

**FISHERIES AGENCY**

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**JAPAN'S OPENING STATEMENT
TO THE 64th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION**

The Government of Japan expresses its utmost appreciation to the Government of Panama for hosting the 64th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission, and extends its grateful thanks to all those who made their tireless efforts to prepare for this meeting, especially to the IWC Secretariat.

First, Japan would like to express once again our sincere gratitude for the outpouring of support and solidarity we have received from our friends of all parts of the world, in response to the last year's Great East Japan Earthquake. All funds received are transferred from the Japanese Red Cross Society to the prefectural committees formed around the local governments of the disaster affected areas, and distributed directly among the affected population. It is therefore to our great regret that some made groundless allegations that donations given in support of relief efforts have been inappropriately used to fund Japan's scientific research programme. The Red Cross explains, as all of those who have generously supported are aware, a hundred per cent (100%) of the money donated is distributed as cash grants to those most in need. Such baseless allegations maliciously trampled on the goodwill given by those who kindly offered their supports.

At the last year's meeting, Japan referred the whaling community, "Ayukawa," which was literally wiped out by the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami. It is now seen as one of the symbols of the restoration. While Ayukawa, together with three other community based small-type whaling communities, Abashiri, Wadaura and Taiji, have been suffering from the hardship since the commercial whaling moratorium, the Commission will discuss and renew this year the catch limits of the aboriginal subsistence whaling as planned. Science-based management complied fully with international law will lead Japan to take consistent affirmative stance on each proposal based on the recommendations by the Scientific Committee. Japan reserves the right to propose an amendment to paragraph 10 of the Schedule which would provide a catch quota for its small-type whaling. From the viewpoint of the legitimacy and the same standard of the rule of law as well as scientific findings the small-type whaling should have the same standing as the aboriginal subsistence whaling.

Japan would like to reiterate our traditional views that the use of cetaceans, like other fishery resources, contributes to sustainable coastal communities, sustainable livelihoods, food security and poverty reduction. Scientifically and legally, there is no legitimate reason to treat them in completely different terms.

Importance of safety at sea should also be shared among us. Japan has engaged in a long-term comprehensive scientific research so as to obtain significant scientific knowledge in Southern Ocean. It is regrettable that the research has suffered from the sabotage activities by radical proponent of violence, the Sea Shepherd. Such unlawful violence has posed serious threats to the lives and safety of vessel crew and researchers on board the vessels. Last year, the Commission adopted the Resolution 2011-2, which urged all Contracting Governments concerned to continue to take actions to cooperate to prevent and suppress actions that risk human life at sea, and further urged them to take appropriate measures in order to ensure that the substance and spirit of this Resolution are observed both domestically and internationally. Japan would like to urge relevant Contracting Governments to adhere to the above Resolution.

Japan is not in a position to support the establishment of a whale sanctuary in the South Atlantic Ocean. First, there are simply no scientific findings in its support. This is obviously inconsistent with Article V, paragraph 2(b). Second, the proposal is a part of the package for the "Future of the IWC" process and should be considered together with other issues. Third, there is no need to support the creation of any sanctuaries while the commercial whaling moratorium is still in effect. Fourth, in 2004 a group of external experts reviewed the IWC sanctuaries scientifically and concluded that IWC Sanctuaries: (1) in general are not ecologically justified, (2) are based on vague goals and objectives, (3) lack rigorous approach to their design and (4) do little more than to provide a false sense of security of whale populations.

As an urgent task, Japan strongly supports the establishment of a mechanism to assist developing countries' participating in the Commission meetings, including the plenary sessions. It recalls that 15 out of 29 countries within the Group One of the interim measures for the contributions were absent from the last year's Commission meeting. It is highly disappointing that an extremely small number of Contracting Governments have participated in the Working Group for the Provision of Assistance to Governments of Limited Means. Japan hopes that the Commission will swiftly establish the mechanism for developing countries so that the Commission may realize broad participation in its work.

Japan has made its utmost effort to reduce unnecessary conflicts by minimizing the number of decisions taken by votes at the plenary session under the process of the Future of the IWC. It strongly urges other members to contribute in a similar manner by refraining from seeking controversial schedule amendment proposals since such action would likely to spoil the atmosphere of calm and constructive dialogues. Japan sincerely hopes that the spirit of mutual respect will prevail at the meeting and the resultant outcome will help move the IWC towards fully functional resource conservation and management organization.