

**64th MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION
REPUBLIC OF PANAMA JULY 2012**

OPENING STATEMENT BY NEW ZEALAND

The New Zealand Government thanks the Government of the Republic of Panama for hosting the 64th annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission.

New Zealand's long-standing position on whaling and whale conservation remains unchanged:

- We strongly support the moratorium on commercial whaling.
- We believe modern science techniques can increase our understanding of whales without killing them.
- We oppose special permit or "scientific" whaling.
- We are particularly opposed to "scientific whaling" in the Southern Ocean.
- We firmly believe that the International Whaling Commission must modernise itself and pursue an agenda that ensures the proper conservation and management of all cetaceans.
- We support the establishment of a South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary. New Zealand is a supporter of all whale sanctuaries and strongly believes that they must be respected by all International Whaling Commission members.
- We are willing to support proposals to set catch limits for aboriginal subsistence whaling that meet the criteria set by the International Whaling Commission and would not significantly impede the recovery of depleted populations.
- We strongly support improved methods for aboriginal subsistence whaling that enhance animal welfare.
- We strongly support the work of the Commission's Conservation Committee and consider that there is much yet to be done to alleviate the threats to whales and other cetaceans from marine pollution, ship strikes and entanglements in fishing and other gear, and other sources of danger.
- We are opposed to whaling under objection and under reservation.
- We support restricting international trade of whale meat.
- We welcome the contribution NGOs can make to the work of multilateral agencies, support increased participation by NGOs and seek greater transparency in the management and work of the International Whaling Commission.

New Zealand recognises that for more than twenty years, the fundamental purpose of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling has been in dispute by its membership.

In recent years, New Zealand has participated in a reform process to resolve the impasse. While a bridge over the divide has not yet been found, we see value in continuing to build an environment where the IWC is able to be transformed into an effective organisation for the conservation of whales.

Against this background, New Zealand urges dialogue amongst members. We seek to continue to build trust. We look to encourage members to cooperate in taking forward the work of the Commission, notwithstanding the different views regarding the management of whaling and the conservation of whales.