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26 January 2001

CIRCULAR COMMUNICATION TO COMMISSIONERS AND CONTRACTING GOVERNMENTS  
[AND MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE for information]  
IWC.CCG.149

**Discussions on Enhanced Scientific Participation of Developing Countries at the IWC**

During the meeting of the Finance and Advisory Committee at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting in Adelaide, Brazil introduced a paper that highlighted its concerns regarding the need to enhance the participation of scientists from developing countries in the work of the IWC. Brazil's paper (Appendix 8 of the Report of the Finance and Administration Committee, IWC/52/9) is attached.

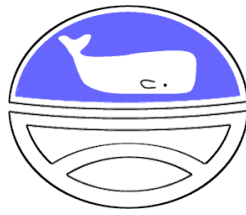
To pursue how enhanced participation might be achieved, Brazil proposed that the Advisory Committee, the Chairman of the Scientific Committee and the Secretary, assisted by any interested parties, discuss '*a mechanism to enhance the participation of developing country scientists in Scientific Committee activities and in obtaining access to the Commission research fund for management-related research*'. Brazil proposed that such a consultation could be held intersessionally and the outcome reported to the Commission at IWC/53 in London this year.

The Finance and Advisory Committee indicated broad support for the principle of increasing such participation, noting that there could be financial implications and the need to ensure that all participants are appropriately qualified.

**The purpose of my writing to you now**, is to canvass interest in taking part in these discussions. If you wish to be involved in the consultation process, please let me know by returning the reply slip **no later than 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2001**. Dr Judy Zeh, in her capacity as Chairman of the Scientific Committee has already requested input from the Committee (IWC.SC.59).

Please note that it is expected that the consultations could be done by email/fax, and that an actual meeting prior to IWC/53 is not currently anticipated.

Dr. Nicky Grandy  
Secretary to the Commission



<b>I wish to be involved in the Discussions on Enhanced Scientific Participation of Developing Countries at the IWC</b>	
<b>Country:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
	Tel:
	Fax:
	Email:

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM, PREFERABLY VIA E-MAIL, IF NOT BY FAX TO:**

The International Whaling Commission  
*E-mail: [secretariat@iwcoffice.org](mailto:secretariat@iwcoffice.org)*  
Fax: +44-1223-232876

**NO LATER THAN 23<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2001.**

## Appendix 8

### A Mechanism to Enhance Scientific Participation of Developing Countries at the IWC

#### Proposed by Brazil for discussion at the Finance and Administration Committee

The International Whaling Commission enters the new century being recognized as the foremost international organization in regard to the management of cetacean species. This is largely due to the efforts of its Scientific Committee, which congregates some of the world's best experts in cetacean management issues.

As the Commission expands its activities beyond whaling, the work of the Scientific Committee has been broadened to encompass issues that are undoubtedly of much wider interest than the direct management of whaling; issues such as monitoring of endangered or depleted species, pollution, by-catch, environmental change and whale watching impacts have become important matters in its agenda. As a result, *the Scientific Committee of the IWC has become the most important inter-governmental source of information and advice on cetacean management for the world's nations*, especially developing countries.

From the point of view of proper representation of member countries, however, it is to be noted that the Scientific Committee hardly encompasses a representative cross-section of worldwide scientific expertise. Composed mainly by developed country scientists, which in no way detracts from their proven expertise, the Committee may to some extent be deprived from the insights arising from the field experience of other good professionals in the developing world.

It may be argued that the Committee has repeatedly invited participants from developing countries to be represented at special meetings and particular topic discussions, set up in its agenda as priorities in previous occasions. It may also be argued that there is already extensive expertise available in current Committee membership. These considerations bring us to an unintended but visible vicious circle, in which developing country participants cannot participate in the Committee's proceedings because of lack of previous experience with the Committee itself and its priorities, nor can they consistently advance to their peers at the Committee which aspects could be considered towards establishing research priorities, from the perspective of their nations' potential contribution to the Commission as a global management and scientific advice body.

It has to be acknowledged that large whale research in particular has been steadily growing in some developing countries, and in many cases local research groups would not only have contributions to make to the Commission, but would also benefit enormously from the exchange of data and expertise at the Scientific Committee, as well as explore new opportunities for international cooperation and partnership. The reality, however, is that contacts between the Committee and these groups are either fragmentary or non-existent in many cases. Again, the recognition of this fact bears no criticism to the Scientific Committee itself, but is instead a factual finding that we understand merits proper consideration as both the Commission and developing country policies evolve regarding research and management of whales.

Participation of developing country scientists is frequently hampered by the sheer lack of government or institutional funds to deploy its personnel to faraway locations where the Scientific Committee meetings are held. Besides the countries' normal – and rather substantial – annual fees for Commission membership, these costs mean that research money normally used for fieldwork would have to be diverted to pay for travel and accommodation costs. Brazil, for instance, is investing substantial amounts of money both in its domestic cetacean research and in maintaining a Federal Working Group on Aquatic Mammals which advises on the national policy for the research, management and conservation of these animals. The costs involved in foreign travel for qualified scientists is a substantial additional burden.

In recent years, the Commission has noted that its reserve funds have accumulated well beyond necessary, and substantial parts of it have been diverted to research activities. The Brazilian government has fully supported these transfers, though it noted that most of the funds were or are to be used in research with little or no direct participation of researchers from developing countries.

Taking note of the fact that the surplus reserve funds are still an issue to be managed by the Commission, Brazil foresees a possibility of using these funds (a) to foster participation of qualified developing country scientists in Scientific Committee activities, and (b) enhance the Commission research fund so as to encompass research proposals directly related to management needs in developing countries.

There are practicalities involved in setting up such a mechanism that could only be addressed in conjunction with the views and needs of the Scientific Committee itself. Brazil therefore proposes that the Commission considers establishing a consultation involving the Secretariat, the Advisory Committee, the Chairperson of the Scientific Committee and any member governments interested in the matter, with a view of discussing such a mechanism to enhance the participation of developing country scientists in Scientific Committee activities and in obtaining access to the Commission research funds for management-related research. Such a consultation may take place in the intersessional period between the 52<sup>nd</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> meetings of the Commission and its findings could be addressed both at the Scientific Committee and F&A Committee meetings before the 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting, allowing the Commission to make an informed decision on the matter at its next session in 2001.