

NAMMCO Council March 25, 2025 – Opening Statement NORWAY

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends of NAMMCO. It is a great pleasure to see you all here in spring Tromsø.

As usual we have a full agenda in front of us, indeed demonstrating that this organization is alive and kicking. Yesterday we also experienced a most constructive seminar focusing on the need to provide for animal welfare when hunting for marine mammals. Although not a formal part of the Council meeting, the focus and content of this seminar was a living proof of the concern that should be a natural part of being a hunter for marine mammals. As this seminar was arranged in the margins of the Council it emphasizes the consciousness of the NAMMCO family when it comes to the issue of animal welfare. From a Norwegian perspective we indeed welcome a strengthened focus on animal welfare also with regard to marine mammals. In general the issue of animal welfare has proven to be a concern of the public opinion, and as such underlined the need for the authorities to continue to have a strong focus on the subject.

Last September there was time for another meeting of the IWC, this time in Lima, Peru. Norway considers that the legitimacy of the IWC is dependent upon its ability to balance its mandate with the diverse interests of its member states. However, this does not seem to be the case. Since the adoption of the Moratorium in 1982, the work of the IWC has been an example of how an international organization shall not work. As a result of the decisions made in Lima, the IWC seems to be digging deeper into a deadlock that has haunted the organization for more than four decades and has surely prevented further development of the organization to happen. Since 1982, the IWC has neglected to fulfil the second part of its mandate: the management of the whale stocks. Instead, the IWC has entirely focused on the other pillar of its mandate: conservation of whale stocks.

NAMMCO has since it was established in 1992 proved to be a completely different organization. Yes, the very purpose of the organization is different, but I also have in mind that NAMMCO operates with a eye on the future and the challenges ahead of us while IWC are stuck with their gaze fixed on the past.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I think the agenda for the next couple of days will remind us that there is a need for sustainable use of marine resources if we shall meet the need of proteins for a rapidly growing population on this planet, and that marine mammals should have a pivotal role to play in that regard.

I wish all participants a successful meeting.

Thank you.