



**FISHERIES AGENCY**

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**JAPAN'S OPENING STATEMENT  
TO THE 63rd ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION**

The Government of Japan is very pleased to be in Jersey to participate in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the IWC and grateful to people of Jersey for its warm hospitality we have received. Japan commends the IWC Secretariat for their efforts to organize this Annual Meeting in a short period of time, and also acknowledges the support for the meeting offered by the States of Jersey.

On March 11, Japan was hit by one of the most powerful and disastrous earthquakes in history. We have been making all-out efforts to restore livelihood and to recover from a series of tragedies that followed the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami. Since then, Japan has been strongly supported by a great number of countries, international organizations, NGOs and individuals from all parts of the world, and we would like to express our sincerest gratitude for the outpouring of support and solidarity we have received.

On the occasion of the 63<sup>rd</sup> IWC Annual Meeting, Japan would like to present three issues which are important for Japan's whaling policy.

Firstly, the devastating earthquake and tsunami, which hit northeastern Japan on 11 March, 2011, also destroyed one of the coastal whaling communities, Ayukawa. The community was literally wiped out and many lives were lost. There is only a vestige of its whaling station buildings left. However, two whaling vessels and their crew have survived the earthquake and tsunami. Out from the devastation, they have expressed a strong desire and an unbending determination for restoration of the whaling community and, the Ayukawa whaling has even been seen as one of the symbols of the restoration from the Great East Japan Earthquake. The small type coastal whaling remains as a priority issue for Japan.

Secondly, it was quite regrettable for Japan to be compelled to make the decision to cut short the 2010/2011 season of the Second Phase of the Japanese Whale Research Program under Special Permit in the Antarctic (JARPA II) because of the dangerous and illegal attacks by the radical anti-whaling non-governmental organization, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. The attacks posed a serious threat to the lives of the crew members of the research vessels, and they represent the Sea Shepherd's disregard for the international maritime legal

system which we should respect. Japan made the said difficult decision in order to protect human lives, but I would like to stress that our decision does not indicate any change in Japan's whaling policy.

Japan is engaged in legitimate research activities responding to important scientific issues. JARPA II is a comprehensive and long-term scientific project (c.f. IWC/SC/57/O1) and its achievements have been presented in many forms including peer-reviewed scientific journals (IWC/62/20). Condoning the violence against the legitimate and important scientific research is unacceptable for Japan.

It is very important for Japan that the violence be stopped immediately. Therefore, Japan requests a discussion to be held at this Annual Meeting on coordinated international actions against Sea Shepherd. We urge the IWC members, especially the flag States and the port States of the Sea Shepherd's vessels, again to cooperate to take effective measures to stop and prevent the violent actions which threaten safety at sea. Japan reiterates that this is a sea safety issue which should be of common concern for us all irrespective of differing positions of each IWC member on whaling and Japan requests that the international community adopt a common position condemning such violence.

Last, but not least, Japan reiterates its strong commitment to continue in good faith the dialogues with all concerned parties at this Annual Meeting for the purpose of making the IWC fully functional as a resource conservation and management organization.

The "Proposed Consensus Decision to Improve the Conservation of Whales from the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission" presented to the members of the IWC last year in Agadir, Morocco, was a brave and noble attempt. In order to support the process, Japan offered substantial compromises. Therefore, it was very regrettable to see no substantial progress made during the Agadir meeting. However, it is a strong wish of Japan to maintain and strengthen the spirit of dialogue and to seek diplomatic resolutions to the controversial issues discussed at the IWC.

Japan is in a position to support realizing the management, conservation and sustainable utilization of whale resources based on the best scientific information available. Japan also recognizes the differences of views on whales and whaling among the IWC members as well as emotional factors which not only those who oppose whaling but also those who support whaling hold. Every IWC member is, therefore, requested to remember that science, international law, and mutual respect should play a more important role in the IWC.