

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA

50TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION
16 - 20 MAY 1998, MUSCAT, OMAN

1. ADDRESS OF WELCOME

2. OPENING STATEMENTS
 - 2.1 Statements by Past Chairmen
 - 2.2 Statements by Contracting Governments and Observers
(Papers IWC/50/OS --)

3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING

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5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS AND SMALL-TYPE WHALING
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Meeting, paragraph 5)
 - 5.1 Japanese proposal for Schedule amendment
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(Any provisions adopted may require amendment of the Schedule)

6. WHALEWATCHING
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 - 6.1 Report of the Scientific Committee
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7. ADOPTION OF REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
(to be circulated as Paper IWC/50/5)

8. **HUMANE KILLING**
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Meeting, paragraph 8 and Appendix 1)
 - 8.1 **Report of the Humane Killing Working Group**
(Paper IWC/50/12)
 - 8.1.1 **Name of the Working Group**
 - 8.1.2 **Information on improving the humaneness of aboriginal subsistence whaling**
 - 8.1.3 **Workshop on Whale Killing Methods**
 - 8.1.4 **Other matters**
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(Any provisions adopted may require amendment of the Schedule)

9. **INFRACTIONS, 1997 SEASON**
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Meeting, paragraph 9 and appendix 2)
 - 9.1 **Report of Infractions Sub-committee**
(Paper IWC/50/7)
 - 9.1.1 **Infractions reports from Contracting Governments**
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 - 9.1.2 **Reports from Contracting Governments on availability, sources and shipments of whale meat and products, and relevant developments; and on stockpiles and sale of whale meat and products, domestic laws and enforcement actions on illegal possession and sale**
 - 9.1.3 **Other matters**
 - 9.2 **Action arising**

10. **ABORIGINAL SUBSISTENCE WHALING**
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Meeting, paragraph 10)
 - 10.1 **Report of Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Sub-committee**
(Paper IWC/50/13)
 - 10.2 **Aboriginal subsistence whaling scheme**
 - 10.2.1 **Report of the Scientific Committee**
(Paper IWC/50/4)
 - 10.2.2 **Action arising**
(Changes to the management procedure or other regulations will require amendment of the Schedule including paragraphs 12, 13 and Table 1)

- 10.3 Review of aboriginal subsistence whaling catch limits
 - 10.3.1 Report of the Scientific Committee
(Paper IWC/50/4)
 - 10.3.1.1 Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas stock of bowhead whales
 - 10.3.1.2 North Pacific Eastern stock of gray whales
 - 10.3.1.3 North Atlantic West Greenland stock of minke whales
 - 10.3.1.4 North Atlantic humpback whales
 - 10.3.2 Action arising
(Changes to the catch limits or other regulations will require amendment of the Schedule including paragraphs 12, 13 and Table 1)

- 11. COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF WHALE STOCKS
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Meeting, paragraph 11 and Appendix 3)
 - 11.1 Revised Management Procedure
 - 11.1.1 Report of the Scientific Committee
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 - 11.1.2 Action arising
 - 11.2 Whale stocks
 - 11.2.1 Report of the Scientific Committee
(Paper IWC/50/4)
 - 11.2.1.1 Southern Hemisphere baleen whales
 - 11.2.1.2 North Pacific minke whales
 - 11.2.1.3 North Atlantic minke whales
 - 11.2.1.4 Southern Hemisphere minke whales
 - 11.2.1.5 North Pacific Bryde's whales
 - 11.2.1.6 Other stocks
 - 11.2.2 Action arising
(Changes to the management procedure, classification and catch limits of stocks, areas or sub-areas will require amendment of the Schedule including paragraphs 9, 10, 11, 12 and Tables 1, 2 and 3)
 - 11.3 Future work plans
 - 11.3.1 Report of the Scientific Committee
(Paper IWC/50/4)
 - 11.3.2 Action arising

12. **REVISED MANAGEMENT SCHEME**
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Annual Meeting, paragraph 12 and Appendix 4)
 - 12.1 **Report of the Working Group on the Revised Management Scheme**
(Paper IWC/50/14)
 - 12.1.1 **Inspection and observation schemes**
 - 12.1.2 **Total catches over time, including monitoring and reporting of bycatches**
 - 12.1.3 **Schedule amendments**
 - 12.2 **Other matters**
 - 12.3 **Action arising**
(Incorporation of the Revised Management Procedure and the Revised Management Scheme, and changes to the data requirements, survey guidelines, inspection and observer schemes will require amendment of the Schedule, including Paragraph 10 and Chapters 5 and 6.)

13. **SOUTHERN OCEAN SANCTUARY**
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Meeting, paragraph 13)
 - 13.1 **Report of the Scientific Committee**
(Paper IWC/50/4)
 - 13.2 **Other matters**
 - 13.3 **Action arising**

14. **SCIENTIFIC PERMITS**
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Meeting, paragraph 14 and Appendices 5 and 6)
 - 14.1 **Report of the Scientific Committee**
(Paper IWC/50/4)
 - 14.2 **Action arising**

15. **SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**
 - 15.1 **Research proposals**
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Meeting, paragraph 15 and Appendix 7)
 - 15.1.1 **Report of the Scientific Committee**
(Paper IWC/50/4)
 - 15.1.2 **Action arising**
 - 15.2 **Research on the environment and whale stocks**
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Meeting, paragraph 15.2 and Appendix 7)
 - 15.2.1 **Report of the Scientific Committee**
(Paper IWC/50/4)
 - 15.2.2 **Action arising**

- 16. CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS
 - 16.1 Observers' Reports
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 - 16.5 Action arising

- 17. ADOPTION OF REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
(to be circulated as Paper IWC/50/4)
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Meeting, paragraph 17 and Appendix 8)
 - 17.1 Small Cetaceans
 - 17.2 Small Cetacean topics for consideration by the Scientific Committee in 1999, 2000 and 2001
 - 17.3 Other

- 18. THE FUTURE OF THE IWC
(Amendments to the Schedule may arise under this item)

- 19. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BUDGET ESTIMATES
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Meeting, paragraph 18)
 - 19.1 Review of provisional financial statement, 1997/98
(Paper IWC/50/8A)
 - 19.2 Consideration of estimated basic budgets, 1998/99 and 1999/2000
(Paper IWC/50/8B)
 - 19.2.1 Research proposals
(Paper IWC/50/4)
 - 19.2.2 Assessment of contributions from Contracting Governments
 - 19.3 Action arising

- 20. IWC ADMINISTRATION
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Meeting, paragraph 23 and Appendices 9 and 10)
 - 20.1 Review of administrative systems
 - 20.2 Advisory Committee
 - 20.3 Annual Meeting arrangements
 - 20.4 Communications
 - 20.5 Action arising

21. AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
 - 21.1 Voting procedures
 - 21.2 Observers
 - 21.3 Advisory Committee
(Paper IWC/50/15)
 - 21.4 Scientific Committee
(Paper IWC/50/15)
 - 21.4 Action arising
(Amendment and addition of various Rules of Procedure are proposed)

22. DATE AND PLACE OF ANNUAL MEETINGS
(Rules of Procedure, Rule B.1.)
(Chairman's Report of the 49th Meeting, paragraph 29)
 - 22.1 51st Annual Meeting, 1999
 - 22.2 52nd Annual Meeting, 2000

23. ADOPTION OF REPORT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
(to be circulated as Paper IWC/50/9)

24. ANNUAL REPORT 1997-98
(Paper IWC/50/11 Draft)

25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ANNOTATIONS TO PROVISIONAL AGENDA

(These annotations have been compiled by the Secretariat from the information available. They are not intended to define the subject area under any agenda item, nor limit discussion to the matter noted.)

Item 1. ADDRESS OF WELCOME

The 50th Annual Meeting will formally open at 9am on Saturday 16 May 1998 and will be addressed by a representative of the Government of Oman.

Item 2. OPENING STATEMENTS

2.1 Statements by Past Chairmen

At last year's meeting the USA proposed, and there was general support, that all the past Chairmen of the Commission who could be contacted should be invited to attend the 50th annual Meeting of the Commission in Oman. The USA 'believes that it would be appropriate to ask past Chairmen to address the Plenary and recommends that the agenda include a new agenda item, entitled "Statements by Past Chairmen" after the Address of Welcome.'

2.2 Statements by Contracting governments and Observers

The Commission's practice is to accept opening statements from Commissioners and Observers in writing only. These will be collated by the Secretariat and distributed as Commission documents at the meeting.

Item 3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING

The practical organisation and arrangements for the meeting will be notified to delegates at registration, and by the Secretary at the start of the meeting. He will also report on the received notifications of all participants, advisers and observers to the meeting.

Item 4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, Rule H.2(d)(i), the Secretary dispatched the draft agenda to all Contracting Governments and Commissioners on 5 February 1998 with a request for comments and any additions with annotations they might wish to propose. The annotated provisional agenda was sent out on 17 March 1998 in accordance with Rule H.2(d)(ii).

The Chairman has asked for agenda items 5, 6 and 7 to be considered first by the Technical Committee.

Item 5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS AND SMALL-TYPE WHALING

At the 45th (1993) Annual Meeting the Commission adopted a Resolution (*Rep. Int. Whal. Commn 44:31, Appendix 3*) in which it resolved to work expeditiously to alleviate the distress to the four small coastal whaling communities which has resulted from the cessation of minke whaling at its next Annual Meeting.

5.1 Japanese proposal for Schedule amendment

Japan will propose an amendment to the Schedule, to add a new paragraph after paragraph 13 to permit the take of minke whales from the Okhotsk Sea - West Pacific Stock of the North Pacific to alleviate the hardship in the community-based whaling communities.

The proposal would include the following points:

- the number of minke whales to be taken in each year
- the term for interim quota
- deal for the unused portion of the quota for each year
- revision of this provision after the Commission's adoption of a non-zero catch limit for this minke whale stock based on the Revised Management Scheme.

Item 6. WHALEWATCHING

Last year the Commission agreed that this item should continue on the agenda, and member nations were asked to submit information. Any action in association with the proposal put forward by Ireland (Agenda item 18) will be dealt with under that item.

Item 7. ADOPTION OF REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Technical Committee will meet in Muscat, Oman, on Saturday 16 May 1998 under its Chairman, Prof. B. Fernholm (Sweden) to consider Agenda items 5 and 6. Its report will be distributed as soon as it becomes available as Paper IWC/50/5.

Item 8. HUMANE KILLING

8.1 Report of the Humane Killing Working Group

The Working Group will meet in Muscat, Oman, on Monday 11 May 1998. The Report of this Working Group will be available as Paper IWC/50/12.

8.1.1 Name of the Working Group

At last year's meeting some delegations had recommended deleting humane killing from the IWC agenda or, at least, changing the name of the Working Group. France, supported by Mexico and Monaco, suggested changing the name of the Working Group to hunting methods. Antigua & Barbuda felt the name was a particular worry, preferring gear and methods for whaling activities. On South Africa's suggestion, it was agreed to leave this issue to the Working Group to decide.

The USA has commented that "We . . . note that, according to the Chairman's report, the name of the Working Group is an unresolved question and would . . . be deserving of attention in Oman."

8.1.2 Information on improving the humaneness of aboriginal subsistence whaling

IWC Resolution 1997-1 welcomed the steps taken so far by the aboriginal subsistence whalers of the USA, the Russian Federation and Greenland to improve the humaneness of whaling techniques in aboriginal subsistence hunts; urged them to do everything possible to reduce still further any unavoidable suffering caused to whales in such hunts; requested the USA, the Russian Federation and Denmark to continue to inform the Commission on an annual basis of progress made in this matter, and to provide other information concerning the taking of whales under

aboriginal subsistence quotas; and requested all Contracting Parties to provide appropriate technical assistance to improve the humaneness of aboriginal subsistence whaling;

It also agreed to consider this issue at Annual Meetings of the Humane Killing Working Group; and requested the next Workshop on Whale Killing Methods to review the data received by the Commission on this matter.

The USA has commented that “the lateness of last year’s meeting combined with the early start of this year’s meeting would make it difficult for the U.S. to respond meaningfully on the subject of improving the humaneness of aboriginal subsistence whaling at this year’s meeting of the working group. Indeed, the Makah’s hunt would not have begun by the time of the annual meeting and therefore, we would have no new information to report. The U.S. had understood that the focus of the 1999 Workshop on Whale Killing Methods would be on improving the humaneness of aboriginal subsistence whaling and will be prepared to provide substantial information at that time. In this circumstance, it would seem that the Humane Killing Working Group should spend the majority of its time planning the 1999 workshop.”

8.1.3 Workshop on whale killing methods

At last year’s meeting it was agreed, because of the short time before the next meeting in Oman, that a Workshop should be held at the same time as the Scientific Committee before the 1999 Annual Meeting, and to retain the annual meetings of the Working Group. Planning for the Workshop should be put in hand at the present meeting.

The USA, following the comments relating to the two sub-items noted above, “suggests that the Working Group on Humane Killing be asked to focus on preparations for the 1999 Workshop, as well as on its name.”

8.1.4 Other matters

The UK has suggested that it would be extremely helpful if the Working Group was able to consider and discuss the most recent data on humane killing of whales from Japan and Norway. It would be useful if the data could include times to death, numbers of harpoons used and the effectiveness of secondary killing methods, in particular the use of the rifle.

Item 9. INFRACTIONS, 1996 SEASON

The Infractions Sub-committee will meet in Muscat, Oman, on Wednesday 13 May 1997. Its report will be circulated as Paper IWC/50/7.

The Infractions Sub-committee considers matters and documents relating to the International Observer Scheme and Infractions insofar as they involve monitoring of compliance with the Schedule and penalties for infractions thereof (*Rep. int. Whal. Commn 29: 22*).

9.1.2 Reports from Contracting Governments on the availability, sources and shipments of whale meat and products, and relevant developments; and on stockpiles and sale of whale meat and products, domestic laws and enforcement actions on illegal possession and sale

At the 46th Annual Meeting the Commission adopted a Resolution (IWC Resolution 1994-7) which invited each Contracting Government to report to the

Infractions Sub-committee at every Annual Meeting on the sources and trade in whale meat and products.

At its 47th Annual Meeting the Commission adopted IWC Resolution 1995-6 which called for all governments and other entities with a history of whaling to determine whether they have any remaining stockpiles of whale meat, and to report to annually to the Commission on these, relevant domestic laws, and enforcement actions. It also encouraged development of mechanisms using DNA or isozyme analysis to randomly sample and identify whale meat in their market places by species and to prohibit the sale of meat from all whales that could not have been taken nor acquired in accordance with ICRW and CITES provisions.

The Commission adopted IWC Resolution 1996-3 at the 48th Annual Meeting which effectively repeated and re-enforced these requests; and then last year the Commission adopted IWC Resolution 1997-2 which encouraged all Contacting Governments to provide information to the IWC about the size of remaining stockpiles and the species of origin of meat remaining in stockpiles, to collect and inventory skin or meat samples for DNA identification from all whales that enter into commerce, and to make the DNA database available to the IWC.

Norway has requested that this agenda item be deleted. "As stated previously, Norway holds the view that questions relating to trade in whale products fall outside the scope of the IWC. In the opinion of Norway CITES and WTO are the appropriate international fora in this context." Norway has asked that if this agenda item is maintained, then its statement should be reflected in the annotations.

9.2 Action arising

Any action in association with the proposal put forward by Ireland (Agenda item 18) will be dealt with under that item.

Item 10. ABORIGINAL SUBSISTENCE WHALING

10.1 Report of the Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Sub-committee

The Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Sub-committee will meet in Muscat, Oman, on Wednesday 13 May 1998 and its report will be distributed as Paper IWC/50/13.

Its terms of reference were revised at the 49th Annual Meeting to consider relevant information and documentation from the Scientific Committee, and to consider nutritional, subsistence and cultural needs relating to aboriginal subsistence whaling and the use of whales taken for such purposes, and to provide advice on the dependence of aboriginal communities on specific whale stocks to the Commission for its consideration and determination of appropriate management measures (*Chairman's Report of the 49th Annual Meeting, Item 10.3.6.2*).

10.2 Aboriginal subsistence whaling scheme

The Scientific Committee is continuing to investigate potential management regimes for aboriginal subsistence whaling, including regimes based on the approach taken in the Revised Management Procedure and utilising simulation trials where appropriate. Its progress will be reported in Paper IWC/50/4.

10.3 Review of aboriginal subsistence whaling catch limits

Last year the Commission set catch limits for aboriginal subsistence whaling which included provisions to ensure review of some in the light of advice or new data from the Scientific Committee.

10.3.1.1 Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas stock of bowhead whales

The strike limits for this stock are to be reviewed annually by the Commission in light of the advice of the Scientific Committee, particularly its advice arising from the 1998 Comprehensive Assessment.

10.3.1.2 North Pacific Eastern stock of gray whales

The taking of gray whales from this stock by aborigines whose traditional aboriginal subsistence and cultural needs have been recognised is to be reviewed annually by the Commission in light of the advice of the Scientific Committee.

10.3.1.3 North Atlantic West Greenland stock of minke whales

The catch limit for this stock will be reviewed if new scientific data become available within the 5 year period 1998 - 2002 and if necessary amended on the basis of the advice of the Scientific Committee.

10.3.1.4 North Atlantic humpback whales

The catch limit of 2 humpbacks each season permitted to be taken by Bequians of St Vincent and The Grenadines expires after the 1998/99 season.

Item 11. COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF WHALE STOCKS

The Scientific Committee will report its progress in work on Southern Hemisphere baleen whales, particularly humpback and blue whale studies, North Pacific minke and Bryde's whales, and North Atlantic minke whales. The Scientific Committee held a special Symposium and Workshop on right whales in Cape Town in March 1998. (Paper IWC/50/4).

11.2.2 Action arising

Any action in association with the proposal put forward by Ireland (Agenda item 18) will be dealt with under that item.

Item 12 REVISED MANAGEMENT SCHEME

12.1 Report of the Working Group on the Revised Management Scheme

Last year the Commission received a proposal from Japan for inspection and observation schemes. It was agreed that comments on the proposal should be forwarded to Mr F. von der Assen (Netherlands) before 1 December 1997 and then circulated to all Commissioners.

The Commission also adopted IWC Resolution 1997-4 calling for improved monitoring and reporting of bycatches of cetaceans.

The Working Group will meet in Muscat, Oman, on Tuesday 12 May 1998, and its report will be distributed as Paper IWC/50/14. Its terms of reference, as specified in IWC Resolution 1994-5, include completion of work on:

- (i) an effective inspection and observation scheme;
- (ii) arrangements to ensure that total catches over time are within the limits set under the Revised Management Scheme; and
- (iii) incorporation into the Schedule of the specification of the Revised Management Procedure and all other elements of the Revised Management Scheme.

12.3 Action arising

Any action in association with the proposal put forward by Ireland (Agenda item 18) will be dealt with under that item.

Item 13. SOUTHERN OCEAN SANCTUARY

Although the Commission has not responded to the repeated requests from the Scientific Committee for advice on objectives for the Southern Ocean Sanctuary, it agreed last year to retain this item on its agenda.

Item 14. SCIENTIFIC PERMITS

Last year the Government of Japan issued Special Permits for the taking of whales for scientific research in the Antarctic and North Pacific. These were evaluated by the Scientific Committee using the criteria established under IWC Resolution 1995-9. Under the terms of Schedule paragraph 30, the preliminary results of any research resulting from Special Permits should be made available at the next Annual Meeting of the Scientific Committee, and will be reported on in Paper IWC/50/4.

Any action in association with the proposal put forward by Ireland (Agenda item 18) will be dealt with under that item.

Item 15. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

15.1 Research proposals

The Scientific Committee will report on future research activities which it believes the Commission should support. Past research programmes supported financially by the Commission will also be reviewed by the Scientific Committee, including the 20th Southern Hemisphere minke whale sightings cruise and the blue whale research carried out under the IWC-SOWER programme.

15.2 Research on the environment and whale stocks

The Scientific Committee has established a regular agenda item to address the impact of environmental changes on whale stocks, with Arctic issues as a separate sub-item. It will report on progress in Paper IWC/50/4.

Item 16. CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

16.1 Observers' reports

IWC observers' reports of meetings of other intergovernmental organisations will be distributed as Paper IWC/50/10.

16.2 Other

At the 45th Annual Meeting it was agreed that the Secretary should identify meetings of other international organisations in which the IWC should have direct participation for co-operation and to include the costs in the budget [*Rep. int. Whal. Commn 44: 29*].

Item 17. ADOPTION OF REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

The Scientific Committee will hold its annual meeting in Muscat, Oman, 27 April - 9 May 1998, under its Chairman, Mr J. L. Bannister (Australia). Its Report should be available shortly before the start of the 50th Annual Meeting as Paper IWC/50/4.

17.1 Small Cetaceans

In 1991 the Commission adopted a Resolution on Small Cetaceans [*Rep. int. Whal. Commn 42:49*] which recalled its request of the previous year to the Scientific Committee to commence a process of drawing together information on the stocks subjected to significant directed and incidental takes, and requested the Scientific Committee to continue this work, including those stocks which were not reviewed. The Small Cetaceans Sub-committee of the Scientific Committee will this year focus on:

- small cetaceans in the Indian Ocean and Red Sea, with special reference to the Middle East;
- further consideration of the criteria for assessing the status of harbour porpoise populations.

17.2 Topics for consideration by the Scientific Committee in 1999, 2000 and 2001

Following the mechanism adopted at the 47th Annual Meeting, the Commission now accepts the Scientific Committee's advice on topics for review in the next year, since the Sub-committee on Small Cetaceans needs at least a year to get the work organised. But agreement on the topics for the second and third years ahead is on a provisional basis. The Commission is asked to confirm the topics for review for 1999 and 2000, and receive recommendations on provisional topics for review in 2001 to start the three-year cycle again.

Item 18. THE FUTURE OF THE IWC

Last year the Commissioner for Ireland introduced a package of proposals designed to encourage discussion between Commissioners, and with the aim of breaking the impasse in the Commission in the situation of increasing catches outside IWC control. He was encouraged to continue dialogue with Commissioners on this initiative, and an intersessional consultation between the Chairman and Commissioners was held in Antigua & Barbuda in February 1998. The proposals under consideration cover the following five points:

- (1) Adoption of the RMS into the IWC Schedule
- (2) Restriction of quotas to coastal areas only
- (3) Limiting whaling to catches for local consumption
- (4) Phase out lethal scientific whaling over a period
- (5) Development of IWC regulations for whale watching

Any action to be taken on these items, including amendments to the Schedule and Resolutions, which arise in earlier agenda items (including agenda items 6, 9, 11, 12, and 14) may be dealt with under this agenda item as a single package of proposals.

The USA has stated that it 'would like to be certain that the agenda item entitled "Future of the IWC," while providing an opportunity for member countries to put forth any analysis they may have initiated and ideas they may have with respect to the components of the Irish proposal, will not preclude discussion of any relevant initiatives which delegates wish to bring up.'

Item 19. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BUDGET ESTIMATES

19.1 Review of provisional financial statement, 1997/98

19.2 Consideration of estimated basic budgets, 1998/99 and 1999/2000

Financial matters arising under these agenda items are dealt with in Papers IWC/50/8A and B

19.2.1 Research proposals

The Scientific Committee will forward its recommendations for funding research proposals which it considers should be supported financially by the Commission (Paper IWC/50/4).

19.2.2 Assessment of contributions from Contracting Governments

At the 49th Annual Meeting Germany voiced its concern over the realised and assessed contributions, which it would like to see changed. It agreed to prepare a paper on the subject for this meeting.

In addition, at last year's meeting, Japan shared the view expressed by Antigua & Barbuda that contributions should be assigned by a more UN-like model, and it would prepare specific proposals to address this issue.

Item 20. IWC ADMINISTRATION

20.1 Review of administrative systems

At last year's meeting the Commission authorised, by IWC Resolution 1997-9, an external review of the IWC's administrative systems and the Secretariat, to be completed in 1998 in time for consideration by the Commission at IWC 51, with a budget of no more than £50,000. A report on progress to date will be available to the Finance & Administration Committee and Commissioners.

20.2 Advisory Committee

Also last year the Commission decided, by IWC Resolution 1997-10, to establish an Advisory Committee comprising the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and two Commissioners to broadly represent the interests within the IWC forum. The role of this Committee is one of support to the Secretariat, and the two Commissioners who volunteered to serve until the 50th Annual Meeting are Norway and Mexico.

20.3 Annual Meeting arrangements

At the 49th Annual Meeting the Commission agreed that the Press be allowed access to the next meeting on the same basis as NGOs and given access to documents, and be charged a nominal fee approximately equal to the costs of producing the documents they require. The Commission should review the matter in the light of experience at the 50th Annual Meeting.

The Secretary was instructed to revise the Rules of Conduct for Observers to take account of this decision.

20.4 Communications

Following agreement at last year's meeting, all standard communications to Commissioners, Contracting Governments and members of the Scientific Committee have been by electronic means (e-mail or fax), with a hard copy following in the post. It would be appropriate to review the operation of this procedure at this meeting.

Item 21. AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

21.1 Voting procedures

Japan proposed an amendment to the Rule of Procedure E.3(d) last year which would have permitted votes by secret ballot under certain conditions. After differing views were expressed by delegations, it was agreed that:

- (a) further discussion and consideration of this issue at the 49th meeting of the IWC be deferred;
- (b) meanwhile,
 - (i) interested Contracting Governments were invited to submit information on voting practices and rules of procedure used in international fora;
 - (ii) the Secretariat would write to international organisations, with which the IWC has established links, in order to gather information on voting procedures including the use of secret ballots;
- (c) the Commission should refer this additional information, together with the proposal for an amendment to Section E.3(d) of the Rules of Procedure, to the Finance and Administration Committee with a view to consideration and disposal of this issue at the 50th Annual Meeting in Oman.

Japan now proposes the following amendment to Rule of Procedure E.3.(d) - (*new text in italic*):

Votes can be taken by show of hands, or by roll call, as in the opinion of the Chairman, appears to be most suitable. Votes shall be taken by secret ballots when the request is made by a Contracting Government and seconded by three (3) or more Contracting Governments, one of whom is either a proponent of the issue to be voted upon, or is specifically named in the said issue, or is directly affected by the vote to be taken.

21.2 Observers

The Commission failed to reach agreement last year regarding a change in treatment for observers to IWC meetings. The USA and the Netherlands put forward a proposal which would have the effect of admitting observers to all meetings and intersessional meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary groups, except the Finance and Administration Committee. However, because of the impasse, the co-sponsors withdraw the proposal and will bring it forward to the meeting in Oman.

The USA has indicated that it “would like to state its intention to propose an amendment to the Rules of Procedure to streamline the process of non-governmental organization admittance into IWC meetings and to ensure the inclusion of non-governmental organization representatives in all IWC sessions as appropriate.”

21.3 Advisory Committee

The Commission last year, by IWC Resolution 1997-10, established an Advisory Committee and suggested that the Secretary draw up a Rule of Procedure for consideration at the next meeting. A proposed text is included in Paper IWC/50/15.

21.4 Scientific Committee

Amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Scientific Committee to set out that Committee’s objectives, priorities and procedures were agreed last year (*IWC/49/4 Annex L*). They will be given final consideration at the Scientific Committee’s 1998 Meeting (and amended if considered appropriate) before being recommended for adoption at the 50th Annual Meeting of the Commission. Further additions for the selection and providing financial support for Invited Participants were also proposed for Rule A.6 (*Chairman’s Report, item 18.2.1*). The present draft texts of the proposed Rules are given in Paper IWC/50/15)

Item 22. DATE AND PLACE OF ANNUAL MEETINGS

Last year Grenada announced that it proposed to host the 51st Annual Meeting, in 1999, which offer was welcomed by the Commission.

To date, there have been no invitations to host the meeting in the year 2000.

Item 23. ADOPTION OF REPORT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Finance and Administration Committee will meet in Muscat, Oman, on Monday 11 May 1997. Its terms of reference are to advise the Commission on expenditure, budgets, scale of contributions, financial regulations, staff questions, and such matters as the Commission may refer to it from time to time (*Rule of Procedure M.8*). Its report will be distributed as soon as it is available as Paper IWC/50/9.

Item 24. ANNUAL REPORT 1997-98

The draft Annual Report of the Commission, covering the year since the 49th Annual Meeting, will be distributed as Paper IWC/50/11 for approval.

Item 25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

This item may be used to raise any other business not previously identified in the agenda, and which does not require immediate substantive action by the Commission.