthanising marine mammals.

We look forward to fruitful and constructive discussions, including discussing the future of NAMMCO, in the next days.

Thank you.