

NJG/JAC/30656

19 December 2007

CIRCULAR COMMUNICATION TO COMMISSIONERS
AND CONTRACTING GOVERNMENTS
IWC.CCG.654

Letter from the Chair of the Commission

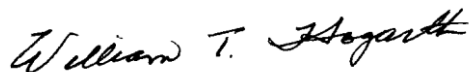
Dear Commissioners and Contracting Governments,

At IWC/59 in Anchorage earlier this year, the Commission agreed to establish a small Steering Group to plan for the intersessional meeting on the future of IWC. The Steering Group met in Washington on 16 and 17 October 2007 and the outcome was reported to you briefly in Circular Communication IWC.CCG.649 of 26 October 2007.

At the Steering Group meeting, a preliminary working paper prepared by the Secretariat at my request to stimulate discussion (i.e. *Issues and potential routes to compromises - some 'straw' ideas*) was presented and discussed briefly. The Steering Group agreed that while the document was of interest, it preferred at this stage to focus on how the process of negotiations within IWC could be improved before launching into discussions on substance. The preliminary working paper was intended to be an internal discussion stimulation note for the Steering Group and therefore has no formal status.

However, I understand that this document is now in the public domain and to allay any concerns that may have arisen by this wider circulation, I thought I should clarify the intended purpose of the document and its status.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William T. Hogarth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'W'.

William T. Hogarth, Ph.D.
Chair of the International Whaling Commission