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**Looking ahead: meeting closes with a diverse new
work programme and emphasis on collaboration**

The plight of the critically endangered vaquita is one of many issues requiring inter-governmental collaboration - according to the IWC whose biennial meeting concluded today.

Collaboration was a key theme throughout the meeting with the need for synergies between organisations stressed in many contexts including aboriginal subsistence whaling, bycatch, marine debris, and ship strikes.

The ten day meeting began with sub-committee sessions which in turn reported to a five day Plenary. Of the seven Resolutions adopted, two were by consensus and five were put to a vote.

Despite different views on the IWC's competence regarding small cetaceans, these included a consensus Resolution calling on Governments to act now in order to save the critically endangered vaquita. The vaquita is a small porpoise that lives in the Gulf Of California and whose numbers have been reduced to less than 59 animals by illegal gillnet fishing.

A Memorandum of Cooperation on the western gray whale, also critically endangered, was strengthened with the additional signatures of the Governments of Mexico and the Republic of Korea in the margins of the meeting.

The second consensus Resolution established a comprehensive review of the Commission's institutional and governance arrangements, conducted by a panel of three independent reviewers who will submit a report to the next IWC meeting in 2018. This work will be overseen by a Standing Working Group.

The Commission also agreed to look at the best way to initiate discussions on issues regarding whales and whaling, and how the Commission should handle the differing views held by member governments. Transparency and inclusion were stressed as vital components of any new discussion and the most effective mechanisms for achieving this will be explored in the next intersessional period.

A proposal for a new whale sanctuary in the South Atlantic did not win the three quarters majority required for any measure that would result in a change to the IWC Schedule, the document that sets out specific measures the IWC decides are necessary in order to conserve whales and regulate whaling.

Notes to Editors

Resolutions

- Despite different views on the IWC's jurisdiction regarding small cetaceans (dolphins and porpoises) consensus was achieved on a [Resolution on the Critically Endangered Vaquita](#).
- A [Resolution on Effectiveness of the IWC](#) was adopted by consensus.
- Despite constructive negotiations, consensus could not be reached on a [Resolution on Improving the Review Process for Whaling under Special Permit](#), and the Resolution was put to a vote which adopted the Resolution with 34 yes votes, 17 no votes and 10 abstentions. Amongst the measures included is the establishment of a new Commission Working Group to consider Scientific Committee reports and recommendations on this issue.
- A [Resolution on Food Security](#) was deferred for further intersessional discussions, aiming to bring a new Resolution to the next meeting of the IWC in 2018.
- A [Resolution on Cetaceans and Ecosystem Services](#) considered the contribution made by cetaceans to the marine ecosystem. This was adopted by vote, with 36 governments voting yes, 16 voting no and 9 abstentions.
- A [Resolution on the Minimata Convention on Mercury](#). This was adopted with 38 yes votes and 23 no votes.
- A Resolution was also adopted containing a series of measures designed to enable governments of limited means to play a full role in IWC intersessional work. Governments expressed their commitment to the principles underlying this Resolution although some continuing concerns over specific wording and the lack of time for further dialogue led to a vote. [The Resolution on the Creation of a Fund to Strengthen the Capacity of Governments of Limited Means to Participate in the Work of the IWC](#) was adopted with 30 yes votes were recorded, 31 abstentions and 1 non-participation.

ENDS