

## **Opening statement NAMMCO31 – Faroe Islands**

Mister Chair, Distinguished Delegates and Observers - Ladies and Gentlemen

The Faroe Islands are a large ocean nation and few people in the world are as closely tied to the sea as the Faroe Islanders.

As a founding member of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission, the Faroe Islands are committed to rational management, conservation and responsible use of the living resources of the sea.

Whaling has been ingrained in the life of our islands since our Norse ancestors settled the Faroe Islands in the Middle Ages, and whaling continues to be an integral part of Faroese food culture.

Today, whaling in the Faroe Islands is a community-based activity. Our unique form of whaling is largely non-commercial - that is the way it has developed over centuries as a part of our food culture.

Still, we also fully respect the rights of others to trade commercially in their marine mammal resources. Our common goal is to ensure that the use of whales and seals is sustainable and that hunts are conducted responsibly - and base our decisions on the best available scientific advice.

NAMMCO is a well-established organisation and constructive in its work. This testifies to the importance of our organisation and the value of our cooperation.

This summer the next NASS survey will be conducted and these recurring whale counting surveys, which span more than 30 years, are the flagship of the scientific corporation in NAMMCO.

The MINTAG project is advancing and demonstrates the ambition propelling the efforts of our organisation, and highlights NAMMCO's leadership in the fields of marine mammal studies.

On behalf of the Faroese delegation, I wish to express our gratitude to our Icelandic hosts for their hospitality in convening this meeting. It is truly a pleasure and honour to come together here in Reykjavík for this significant event. Furthermore, our sincere appreciation goes to the secretariat for their diligent and dedicated efforts in facilitating the work of our organization.

We look forward to the discourses at this annual meeting, aiming to engage in meaningful discussions on NAMMCO's initiatives and achieve fruitful outcomes that advance our common responsibility.

Thank you.