



**Minutes of the Bureau Meeting
Tuesday 28 February 2023
Virtual Meeting**

19h00 to 21h00 UK time

Attendance:

Bureau Members:

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| Amadou Télivel Diallo | (Chair, Republic of Guinea) |
| Belinda Jago | (For Nick Gales, Vice-Chair, Australia) |
| Miguel Iniguez | (CC Vice-Chair, Argentina) |
| Lucia Scheinkman | (Argentina) |
| Horace Walters | (Saint Lucia) |
| Tom Gleason | (United States) |
| Mi Ae Kim | (United States) |
| Madison Harris | (United States) |
| Alisha Falberg | (United States) |
| Lisa Phelps | (WGOE Co-Chair, United States) |
| Ryan Wulff | (F&A Chair, United States) |
| Stephanie Langerock | (Belgium) |

Invited Participants:

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| Alex Zerbini | (SC Chair, Brazil) |
| Adam Clark | (BSC, Australia) |

Interpreters:

Schéhérazade Matallah-Salah
Warda Tazi

Secretariat:

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| Rebecca Lent | (Executive Secretary) |
| Nikki Bartmeier | (Head of Finance and Administration) |
| Moussa Ki Sow | (Database Manager) |
| Iain Staniland | (Head of Science, Conservation, & Mgt) |
| Mark Tandy | (Head of External Affairs) |

Apologies:

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| Cat Bell | (CC Chair, UK) |
| Francis Nunoo | (Ghana) |
| Nick Gales | (Vice-Chair, Australia) |

1. Welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed all to this his first meeting in his role as Chair of the Commission. The Chair noted that given the decisions on the biennial budget taken at IWC68, all Bureau meetings other than the one(s) held at the Commission meetings are to be held virtually. He reminded participants that the Bureau meeting was convened in line with Rule of Procedure B.4 and that the Chairs and Vice-Chairs from the Scientific and Conservation Committees, and the Budgetary Sub-Committee were also invited to join this Bureau meeting, as allowed under the Rule of Procedure 9.

2. Review and adoption of the bureau agenda and minutes of the previous bureau meeting

The agenda, which was circulated to the Bureau on 23 January 2023, was adopted with no changes. All background papers were also circulated to the Bureau on 16 and 20 February 2023. The Chair noted that given the recommendations of the Working Group on Operational Effectiveness (WG-OE) that were adopted at IWC68, the agenda and all documents were shared with the Commission prior to the meeting.

The minutes of the previous Bureau meeting held just prior to and during the IWC68 meeting had already been adopted by correspondence and can be accessed [here](#).

3. Appointment of rapporteur

It was agreed that, as usual, the Secretariat would serve as rapporteur for the Bureau meeting.

4. Financial contributions

4.1 Current status

The Secretariat provided an overview of the status of contributions for the Commission financial years of 2022 and 2023. The Commission is currently quorate, given that for 2022, 57 countries are in good standing and 31 countries have arrears. The total amount of arrears for 2017-2022 is just over £500,000, which is 31% of our annual contributions budget.

Contributions for the Commission financial year of 2023 are due 30 June 2023 and currently some 20 countries are in good standing. The deadline for paying 2023 contributions is 30 June 2023, although under the Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations, voting rights are not suspended until the earliest of the following events:

- 1) Commission or Bureau meeting
- 2) Postal vote
- 3) 30 September.

4.2 Web-based tool for updates

The Secretariat requested the Bureau to consider implanting a web-based tool to provide regular updates on the status of contributions of member countries, similar to what is currently provided by the UN Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). Bureau members were in agreement that this would be beneficial but urged caution relative to any appearance of naming any

countries before the due date for contributions. A voting status column will be included in the schedule to clarify who has the right to vote at that particular time.

In addition, in response to a query from a member country of the IWC, the Bureau confirmed that the Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations do not allow payment in any currency other than Pounds Sterling.

4.3 Voluntary funds

The Secretariat provided an update on contributions to various voluntary funds at the IWC and proposed that a new webpage provide a report on these contributions, to be updated quarterly. This would provide information about sources of voluntary funding and how these funds are being utilized, thereby affording more transparency. The Bureau expressed general support for this increased transparency on voluntary funding and looked forward to reviewing the mock-up prior to posting.

5. Primary post-IWC68 tasks based on Outcomes document

5.1 Budget

The Secretariat provided detail on the implementation of the IWC68-agreed biennial budget, including cuts to the Secretariat and to the Scientific Committee (meeting budget and Research budget). Financial contributions invoices have been sent out. Various adjustments have been made to minimize the impact of these cuts on the Secretariat and the Scientific Committee operations.

5.2 WG-OE and other intersessional groups

WG-OE Co-Chair Lisa Phelps provided an update to the Bureau on the plans for the WG-OE to address the tasks assigned at IWC68, as provided in the document 'Summary of Main Outcomes, Decisions and Required Actions from the 68th Meeting of the IWC'. The WG-OE Co-Chairs will first work with the Secretariat to update the list of WG-OE participants. Once this membership list is finalized, the WG-OE members will be asked to review the list of actions assigned by the Commission at IWC68, prioritize these tasks, and then add tasks as necessary. These taskings should be finalized by May or June of 2023. The WG-OE will meet over the year, likely by correspondence and/or in virtual format, to continue its work. Proposals to the Commission will be provided in papers at least 60 days prior to IWC69, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. Other Bureau members agreed that having a clear list and timeline will assist in attracting new and actively engaged members from a broader region, and they offered to assist as participants or in finding new members for the WG.

5.3 Modifications to the Rules of Procedure, Financial Regulations and Schedule

Edits agreed at the IWC68 meeting have been made and shared with the Commission via Circular. The documents are on the IWC website with track changes for ease of discerning the modifications.

Other tasks post-IWC68 were noted during the Bureau meeting, including the ASW survey on indigenous rights, for which a call for tenders has been issued, a Commission-wide survey on seismic testing, and other activities. The Secretariat also implemented the recommendations of the WG-OE that were adopted at IWC68, notably for the Bureau and the structure of the Commission meetings.

Other updates post-IWC68:

The Secretariat also updated the Bureau on the plastics pollution resolution adopted at IWC68. The Secretariat is exploring cooperation with other IGO's and UN Bodies - working with CMS including representation in the UNEP Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on plastic pollution discussions and signing a partnership with the Global Ghost Gear Initiative. There have also been steps taken to implement the ASW recommendation for the study of indigenous rights, with a tender out for proposals and a review process so that the study could begin in June 2023 and be completed in time for IWC69. Workplans endorsed at IWC68 include reaching out to the Commissioner for Panama, who have offered to chair the Whale Watching SWG (replacing Ryan Wulff). The Ship Strikes Standing Working Group is setting up an Expert Panel and working with the IMO on a proposal for a protected area around the Pelagos Sanctuary. The Letter of Agreement FAO Common Oceans project on bycatch has been signed, a bycatch risk assessment meeting is forthcoming for Chile, and meetings are planned to get started on a Bycatch Mitigation Initiative pilot project in Peru. Two workshop reports are to be published soon on the Conservation Management Plans for Franciscana and Southern Right Whales.

The Vice-Chair of the Conservation Committee added that the report of a workshop on the Humpback Whale in the Arabian Seas has been published. He also mentioned the questionnaire on seismic surveys that was circulated to the IWC shortly before the Bureau Meeting.

6. Updates from the SC

6.1 Budget Issues

The Chair of the Scientific Committee, Dr Alex Zerbini, informed the Bureau on how the SC is adapting to the new biennial budget decided at IWC68, which included cuts to the SC Meeting and Research budget. The SC will now be transitioning to biennial meetings, but making use of savings from not meeting in person during the pandemic to host meetings in both 2023 and 2024. The process of determining Invited Participants to SC69A is underway, with fewer receiving SC funding given increased costs and reduced budgets. The Bureau discussed possible options for enhancing the diversity of IPs (gender, geographical representation, career stage, etc) for both SC and CC meetings, and related workshops and events, and to take into account the future challenges faced by the IWC.

6.2 Plans for SC69A and SC69B

Dr Zerbini referred to the paper provided to the Bureau with information on the timing, schedule and major agenda items for the SC meeting in Bled, 24 April – 7 May. There will be some pre-meetings and meetings of the Convenors and the joint Conservation Committee-Scientific Committee Working Group one day following the end of SC (7 May 2023). There is also a pre-meeting of a small group of scientists reviewing the New Zealand Government plans to improve conservation for the Maui and Hector's dolphins (funded by the Government of New Zealand). The SC Chair noted that data gathering would begin for a review of the Southern Ocean Sanctuary in 2024, as required by the Commission; the Indian Ocean Sanctuary will not be reviewed, until and unless the Commission requests such a review.

Regarding next year's SC meeting, Antigua and Barbuda expressed an interest in hosting SC69B in 2024 during the IWC68 meeting. Unfortunately, there has been no formal response yet to the Secretariat's

queries regarding this event¹. Saint Lucia confirmed that they will be the lead contact on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda and will be in touch immediately following the Bureau meeting. The Secretariat noted that the deadline for confirming location and signing contracts were pressing (one year before SC69B) therefore this rapid action on making concrete arrangements, including a signed contract with the venue, is much appreciated.

7. Secretariat updates

7.1 Personnel

The Secretariat noted one recruitment of the part-time Journal Assistant Editor to the Publications team, started January 2023.

There was discussion of the timeline and procedures for the recruitment of a new Executive Secretary, which is currently underway. The application period is open until 15 March, and the review of applications will be completed by April. The Bureau will conduct interviews on or around the first week of June, and there will be a postal vote on the recommended candidate shortly thereafter, lasting one month. The Secretariat will reach out to the member countries to encourage payment of contributions in order to cast a vote.

7.2 Red House

The Red House has been on the market for nearly two years and the overall economic conditions in the UK have hampered the sale. The prediction is that the spring market will be stronger, and a sale is more likely. The Secretariat will relocate to rent a smaller, more economical and fit-for-purpose open space office once the sale is confirmed.

7.3 [Global Biodiversity Framework](#) – Post 2020

Members of the Secretariat continue to be engaged in this work as it progresses following the agreement adopted in December 2022 at the CBD COP. There are numerous efforts underway to action the many elements of the new framework and the Secretariat and/or its designees from the Scientific and Conservation Committees are engaging as resources and time allow. This work would reflect the mandate of the IWC on the science as well as stewardship.

7.4 Possible venues for SC69B and IWC69

The delegation of Peru offered to host IWC69 in 2024. The Secretariat reported that these preparations are underway and that a site visit is being planned – to Lima, Peru in June 2023. The shape/schedule of the IWC69 meeting will reflect decisions of IWC68 based on the discussions of the WG-OE on Commission meeting operations. It was noted that as the next country to host the IWC meeting, the Commissioner from Peru can attend future meetings of the Bureau up to IWC69.

8. Date of next Bureau meeting – 6 June 2023.

¹ It is noted that subsequent to this a meeting was held between the Secretariat and the Commissioner for Antigua & Barbuda on 08/03/23 to discuss preparations. Information on logistics and the estimated overspend (approx. £45,000 GBP) to be covered by the host were exchanged and a site visit planned for early April 2023.

This virtual meeting will include interviews with candidates for the Executive Secretary position.

9. AOB

There was nothing to report.

Meeting was adjourned at 21h00 UK time.