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MEDIA RELEASE

Conservation Group supports Iceland's Right to Hunt Whales

Switzerland, 17 October 2006 The world's leading pro-sustainable environmental group, IWMC World Conservation Trust, today voiced support for Iceland's decision to resume commercial whaling and called on the international community to begin regulating hunts.

Iceland announced today that it will issue licenses to fishermen to hunt nine fin whales and thirty minke whales in the year up to the end of August 2007, from regional populations of around 25,000 and 43,000 respectively.

Eugene Lapointe, President of IWMC, said: "Iceland will take such a tiny number of whales that you would have to be delusional to argue the hunt could have any negative long-term impact on whale stocks. The hunt is clearly sustainable and fully justified."

Mr. Lapointe dismissed the statements of condemnation from animal rights groups and politicians in anti-whaling countries, who are protesting Iceland's decision. "Opponents argue that there is an insufficient demand for whale meat. If they are right, how can they be concerned that whales could be over exploited? The fact is, it is for the fishermen, not animal rights campaigners, to decide whether to invest in hunting whales and it is for the Icelandic government to regulate catches."

He added: "You have to wonder about the true motivations of opponents of sustainable whaling. Criticizing whaling countries seems to have become a means of diverting attention from environmental and political problems at home, while animal rights campaigns appear to be designed to maximize fundraising possibilities."

Attention is now likely to focus on the role of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the body that is supposed to regulate catches of whales. Most whale hunting, while sustainable, takes place outside of its direct control.

Mr. Lapointe said: "It is the anti-whaling countries and animal rights groups that have hamstrung the IWC and prevented it from doing its job. Iceland set a reasonable target date for the IWC to establish a management system but the usual suspects thought they could be clever and delay progress forever. They were wrong. When you equivocate endlessly, the world has a tendency to move on without you."

IWMC believes whales will be properly protected only when an internationally agreed management system is put in place.

— ENDS —

The International Wildlife Management Consortium (IWMC) World Conservation Trust is an international organization that promotes Sustainable Use as a conservation mechanism, for the protection of the sovereign rights of independent nations and for the respect of diverse cultures and traditions.

Eugene Lapointe, President of IWMC World Conservation Trust was Secretary General of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) from 1982 to 1990.

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