

NGO statement on Australia and New Zealand's resolution on special permit whaling

Thank you Chair,

My name is Paul Spong.

I speak on behalf of Australian Marine Conservation Society, Cetacean Society International, Environmental Investigation Agency, Dolphin Connection, Fundacion Cethus, Greenpeace International, Humane Society International, International Fund for Animal Welfare, NRDC, Ocean Care, Pro Wildlife, Robin des Bois, World Animal Protection, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, WWF, Animal Welfare Institute, Whaleman Foundation, and there may well be others.

We wish to stress that in our view special permit whaling is an anachronism; there is nothing to be learned today about the conservation and management of whales that cannot be obtained through non-lethal means. Recalling that the ICRW was negotiated 70 years ago and that Article VIII - special permit whaling – has predominantly only been used since the moratorium on commercial whaling was agreed - acting as a way of bypassing it - we believe there is no longer any need for Article VIII of the Convention and it should be removed. Furthermore, we recall to the Commission that the practice of any country issuing special permits for whaling activities in an established Sanctuary is completely unacceptable.

The International Court of Justice ruling noted that the IWC is an evolving body and, consequently, we look forward to a time when Article VIII and so-called scientific whaling can be consigned to the past. This is fundamental to the continued progress being made in moving the IWC into the 21st Century.

While our organisations remain utterly opposed to scientific whaling, as it undermines the moratorium, we acknowledge Australia and New Zealand's efforts in this resolution. It is critical that the Commission has a process to properly engage on special permits and crucially to ensure that the findings of the ICJ are incorporated into the workings of the Commission. As the ruling made clear in paragraph 61 of the judgment, whether or not the killing of whales is for the purposes of scientific research cannot depend simply on the perception of the state issuing the permits. The ICJ was clear, state parties have a duty to cooperate with the IWC. The word duty is of critical importance, it speaks to the obligation that members of the world community have towards one another.

Through the processes this resolution seeks to introduce, we hope the whole Commission will join us and the wider scientific community in recognising that there is no need for special permit whaling.

There is of course a simpler solution: we urge Contracting Governments still issuing special permits to join with the wider scientific community that has abandoned

whaling. In the face of the many other urgent conservation needs facing cetaceans today, we urge parties to the IWC to come together in addressing these, with genuine, collaborative and non-lethal research.

Our plea is this. Let go of the past, and join fully with the rest of the world in facing the immense challenges of today. It is our duty to do what we can to give future life on our planet a chance.

Thank you Chair for this opportunity.

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