

**Statement issued at the conclusion of the special Commissioners' meeting on the Revised Management Scheme, Cambridge, UK, October 2002**

At its 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, the International Whaling Commission agreed to hold a special meeting of Commissioners to examine the outstanding issues required to finalise the Revised Management Scheme (RMS)\* for commercial whaling and to specify the future work needed to expedite its completion.

The meeting comprised representatives from 37 of the 49 member states. It was chaired by Henrik Fischer (Denmark), the Vice-Chairman of the Commission.

It met from 15-17 October 2002 in Cambridge, UK.

There was a valuable exchange of views and ideas on a number of difficult issues surrounding the completion of an RMS, including catch verification schemes, compliance reviews, costs, area restrictions, animal welfare data and other related issues. Progress was made in several areas where fundamental differences have been expressed in the past. A mechanism to build on this progress was established, including the establishment of three special working groups (on costs, catch verification and compliance). The next special Commissioners' meeting will take place prior to the next Annual Meeting of the Commission in Berlin in June 2003.

\* *see background below*

## Background on the IWC and the Revised Management Scheme

### Background

In 1982, the IWC decided by majority vote to implement a pause or 'moratorium' in commercial whaling with effect from the 1986 coastal and 1985/86 pelagic whaling seasons. There were a number of factors involved in this decision. These included difficulties in agreeing what catch limits to set for non-protected species (due to scientific uncertainties in the information needed to apply the management procedure then in place) and differing attitudes to the acceptability of whaling. The wording of the moratorium decision implied that with improved scientific knowledge in the future, it might be possible to set catch limits other than zero for certain stocks.

### The 'moratorium'

### The Comprehensive Assessment and the RMP

After the moratorium decision was taken, the IWC Scientific Committee embarked on a major review of the status of whale stocks (including an examination of current stock size, recent population trends and productivity) which it called the Comprehensive Assessment. At the outset of its work on this, the Scientific Committee recognised the need to develop management objectives and procedures that learnt from its previous difficulties, and in particular recognised the limitations of both the data it had and the data it was likely to obtain. It spent over eight years developing the Revised Management Procedure, a scientifically robust method of setting safe catch limits for certain stocks (groups of whales of the same species living in a particular area) where the numbers are plentiful.

### The RMS

Given this scientific advance which has been accepted by the Commission, there has been pressure from some countries to remove the moratorium for certain stocks of minke whales. However, before the RMP is implemented and the moratorium on commercial whaling lifted, the IWC has agreed that an inspection and observation scheme must be in place to ensure that agreed catch limits are not exceeded. **It is this combination of scientific and non-scientific factors that comprises the Revised Management Scheme.**

### The road to an RMS: 1994

The RMS Working Group was established in 1994 to complete work on:

- i) an effective inspection and observation scheme;
- ii) arrangements to ensure that total catches over time are within the limits set under the Revised Management Scheme; and
- iii) incorporation into the Schedule of the specification of the Revised Management Procedure and all other elements of the Revised Management Scheme.

### July 2000

Progress on this difficult issue proceeded slowly and in July 2000, the International Whaling Commission adopted Resolution 2000-3. This Resolution recognised that it is important for the future of the Commission that the process to complete the Revised Management Scheme (RMS) proceeds expeditiously.

### Monaco February 2001

A meeting was held in Monaco from 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2001 and some progress was made on:

1. revising the section of the Schedule that deals with supervision and control; and
2. developing a text to incorporate the structure and elements of the RMS, including the Revised Management Procedure, into the Schedule.

The focus of discussions at an intersessional meeting held in Monaco in February 2001 was on the development of an effective inspection and observation scheme.

Among the issues still to be resolved were: (1) the level of international observer coverage required; (2) the type and level of tracking of whaling vessels required; (3) the timing (e.g. daily, weekly) of reporting of whales hunted, struck and killed; (4) maintenance and availability of a register of DNA profiles of all whales killed; (5) procedures to monitor the origins of whale products on the market; and (6) the funding of the scheme.

**The Expert  
Drafting Group**

**2001-2002**

The report of the Monaco meeting was discussed at the 2001 Annual Meeting of the Commission held in London. Although progress was made in a number of areas, agreement was not reached on all and the Commission agreed to establish an Expert Drafting Group (EDG) to develop a consolidated draft of two chapters of the Schedule, those relating to Supervision and Control, and those relating to Information Required.

**May 2002**

The Commission reviewed the work of the EDG and agreed to hold an intersessional Commissioners' meeting in October 2002 to forward this work.

**October 2002**

*See statement from the special Commissioners' meeting above.*