

The Shared Interests of International Whaling Commission Members  
Supporting the Principle of Sustainable Use

Tokyo, Japan

23 April 2009

In light of the existing situation within the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and the efforts of its Small Working Group to resolve the impasse that has paralyzed the organization, a meeting of representatives of sustainable use of cetaceans held in Tokyo, Japan, 22 and 23 April adopted the following shared interests in relation to the operation of the IWC and its role and responsibility in implementing the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) in managing and conserving the world's whale stocks.

The representatives of 32 IWC members noted the activities relating to the "Future of the IWC" and have always encouraged good faith negotiations that would recognize the provisions of the ICRW as they relate to the management of whaling. In this regard, we are committed to endorsing the following shared interests at the IWC's annual meetings and related intersessional meetings:

- WE SUPPORT the principle of sustainable use of abundant whale stocks which contribute to sustainable coastal communities, sustainable livelihoods, preservation of cultural traditions, food security and poverty reduction;
- WE OPPOSE placing the use of whales outside the context of the globally accepted concept of sustainable use and the norm of science-based management and rule-making, as whales are no different from any other living marine or terrestrial resource traditionally utilized for food;
- RECOGNIZING that many whale stocks are abundant and increasing, we support the sustainable use of abundant stocks of whales and the protection of depleted ones, consistent with the ICRW;
- WE WELCOME the resumption of international trade in whale products and reiterate that the IWC has no competence on this issue;

- WE NOTE with concern the continued use of existing classifications, such as “Aboriginal Subsistence”, “Commercial” and “Small-Type Whaling”, as these discriminatory terms have no meaning in resource management.
- WE RECOMMEND strongly the use of the universal language “Harvest Quota” when describing all off-takes of whales irrespective of purpose;
- WE OPPOSE the continuation of the moratorium for those whale stocks that have recovered and are abundant, given the risk-averse management procedure for calculating quotas, that is, the RMP, which has been adopted by consensus by the IWC;
- WE CONTINUE TO REJECT the creation of sanctuaries which are inconsistent with the ICRW;
- WE RECOGNIZE THE NEED of both lethal and non-lethal scientific research related to population growth and the interactions between whales and the marine ecosystem, and
- WE SUPPORT decisions that ensure food security and the maintenance and preservation of traditional food cultures as a fundamental right.