

MEDIA RELEASE

Leading International Conservationist Hails The Sustainable Use Of Wildlife

Tokyo, 1 November 2005: Eugene Lapointe, President of IWMC, the leading international pro-sustainable use conservation group, told an audience of politicians, government officials and industrialists today that, contrary to some common perceptions, governments all over the world share Japan's commitment to the sustainable use of wildlife. The problem, he said, is that some governments don't preach what they practice.

Speaking at the Tokyo Press Center, at the launch of the Japanese edition of his book "Embracing the Earth's Wild Resources", Mr. Lapointe, a former Secretary General of CITES, drew a distinction between the ways in which developed countries deal with conservation issues within their own borders and the solutions they advocate for others at international meetings.

Mr. Lapointe argued that conservation practices in the United States, the European Union, Australia and most other first world countries demonstrate that sustainable use is the most effective approach. Sustainable use is the guiding principle behind the hunting of game birds, boars, deer, kangaroos and many other wild animals. Yet these same countries also strongly oppose limited hunts of whales, elephants, sea turtles and other species in areas where they are abundant, often advocating total prohibitions on hunting that create economic hardships and remove local incentives for conservation.

One reason for this inconsistency is the eagerness of politicians to "export environmentalism" to gain credentials that do not require sacrifices from their own constituents. Politicians can portray a pro-environment image to voters by supporting the mantras of campaigners for prohibitions on utilizing wildlife in other countries, while failing to deal effectively with environmental issues closer to home. This tendency is reinforced by campaigning non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have gained considerable political power in developed countries. A myriad of animal rights groups now campaign to terminate any reasonable exploitation of wild resources by humans, particularly in developing countries.

Mr. Lapointe said: "The vast majority of national governments support the sustainable use of their *own* resources but then rush to condemn others when they wish to exploit *their* resources. We arrive at the somewhat perplexing scenario of the U.S. rabidly defending its right to hunt a marginally endangered population of bowhead whales while, simultaneously, condemning Japan for taking minor numbers of much more plentiful species."

Recognizing that countries advocating the consistent application of sustainable use face challenges in gaining a level of international consensus, Mr. Lapointe called for nations to cooperate more closely on conservation issues and to be more proactive in affirming the virtues of sustainable use.

Mr. Lapointe said: “We must recognize that there is no tuna issue, no elephant issue, no whaling issue, no mahogany issue – there is only one issue – the principle of sustainable use itself.” □

The IWMC World Conservation Trust is an international organization that promotes the Sustainable Use as a conservation mechanism, the protection of the sovereign rights of independent nations and the respect of diverse cultures and traditions. It is a non-profit body supported by donations. The IWMC President and Founder is Eugene Lapointe, Former Secretary General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) from 1982 to 1990.

For further information
contact E. Lapointe at the Shinagawa Hotel 03-3440-1111, room 2367
or email: iwmc@iwmc.org