



FISHERIES AGENCY
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES, GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

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CLOSING STATEMENT TO 58th ANNUAL MEETING
INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION

STATEMENT BY JAPAN'S COMMISSIONER MINORU MORIMOTO

The historic 58th Annual Meeting of the Whaling Commission in the Caribbean island of St Kitts and Nevis will be remembered for endorsing that the moratorium on sustainable commercial whaling is no longer necessary. The IWC has now begun the process for bringing its functions back on track as a resource management organization that regulates and monitors sustainable whaling.

The polarized debate has for too long held back the IWC and brought the organisation to its knees. It has not fulfilled its obligations to its charter document – the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling 1946 – for the last 20 years. The dysfunctional nature of the IWC is caused by the fundamental differences in the position of its members and over the years has become a mere stage for emotional and political conflicts at the sacrifice of its original mission.

The current situation can no longer continue and has compelled the majority of members to initiate a process where the IWC can be “normalized”. Almost 40 of the Whaling Commission’s members have already taken first step on the path to normalization. As a result, Japan is pleased to be able to host an independent meeting of these concerned members early next year to discuss ways in which the Whaling Commission can be brought back on track to completing and implementing regulated and monitored commercial whaling.

We are convinced that the IWC can only be saved from its current crisis by respecting and interpreting the whaling charter in good faith. This means protecting endangered and depleted species while allowing the sustainable utilization of abundant species under a controlled, transparent and science-based management regime. In this regard, we are pleased that the Commission did not adopt any resolution against our research programs.

We are pleased the Whaling Commission passed by consensus our resolution urging NGOs to act in a non-violent manner when making their views known about whaling. All members are deeply concerned over the increasingly aggressive nature of Greenpeace’s illegal interference with our research programme in the Antarctic. We believe this resolution will provide added weight to taking further action against Greenpeace at the next IWC meeting if they repeat their activities against us this Austral summer.

Use of cetaceans, like other fishery resources, contributes to sustainable coastal communities, sustainable livelihoods, food security and poverty reduction. Whales should be treated as any other marine living resources available for harvesting subject to conservation and science-based management. Scientifically and legally, there is no reason to treat cetaceans differently.

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