



Circular Communication to Commissioners, Contracting Governments and  
Members of the Scientific Committee

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**Report of the IWC Expert Workshop on Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling**

At IWC 65 in 2014 the Commission adopted Resolution 2014-1 which emphasised the need to regulate Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling through a consistent and long term approach.

This Resolution also requested the ASW Sub-committee to address a number of issues as a matter of urgency. These issues, and associated developments in the practice of ASW were progressed at an IWC expert workshop which took place in Maniitsoq, Greenland in September 2015.

The workshop was attended by experts in cultural and nutritional anthropology, social science, biology and human rights law from more than 12 countries. In addition, hunters from each of the IWC's four ASW hunts shared information on their culture and hunting practices.

Discussions focussed on developments in law and attitudes to indigenous rights over the past twenty years. The experts also considered the evolution of traditional societies and the inevitability of change in all societies, aboriginal or otherwise.

A key issue for the workshop was 'Needs Statements': the documents provided to the IWC by governments on behalf of their subsistence whaling communities to explain the need for the hunt. The workshop recommended that flexibility is essential to accommodate the different circumstances of each hunt, but also agreed that some consistency across the documents would assist the Commission. Clearer timetabling and process was also discussed as a means of adding clarity and transparency to the management of ASW.

The expert recommendations arising from the workshop will be presented to the Commission, via the ASW Sub-committee, at IWC66 in October 2016.

The full report of the workshop is available for download here: <https://archive.iwc.int/?r=5664>

Simon Brockington  
Executive Secretary

*c.c. Accredited observers to the IWC*

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