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11 January 2008

CIRCULAR COMMUNICATION TO COMMISSIONERS
AND CONTRACTING GOVERNMENTS
IWC.CCG.661

**Call for input to the
Intersessional Meeting on the Future of IWC**

Please find attached a call for input from Contracting Governments to the March 2008 Intersessional Meeting on the Future of IWC.

The Steering Group established to plan and develop a draft agenda for the intersessional meeting, agreed that it is important for individual Contracting Governments to have the opportunity to provide input in advance of the March meeting on their initial thoughts on the negotiating process within the IWC and how it might be improved, and ways in which trust might be rebuilt. Responses will be compiled and made available prior to the meeting. Please note that when the responses are compiled this will be done without attributing comments to specific Contracting Governments.

Please return responses to the Secretariat by Friday 15 February 2008.

Dr Nicky Grandy
Secretary to the Commission

**Call to Contracting Governments for input
to the Intersessional Meeting on the Future of IWC,
Renaissance London Heathrow Hotel, 6-8 March 2008**

Introduction

At IWC/59 in Anchorage, the Commission agreed that an intersessional meeting should be held prior to the 2008 Annual Meeting to provide an opportunity for Contracting Governments to discuss the future of the organisation, given *inter alia* the impasse reached on the Revised Management Scheme (RMS) and the number of issues for which polarisation rather than consensus appear to be the norm within the Commission. The Commission agreed to establish a Steering Group to help prepare the meeting. The Steering Group comprises the Commission Chair, Vice Chair and representatives (from Chile, New Zealand and Palau) of three non-IWC meetings held between the 2006 and 2007 Annual Meetings to discuss the future of IWC¹.

The Steering Group met in Washington in October 2007 (see Circular Communication IWC.CCG.649 of 26 October 2007). It noted that attempts made to date (such as the 'Irish Proposal'² and the Chair's RMS package³) to find a way out of the impasse in which IWC currently finds itself have not worked, and agreed that there is an urgent need to explore ways that might be more successful and which can improve levels of trust amongst members and others. To this end, rather than launching into negotiations on substantive issues where major differences among IWC members exist, the Steering Group agreed that, initially, it would be more fruitful to take a process-orientated approach and to seek ways to improve how negotiations within the IWC are conducted. The intersessional meeting in March will therefore focus on matters of process rather than on matters of substance.

Given this, the Steering Group agreed that it was important for individual Contracting Governments to have the opportunity to provide input in advance of the March meeting on their initial thoughts on the negotiating process within the IWC and how it might be improved, and ways in which trust might be rebuilt. Responses will be useful in targeting introductory presentations at the meeting and in structuring the agenda. They will be compiled and made available prior to the meeting. Please note that when the responses are compiled this will be done without attributing comments to specific Contracting Governments.

Questions

1. Why do you think that discussions to date within the IWC have not led to a more consensus-based resolution of IWC's problems? Is the negotiating process itself a factor?
2. What are your initial thoughts on how future discussions and negotiations should be organised and conducted, taking into account the need to rebuild trust?

Please do not hesitate to provide any additional information or ideas you may have in relation to how the functioning of IWC can be improved.

Please return responses to the Secretariat by Friday 15 February 2008

Email: Secretariat@iwcoffice.org; Fax: +44 (0)1223 232876

¹ The three meetings were: (1) the Conference for the Normalisation of the International Whaling Commission, Tokyo, February 2007, hosted by the Government of Japan; (2) the Symposium on the State of the Conservation of Whales in the 21st Century, New York, April 2007; and (3) a meeting of Latin American countries held in Buenos Aires in December 2006.

² *Rep. Int. Whaling. Comm 49:35*

³ *Ann. Rep. Whaling Comm 2004:82-91*