

St. Kitts and Nevis Declaration
58th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission
June, 2006

St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua & Barbuda, Benin, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Dominica, Gabon, Gambia, Grenada, Republic of Guinea, Iceland, Japan, Kiribati, Mali, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, Nauru, Nicaragua, Norway, Republic of Palau, Russian Federation, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, Suriname, Togo, Tuvalu.

EMPHASIZING that the use of cetaceans in many parts of the world including the Caribbean, contributes to sustainable coastal communities, sustainable livelihoods, food security and poverty reduction and that placing the use of whales outside the context of the globally accepted norm of science-based management and rule-making for emotional reasons would set a bad precedent that risks our use of fisheries and other renewable resources;

FURTHER EMPHAZING that the use of marine resources as an integral part of development options is critically important at this time for a number of countries experiencing the need to diversify their agriculture;

UNDERSTANDING that the purpose of the 1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) is to “provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry” (quoted from the Preamble to the Convention) and that the International Whaling Commission (IWC) is therefore about managing whaling to ensure whale stocks are not over-harvested rather than protecting all whales irrespective of their abundance;

NOTING that in 1982 the IWC adopted a moratorium on commercial whaling (paragraph 10 e of the Schedule to the ICRW) without advice from the Commission's Scientific Committee that such measure was required for conservation purposes;

FURTHER NOTING that the moratorium which was clearly intended as a temporary measure is no longer necessary, that the Commission adopted a robust and risk-averse procedure (RMP) for calculating quotas for abundant stocks of baleen whales in 1994 and that the IWC's own Scientific Committee has agreed that many species and stocks of whales are abundant and sustainable whaling is possible;

CONCERNED that after 14 years of discussion and negotiation, the IWC has failed to complete and implement a management regime to regulate commercial whaling.

ACCEPTING that scientific research has shown that whales consume huge quantities of fish making the issue a matter of food security for coastal nations and requiring that the issue of management of whale stocks must be considered in a broader context of

ecosystem management since eco-system management has now become an international standard.

REJECTING as unacceptable that a number of international NGOs with self-interest campaigns should use threats in an attempt to direct government policy on matters of sovereign rights related to the use of resources for food security and national development;

NOTING that the position of some members that are opposed to the resumption of commercial whaling on a sustainable basis irrespective of the status of whale stocks is contrary to the object and purpose of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling;

UNDERSTANDING that the IWC can be saved from collapse only by implementing conservation and management measures which will allow controlled and sustainable whaling which would not mean a return to historic over-harvesting and that continuing failure to do so serves neither the interests of whale conservation nor management;

NOW THEREFORE:

- COMMISSIONERS express their concern that the IWC has failed to meet its obligations under the terms of the ICRW and,
- DECLARE our commitment to normalizing the functions of the IWC based on the terms of the ICRW and other relevant international law, respect for cultural diversity and traditions of coastal peoples and the fundamental principles of sustainable use of resources, and the need for science-based policy and rulemaking that are accepted as the world standard for the management of marine resources.