



OPENING STATEMENT BY INSTITUTO BALEIA JUBARTE – THE BRAZILIAN HUMPBACK WHALE INSTITUTE

Time for the IWC to Enter the 21st Century – At Last

On the occasion of the 68th Plenary meeting of the International Whaling Commission, the Brazilian Humpback Whale Institute, which manages the most relevant whale research and conservation project in operation in Brazil, with 34 years of continuous activities, wishes to express its gratitude to the Government of Slovenia for once again hosting the Commission in Portoroz, and to its Chair and Secretary for steering the IWC through difficult, but nevertheless historic, times.

The most recent in-person meeting of the Commission, in Florianópolis, Brazil, was a defining moment for the IWC. Not only the attempts to return to the large-scale slaughter of whales were resoundingly rejected by member States, but also the Florianópolis Declaration was approved by a vast majority. The Declaration clearly sets the course for the future of the IWC. A future in which, instead of becoming irrelevant due to the endless bickering about an unsustainable, unnecessary and economically unfeasible industry from the past, namely commercial whaling, the Commission increasingly becomes a hub for cetacean management in what really matters for most of the world, including the mitigation of human-induced mortality, the understanding of their vital role in, and provision of, ecosystem services, including a substantial role in mitigating climate change, and the promotion of whale watching as a major beneficial force, generating sustainable jobs and income around the world and enhancing public understanding of the role of whales and oceans in human life.

Further, the IWC should become more involved in promoting and supporting the establishment of Marine Protected Areas aimed at conserving cetaceans and their key habitats. Not only the proposed South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary should be adopted, but also in line with the 30x30 initiative member States should consider cetaceans when working to enhance their national MPA networks. In this regard, we are proud of being part of the *Un Solo Mar* Brazil-Uruguay joint initiative to promote the establishment of new MPAs aimed at protecting our shared marine biodiversity.

It's time for the IWC to stop being held back by fruitless debates about the clearly defunct whaling industry, reject the poorly disguised attempts to clog its agenda with pointless draft resolutions, and embrace its role as the main conservation and non-lethal management body for cetaceans in the 21st century. This is the way forward – the only possible way forward.