IWC/70/08/05/REV21/EN
Agenda item 08

HOBART DECLARATION ON THE EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE REGULATION OF WHALING, 1946

Submitted by the IWC Chair, Vice-Chair, and the Governments of Australia and Benin

1. The Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (the Convention), meeting in Hobart, Australia in 2026, on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of the signing of the Convention and the seventieth meeting of the International Whaling Commission (the Commission);
2. **RECOGNISING** that throughout its eighty-year existence the Commission has been universally recognised as the primary intergovernmental organisation responsible for the global management and conservation of whales ~~and other cetaceans~~;
3. **CELEBRATING** the global standing of the Commission's Scientific Committee and its role in developing novel scientific techniques and providing research results, reports and recommendations based on the best available science on whales and other cetaceans which has underpinned the Commission's important decisions and outcomes in management and conservation;
4. **RECALLING** that when the Convention came into force, whaling was the only recognised, critical threat to whales globally and that two previous attempts in the 1930s to conclude a convention to regulate the historically expanding and unsustainable whaling industry had failed;
5. **FURTHER RECALLING** that, given these previous failures to regulate whaling, the original ~~intent~~ object and purpose of the Convention was "to provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry";
6. **NOTING**~~**RECOGNISING**~~ that since the Convention came into force many serious, compounding and unforeseen threats have arisen which impact whales and other cetacean populations, their environments and their food sources;
7. **EMPHASISING** the need for the Commission to take into account all sources of whale mortality, including those not related to whaling, and that consequently the Commission's work to quantify and mitigate those threats is relevant to all Contracting Governments, irrespective of their policies on commercial whaling;
8. **FURTHER NOTING** that the number of Contracting Governments to the Convention has expanded manyfold, and **RECOGNISING** that the Commission has achieved important progress through constructive dialogue and cooperation among Contracting Governments with diverse policy perspectives;
9. **RECALLING** that the Commission instituted catch limits ~~of zero~~ for the killing of whales for commercial purposes to zero (the moratorium) and these have been in effect since the 1986 coastal and the 1985/1986 pelagic season;
10. **ACKNOWLEDGING** that the global moratorium on commercial whaling has been extraordinarily successful in enabling the recovery ~~trajectories for~~of many whale populations;
11. **ACKNOWLEDGING** that other conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission have further supported the recovery of whale populations;

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12. **FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING** that the Revised Management Procedure, agreed by the Commission in 1994, represents a robust, practical and precautionary mechanism to set sustainable catch limits of whales when implemented correctly and completely (noting that an agreed ~~including through the yet-to-be developed~~ Revised Management Scheme does not exist), and its development has contributed to ~~many~~ approaches and procedures now implemented by the Commission to conserve and manage whale populations;

~~11.~~

~~12.~~13. **CELEBRATING** the development of robust ~~continued and evolving improvements in~~ management procedures for Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling (ASW) that provide for~~balance~~ the nutritional~~, and~~ cultural and subsistence needs of ASW ~~hunting~~ communities ~~with whale population status~~;

~~13.~~14. **EMPHASISING** the Commission's inter~~multi~~national whale research efforts that underpin the decisions of the Commission, and in particular the Southern Ocean Whale and Ecosystem Research Programme (SOWER) and the Commission's Southern Ocean Research Partnership (IWC-SORP) and Pacific Ocean Whale and Ecosystem Research Programme (IWC-POWER);

~~14.~~15. **RECOGNISING** the success of the Commission and its Scientific and Conservation Committees in advancing knowledge on the abundance, trends and status of many whale and other cetacean populations, the threats they face and mitigation options to address those threats;

~~15.~~16. **FURTHER RECOGNISING** the Commission's global leadership on best practices for ~~responsible, economically viable~~ whale watching, responses to mass strandings, whale welfare and the training, capacity building and mitigation methods to disentangle large whales and other cetaceans from fishing gear;

~~16.~~17. **RECALLING** the important contribution of the Commission's Conservation Management Plans to provide an effective mechanism of cooperation for Contracting Governments~~Party~~ and Non-Contracting Governments~~Party~~ range states for the non-lethal uses of cetaceans and to mitigate direct threats to whales and other cetaceans;

~~17.~~18. **ACKNOWLEDGING** the significant increase of strategic partnerships between the Commission and other relevant intergovernmental organisations and bodies to drive positive management and conservation outcomes for whales and other cetaceans, particularly in light of new and evolving threats;

~~18.~~19. **RECOGNISING** the ~~important~~ contribution of civil society to the work~~discussions and decisions~~ of the Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, THE COMMISSION:

~~19.~~20. **REAFFIRMS** its strong ~~and unwavering~~ commitment to the Convention, noting that while its object and purpose remain constant, the practices and measures agreed upon to give effect to that object and purpose may be adjusted to respond to changing circumstances~~evolve~~ over time in a manner consistent with the Convention;

~~20.~~21. **PLEDGES** to ~~ensure the Commission~~ remain~~s~~ the world's primary intergovernmental organisation responsible for the global management and conservation of whales ~~leading legal and authoritative body for matters relating to the management and conservation of whales~~ and other cetaceans and engages effectively and appropriately on important and relevant global marine issues;

~~21.~~22. **ENCOURAGES** a strategic focus to the work of the Commission to strengthen cooperation and collaboration with other organisations and bodies, as appropriate and

in line with their respective mandates, to achieve priorities in the management and conservation of whales and other cetaceans;

23. **ACKNOWLEDGES** divergent views remain on the management and conservation objectives of the Commission; and **COMMITS** to cooperative, constructive and inclusive decision- ~~-~~making on all Commission decisions; ~~and~~

24. **REAFFIRMS** the value of continued dialogue, good faith, mutual respect and cooperation among Contracting Governments;

~~22.~~

~~23.~~25. **AFFIRMS** that efforts to address major non-whaling related threats to whales and other cetaceans are relevant to all Contracting Governments ~~and will continue~~;

~~24.~~26. **FURTHER COMMITS** to ~~ensure the Commission~~ work, as the global authority for whales and other cetaceans, ~~works~~ with the relevant international bodies with responsibility on matters relating to food security, in a manner consistent with~~without prejudice to~~ its mandate;

27. **PLEDGES** to continue to support Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling and work closely with Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling communities ~~to ensure their meaningful engagement in decision making on matters that affects their lives and ensures their knowledge is valued and considered~~;

~~25.~~

28. **FURTHER PLEDGES** to support the Scientific Committee to ensure it can continue providing research results, reports and recommendations based on the best available science on priority matters identified by the Commission;

~~26.~~29. **FURTHER REAFFIRMS** the importance of continuing efforts to ensure that the scientific findings and management recommendations developed by the Commission's Scientific Committee are appropriately considered;

~~27.~~30. **CALLS UPON** all Contracting Governments to build on the achievements of the past eighty years by continuing their collective commitment towards the management and conservation of whales and other cetaceans for the benefit of present and future generations.

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