

68th Meeting of the International Whaling Commission - Portorož, Slovenia, 17-21 October 2022

Opening Statement of Uruguay

The Government of Uruguay wishes to thank the Government of Slovenia for organizing the 68th meeting of the International Whaling Commission. We hope that its work will be fruitful.

We wish to highlight the efforts made by the secretariat of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies to continue their work in the context of the COVID-19 emergency and recognize the impact the pandemic had on the financial situation of the Member States. We express our concern about the delicate financial situation that this body is going through, and we expect to make our outmost efforts to overcome this difficult situation.

Uruguay reaffirms its commitment to the International Whaling Commission as the main international forum for the conservation and management of cetaceans and reiterates its agreement with the validity of the moratorium on commercial whaling. In this sense, it praises the adoption of this measure 40 years ago and confirms its opposition to trade - mainly international trade – of cetaceans and their derivatives, to the so-called "scientific" hunting and to hunting under reservation or objection to the moratorium.

Consequently, Uruguay expresses its opposition to the draft Resolution on "Implementation of a Conservation and Management Program for Whale Stocks Aimed at Lifting the Moratorium and the Orderly Development of the Whaling Industry".

The hunting of cetaceans constitutes an inappropriate measure, and it is contrary to the mitigation of the food crisis; this is the reason why Uruguay also rejects the draft Resolution on "Food Security" and any other initiative with the same orientation.

Given the environmental, economic, and social relevance of live cetaceans and their contribution to sustainable development, biodiversity, and their role in mitigating the effects of climate change, Uruguay demands respect for the integrity of the Whale Sanctuaries already established by the Commission and supports the creation of new sanctuaries, both at national level and within the framework of the IWC.

In this regard, it offers its unconditional support to the proposal for the creation of the South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary and its Management Plan, endorsed by the Scientific Committee and the Conservation Committee of the IWC, while urging all members to provide their valuable support.

Uruguay supports the draft Resolution on "Marine Pollution by Plastics" by recognizing the seriousness of the problem generated by the accumulation of plastic waste of all sizes that reaches the seas, and highlights the tasks carried out by the Scientific and Conservation Committees in this matter.

Only sustainable development that guarantees diversity and protection of the environment can lead us to a better world.