



## **FISHERIES AGENCY**

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES, GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

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### **OPENING STATEMENT OF JAPAN TO THE 60<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION**

The Government of Japan expresses its appreciation to the Government of Chile for hosting the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and for the hospitality we have received.

Japan is of the view that due to serious disagreements among different groups within the IWC, there has been a paucity of constructive, rational and science-based discussions and decisions. Such state of affairs can only be described as “dysfunctional”.

From this point of view, at the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of IWC held in Anchorage, the delegation of Japan made every possible effort to reduce confrontation and conflict in an attempt to build trust among members. In this regard, with respect to small-type coastal whaling, Japan presented a reasonable and flexible proposal reflecting discussions on the RMS and made it open for negotiation. However, Japan was forced to withdraw the proposal due to the obstinate opposition by some members insisting that they would never admit resumption of Japan’s small-type coastal whaling regardless of resource conditions.

Further, our delegation was deeply disappointed to observe that the quality of discussions had deteriorated rapidly during the sessions and that unproductive and uncompromising interventions were frequently made. Due to such circumstances, Japan stated, on the last day of the Anchorage meeting, that there is a real possibility that we will review the way we engage with IWC at the fundamental level.

Japan is strongly convinced that the current situation is undesirable for all members and that the IWC must be normalized as an organization that can carry out its purpose of conservation and management of the whale resources. Our delegation sincerely supports the Chair’s efforts concerning the future of the IWC. Japan commends and appreciates the tremendous efforts Chair-Hogarth has put in over the past year in order to once again make the IWC an effective organization that can fulfill its own mission, the conservation and management of whale resources. Japan remains committed to make serious efforts to normalize the IWC. At the end of last year, this willingness of ours was proven by our decision not to catch humpback whales, while the normalization of the IWC is making progress. We will continue to show this willingness during this meeting.

At the Intersessional Meeting on the future of the IWC held last March, Japan continued its attempts to promote non-confrontational and constructive dialogue and contributed to the progress of the meeting. Japan believes that the Commission must devote as much time as possible to advance the discussion concerning the future of IWC at this annual meeting. For

this purpose, our delegation will again strive to take non-confrontational approaches as we did at the Anchorage and Heathrow meetings. Likewise, we strongly urge other members to cooperate with each other in the same manner in order for all of us to normalize the IWC once again and make it functional.

In addition to the normalization of the IWC, it is also very important for the members of this Commission to take serious and concrete steps against the illegal and dangerous harassment that Japan's Antarctic research vessels experienced. Although the IWC has adopted two resolutions and one statement by consensus, the situation does not appear to have improved and there exist substantial fears that harassment against those vessels will further be escalated.

Therefore, Japan will request the IWC and its members to take further specific measures at this annual meeting. As this is a fundamental issue beyond positions on whaling, Japan will ask all member States to address it with strong commitments. Our delegation is ready to discuss with concerned parties what specific measures can be adopted by consensus.

Japan supports the realization of management, conservation and sustainable utilization of whale resources. Japan believes that all whaling activities should be managed internationally under catch quotas calculated on a scientific basis and under a proper inspection and enforcement scheme. This idea is in line with Article 64 and 65 of the UNCLOS.

It should be repeatedly emphasized that the IWC has not fulfilled its responsibilities as a management organization for a long time. With the exception of some measures related to subsistence whaling, it has fallen into chaos where no appropriate management action can be adopted. The collapse of the process to develop the RMS is a clear example.

While Japan expresses its strong desire that the IWC be brought back to its mandated functions as a management organization as soon as possible and supports the Chair's efforts concerning the future of the IWC, it cannot overlook the present and future "vacuum" situation related to whale resource management.

Japan sincerely hopes that all members will work together to make the IWC more effective and that this annual meeting will be remembered as one which rescued the IWC from the brink of collapse rather than the one which determined its collapse when we reflect on this annual meeting in the future. The delegation of Japan expresses its firm commitment to making every effort to achieve this goal.