



## Minutes of the IWC Bureau Tele-Conference 26 March 2015

The IWC's Bureau met by tele-conference at 22.00Hrs UTC on 26 March 2015. The meeting was convened under Commission Rule of Procedure B.4 which requires the Bureau to meet in those years in which the Commission does not meet, and to otherwise meet as required to fulfil its functions in accordance with Rule M.9.

The Chair of the Commission, Bruno Mainini (Switzerland) acted as Chair of the meeting. The list of participants is given as Annex A.

### 1. WELCOME ADDRESS AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Bruno Mainini (IWC Chair) welcomed participants to the telephone conference and referred to the Bureau's Terms of Reference<sup>1</sup> and procedures guidance<sup>2</sup>.

The Chair explained that the Commissioner for Ghana was unable to join the meeting on this occasion, but would be provided with the report of the conference.

The Agenda was adopted unchanged and is given at Annex B.

A list of the documents available to participants is given at Annex C.

### 2. APPOINTMENT OF RAPPORTEUR

Andrea Cooke and Simon Brockington of the Secretariat agreed to act as rapporteurs.

### 3. DATE AND VENUE FOR IWC/66 IN 2016

The Secretary introduced documents IWC/M15/BUR04 and IWC/M15/BUR05 which were a letter and supporting documents from the Government of Slovenia offering to host IWC meetings in 2016. The proposed dates for the Scientific Committee were 5-19 June in Bled and 29 September-7 October in Portorož for the Commission

The Chair recalled that previous IWC meetings held at these venues in 2014 were very successful. Japan supported this view and indicated that their delegation would be happy to return to Slovenia for both meetings. St Lucia, Uruguay and Australia agreed that the offer should be accepted, although Australia noted that the IWC had been a regular visitor to European destinations in recent years and that future venues should alternate between different global locations.

Japan raised the concern that the suggested date for the Commission meeting was close to the expected dates for CITES Conference of the Parties in 2016, and noted that IWC and CITES shared many constituents. The Secretary explained that the IWC dates were based around availability at the venue in Portorož and that initial investigations indicated that CITES was expected to meet in late October.

After discussion the Secretary **agreed** to check with CITES to see if confirmation of dates for their 2016 CoP was available. The Bureau **agreed** to accept the offer from Slovenia to host the IWC meetings in 2016 pending confirmation that dates will not conflict with the CITES Conference of Parties.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bureau's Terms of Reference are described at IWC Rule of Procedure M.9

<sup>2</sup> Circulated to Bureau members as a background document.

**After minute:** The Secretary contacted CITES Secretariat on 1 April 2015. CITES indicated that their current date options for CoP 17 in South Africa are either 19-29 September or 26 September-6 October 2016. As the second of these options will conflict with the IWC's proposed dates, CITES have agreed to contact South Africa to understand when they will be in a position to confirm which option they will use.

#### **4. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

##### **4.1 Financial Statements for the year ending 31 August 2014**

The Secretary introduced the audited Financial Statements for the year ending 31 August 2014 which were circulated to Commissioners in February 2015.

The Secretary drew attention to the auditor's opinion that the statements had been properly prepared in accordance with the Commission's accounting policies and presented a proper record of the Commission's transactions for the year ended 31 August 2014.

The Secretary went on to note that the year had ended with a surplus of GBP 83,704 which caused an increase in the level of the General Fund from GBP 1,027,801 in 2013 to GBP 1,111,506 in 2014.

Japan congratulated the Secretariat on its careful financial management and the surplus of income over expenditure. However it emphasised that the Commission's healthy financial position is partly the result of a succession of new members and of a continued flow of voluntary contributions. It noted that the financial position may weaken if governments decide to leave the organisation or encounter difficulties in paying.

The USA, in the role of Chair of the F&A Committee, echoed this view and said there was a need to watch the balance of the General Fund especially in the period 2017-18 when the present forecasts indicated that expenditure will be in excess of income. The Secretary agreed that there was a need to remain vigilant to the future financial position and noted that in 2014 the Commission had agreed a zero percent rise in contributions. Consequently inflationary pressures would soon start to affect the overall financial position.

The USA, supported by Japan and Australia recommended that the Bureau re-examine the 2016 budget and 2017-2018 projections at the forthcoming meeting in September 2015.

The Bureau **agreed** to examine the Commission's forecast financial position at its meeting in September 2016, and **recommended** that the Chair accept the 2014 financial statements on behalf of the Commission.

##### **4.2 Provisional Financial Statement for the 'bridge period' 1 September-31 December 2014**

The Secretary introduced IWC/M15/BUR02 which was the Provisional Financial Statement for the 'bridge period' covering 1 September-31 December 2014. This period covered the changeover from a financial year which started on 1 September to one which begins on 1 January.

The Secretary noted that income and expenditure had both run according to budget during the bridge period. Bureau members **agreed** that information available to date showed that the process for changing financial year was running smoothly.

#### **5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING**

The Secretary introduced IWC/M15/BUR03 which explored performance reporting including adaptation of a 'balanced scorecard' approach. He explained that a key function of the Bureau is to support on-going work under the Convention and to review progress made by Committees and sub-groups. Given the Commission has around 30 different Committees and sub-committees in operation, and the different rates of progress between

them, the Bureau may wish to consider introducing a structured framework for understanding how each work area is developing.

IWC/M15/BUR03 proposed three complimentary approaches towards performance reporting as follows:

- (1) A list of recent Resolutions, Committees and working groups with a brief commentary on their progress to date;
- (2) A scorecard giving metrics to measure IWC customer requirements, organisational capabilities, future requirements and financial metrics; and
- (3) A overview commentary from the Chairs of the main Committees on the progress of groups operating under their Committee.

The Secretary proposed that reports could be prepared at regular intervals, either quarterly or every half year and requested views from Bureau members on the usefulness of such an approach.

Australia commended the Secretariat on an excellent example of innovation and governance practice and supported the development of a robust reporting framework. It emphasised that any reporting system must be cost effective, as well as not burdensome on those required to produce reports, and that this could be achieved by using an on-line real time system open to all Committee and Sub-committee Chairs. It commented that while many aspects of IWC reporting can be open to general readership, some aspects may require restriction to Contracting Governments.

Japan noted that the recent transition to biennial Commission meetings made it important to keep track of projects. Japan asked whether the information would be only for the use of the Bureau or for the wider Commission. If the information was for the wider Commission it raised the question of whether the Bureau had the authority to request reports from working group Chairs or to encourage progress.

Japan noted that several of the Scientific Committee's Sub-groups themselves had a range of smaller groups, often working by email correspondence. These groups delivered vital work which was frequently of a technical nature. Accordingly Japan recognised the importance of not attempting to micromanage these groups, and asked whether it was appropriate for the Bureau to request progress updates.

Australia agreed that it was important not to micromanage sub-committees and emphasized the need to increase visibility for all Commissioners on the range of work which was underway. This was particularly important for the Scientific Committee where Commissioners do not regularly attend. It suggested there was merit in proposing a system to the Commission which illustrated the range of work underway, the budget allocated and a system to show progress in different areas, perhaps based around use of traffic light indicators.

The Chair thanked the Secretariat for its initiative and supported the concept of receiving a progress overview. He noted the difference in working styles between the Scientific and Commission, and the extent of work undertaken through email correspondence. In addition it was unclear to what extent financial information should be released to external observers. Accordingly the Chair proposed that the Secretariat should prepare an updated document for presentation at the in person Bureau meeting in September 2015 which would take account of the comments received.

The Chair called for Bureau members to contribute further thoughts to support the development of an updated document. Japan, Australia and Uruguay supported this call for further input and noted that informal consultations could take place with Scientific Committee working group chairs during SC66a in May 2015, and also with Conservation Committee working group Chairs during the joint Scientific and Conservation Committee meeting on 4-5 June 2015.

Accordingly the Bureau **agreed** that the Secretariat should present an updated document in September 2015 with a view to making a formal proposal to the Commission in 2016. In developing the updated document it

**encouraged** the Secretariat to hold informal consultations with Bureau members and Committee and Working Group Chairs at convenient times, including during the meetings to be held in San Diego in May and June 2015.

## **6. IWC WEBSITE**

### **6.1 Marine debris**

Australia drew attention to a recommendation in document IWC/65/CC Rep04<sup>3</sup> that the IWC should develop a dedicated section of its website to cover the growing issue of marine debris. Australia noted the Commission's on-going work on marine debris and the increased international attention to the issue. Following the Commission's endorsement of the report in 2014 Australia asked the Bureau to recommend that the Secretariat should move ahead with the establishment of the webpage.

The Chair agreed with the importance of the work on debris. The Secretary reported that the ongoing revamp of the website was progressing well. Recent additions included new content on the Special Permit pages and a new section on the structure of the Commission and its Sub-committees as requested at IWC65 in 2014. Future priorities include responding to calls for more information on IWC's work on small cetaceans, the IWC's work on Conservation Management Plans, and to establish the webpages on marine debris as requested at IWC65. The Secretariat also planned to update the pages on the Revised Management Procedure to improve accessibility to this important technical area.

Japan recognised the Commission's agreement to work on marine debris and moved that discussions on use of the website should be discussed in the context of dealing with all issues together. It proposed that a level of guidance was required on use of the website and accordingly discussions continued under Item 6.2 (Small Type Coastal Whaling) below.

Following the discussions at Item 6.2 the Bureau **agreed** that the Secretariat proceed with development of pages on marine debris. The Bureau's agreements on handling other website issues are reported at Item 6.2.

### **6.2 Japan's Small Type Coastal Whaling consultations**

Following from discussions during Item 6.1 above, Japan suggested a requirement for Commission guidance on the placement of items on the IWC website. It indicated a need to avoid the situation where an individual group or member could ask the Secretariat to place any item on the website, and instead the guidance should ensure the Commission remains in overall control of website content. In illustrating how this suggestion could work in practice, Japan highlighted that the work on debris had received endorsement by the Commission, and in a similar way the work on Small Type Coastal Whaling had been the subject of several previous Commission Resolutions which committed the Commission to work on alleviating the difficulties faced by Japanese coastal communities.

Uruguay asked whether the use of the website would be available to proponents of other proposals to build support for draft resolutions, such as that to establish a South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary.

The Chair noted that provision of information was increasingly important and that information can be used in different ways. He indicated that reaction to the IWC's website is increasingly favourable and that it may now be important to have some general guidance on how the website was to be used.

Australia highlighted a difference between, on one hand, work which has been clearly established by the Commission where rules for website content can be less onerous (and partly dependent on the Secretariat's ability to process updates and write content); and on the other hand situations where individual members wish to put forwards particular ideas which had not been the subject of clear Commission endorsement. Australia

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<sup>3</sup> This document is the report of the second IWC workshop on marine debris held in August 2014 entitled 'Mitigation and Management of the Threats posed by Marine Debris to Cetaceans'.

indicated that discussion of ideas or issues of this nature were an important part of a transparent debate by the Commission, and that practical guidance was required on how the website should be used.

The USA agreed with the motion to develop guidance and highlighted the connection to the work of the Operational Effectiveness group working under the Finance and Administration Committee.

After further discussion Bureau members **agreed** to form a working group, supported by the Secretariat, to collect ideas for assembling initial guidance over the next three months and to be concluded by July 2015. The initial guidance will allow other proposals and projects to be included on the website during the remaining intersessional period and the guidance will then be presented, via the F&A Committee, to the Commission in 2016. Other projects in this respect would include the longstanding proposal on the establishment of a South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary.

## **7. DATE AND VENUE FOR IN-PERSON MEETING OF THE BUREAU IN 2015**

The Chair noted the requirement for the Bureau to meet in those years in which the Commission does not meet, and accordingly invited participants to assemble in Switzerland on 21-23 September 2015.

These dates were proposed in order to allow any Bureau participants also attending the IWC's technical workshop on Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling in Greenland from 14-18 September to return via Denmark.

The Chair noted that the Commissioner for Slovenia should be invited to attend the Bureau meeting in Switzerland in his role as host of the upcoming Commission meeting.

Agenda Items for the September 2015 meeting will include:

- Review of the 2016 budget and forward financial position 2017-2018;
- Continuation of discussions on performance reporting;
- Guidance on placement of items on the IWC website;
- The plenary agenda for IWC66 in 2016.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

In response to an enquiry from Australia, the Chair indicated that Bureau documents can be considered confidential but that the meeting report will be placed on the Commission website in the normal way.

## **9. CLOSE**

The Chair thanked delegates for their work and looked forward to seeing Bureau members in person in Switzerland in September.

The meeting concluded at 23:40 UTC.

## **Annex A**

### **List of Participants**

#### **IWC Chair**

Bruno Mainini (Switzerland)

#### **IWC Vice-Chair**

Joji Morishita (Japan)

Hideki Moronuki (Japan)

#### **Chair of F&A Committee**

Ryan Wulff (USA)

Melissa Garcia (USA)

#### **Bureau Members**

#### **Australia**

Christine Schweizer

Suzi Heaton

#### **St Lucia**

Jeannine Compton-Antoine

#### **Uruguay**

Carlos Rodriguez

#### **IWC Secretariat**

Simon Brockington (Secretary)

Brendan Miller (Technical support)

Andrea Cooke (Rapporteur)

*Apologies received in advance:*

#### **Ghana**

Benson Nutsukpui

## **Annex B**

### **Agenda**

1. Appointment of rapporteur
2. Adoption of Agenda and Chair's welcome
3. Date and venue for IWC/66 in 2016
4. Financial Statements
  - (a) Presentation of Financial Statements for year ending 31 August 2014, and Report of the Independent Auditor
  - (b) Presentation of Provisional Financial Statement for the Bridge Period 1 September 2014 to 31 December 2014
5. Performance measurement and reporting
  - (a) Presentation
  - (b) Discussion
6. IWC Website
  - (a) Marine debris
    - (i) Presentation
    - (ii) Discussion
  - (b) Japan's Small Type Coastal Whaling consultations
    - (i) Presentation
    - (ii) Discussion
7. Date and venue for in-person meeting of the Bureau in 2015
8. Any other Business
9. Close

## **Annex C**

### **List of Documents**

#### **IWC/M15/BUR**

01. Provisional Agenda (this document)
02. Provisional financial Statements 1 Sept 2014 to 31 Dec 2014
03. Performance measurement and reporting
04. Offer letter for IWC/66 from Slovenia
05. Letter of support for offer to host IWC/66 from Slovenia

#### **Background documents**

1. Bureau Procedures Guidance
2. Audited Financial Statements year ending 31 August 2014