

Agenda Item 2

Opening Statements

Information Document 2.b-i

**Opening Statements : Observers
– NAMMCO**

Action Requested

- Take note

Submitted by

NAMMCO



**NOTE:
DELEGATES ARE KINDLY REMINDED
TO BRING THEIR OWN COPIES OF DOCUMENTS TO THE MEETING**



NORTH ATLANTIC MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION (NAMMCO)

STATEMENT TO THE 8TH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO ASCOBANS

NAMMCO is an international regional body for cooperation in research, conservation, and rational management of all species of cetaceans (whales and dolphins) and pinnipeds (seals and walrus) in the North Atlantic. **NAMMCO** focuses on modern approaches to the study of the North Atlantic marine ecosystem as a whole and to better understand the role of marine mammals and the impact of anthropogenic activities in this system.

With due regard to the needs of coastal communities, the **NAMMCO** Member States, Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway, confirmed at the 2016 Council Meeting in February their commitment to ensuring the effective conservation and the sustainable and responsible use of marine mammals - through active regional cooperation on research and improvement of hunting methods and science-based management decisions. The increasing stocks of narwhal, beluga and walrus off Greenland are a clear result of sound and science-based management, following advice from **NAMMCO**.

Climate change carries serious consequences for marine mammals. This can already be seen from the decreasing blubber thickness of harp seals and minke whales in the Barents Sea, and the changes in geographical distribution of minke whale and fin whale around Iceland.

Therefore, aware that direct catches represent only the most apparent anthropogenic pressure, and that marine mammals also face multiple, cumulative and synergistic threats, **NAMMCO** reiterated its will to progress towards effective ecosystem-based management and monitoring of other direct or indirect anthropogenic disturbances, such as by-catch and entanglements, noise, pollution, climate change and increased human activities in the Arctic (shipping, fishing, mining, tourism...).

NAMMCO believes that with climate change, and other environmental changes, and their unforeseeable consequences for marine mammals - and coastal communities, it is essential to join forces and strengthen the scientific cooperation between organisations dealing with marine mammals for the benefits of their conservation.

At the occasion of the 8th Meeting of the Parties, **NAMMCO** therefore invites **ASCOBANS** to enhance the scientific cooperation between the two organisations to the benefits of small cetacean conservation. Three issues of shared concerns come to mind: by-catch monitoring, estimation and mitigation; the assessment of North Sea harbour porpoises, a shared stock between **NAMMCO** and **ASCOBANS**; and the monitoring of the effect of persistent organic pollutants on marine top predators.

NAMMCO wishes all the participants a productive meeting and success in addressing the pressing conservation issues facing cetaceans within the waters of the Agreement and looks forward to discussing ways of implementing an enhanced cooperation between our two organisations.

For more information:

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