



## NGOs Address IWC Plenary

IWMC is proud to publish below the presentations made by pro-sustainable use groups at the IWC plenary meeting this afternoon.

### Laila Jusnes, HIGH NORTH ALLIANCE

Mitt navn er Laila Jusnes og jeg representerer Høge Nord Alliansen. My name is Laila Jusnes and I represent the High North Alliance, an organisation with our offices situated in Reine in the Lofoten Islands, in northern Norway.

First, Mr Chairman, let me thank you for giving the NGO community the opportunity to share our views with the distinguished Commissioners. And also, let me congratulate the Government of Chile on hosting this meeting. The High North Alliance is pleased to be one of the sustainable use organisations to speak today.

The High North Alliance represents hunting and fisheries organisations in Norway, Greenland, Iceland, Canada and the Faroe Islands. Whaling communities are widespread. They are in the Arctic, in Russia, the Caribbean, Europe, North America, Asia, and the South Pacific.

Our organisation was borne out of the anti-whaling movement. It was created in response to a total ban on all commercial whaling. We work to protect the rights of whalers to harvest renewable resources in line with the principle of sustainable use and management.

The High North Alliance is not just some urban-based group that lives in the big cities of Western countries. We live among people for whom whaling is their way of life and part of their culture.

I live in Reine. This is one of the key Norwegian communities in our country's whaling activities. Throughout Lofoten Islands all communities are involved in whaling, some way or the other.

Whaling is extremely important to us. In the small community where I live, we have six whaling boats owned by local fishermen, each with a crew of up to six people. So, whaling and fishing helps sustain the lives of most Reine families. Of the children at the local kindergarten where I send my son, almost all of their fathers are whalers or fishermen.

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We live our lives through the sustainable use of the marine environment. We have been doing so for many centuries. Whaling sustains our communities and sustains our culture – a culture that has its roots in sustainability.

Whaling feeds our families, our communities, our economies, and our cultures. For many, centuries of reliance on the products of our sustainable hunts has created a vital cultural, spiritual and ecological link between whaling peoples and whales.

Science, as well as inter-generational knowledge, determines the number of whales we are able to hunt within the waters of the North Atlantic. Whalers all work closely together. We share knowledge of the best ways to hunt and kill. We have modified our methods over the years and they are efficient.

Those of us living in the Arctic, in the harshest climates in the world, will continue to live in this environment and fulfil our duties to our communities.

Mr Chairman, I want to appeal to the Commissioners here today. I want them to think about the effect their decisions have on the communities represented by the High North Alliance, and other whaling communities around the world, when they oppose all whaling, regardless of the science.

This organisation has, over the years, tried to ban whaling and has denigrated commercialisation of whaling around the world. Lately we have seen attacks on Greenland's way of life and its whaling tradition and practices. The attitudes and allegations against Greenland reflect a deep lack of knowledge of the realities of life there.

Mr Chairman, I leave you with this thought. The world has come together in Rome only a few weeks ago and declared that we all must work to protect global food security. Respect for our way of life, respect for the livelihoods of all whaling peoples, must be at the forefront of this organisation. This organisation is not only about whales. It is about ensuring a continued way of life for whaling peoples and continued food security for us. We need you to respect that.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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## Akiko Sato, WOMEN'S FORUM FOR FISH

We are very pleased to have the opportunity to make an intervention for the first time.

The Women's Forum for Fish, founded by Mrs. Yuriko Shiraishi in 1993, is an organization that supports the sustainable use of marine resources for food. We now have about 1,000 members throughout Japan who are fishermen and their families, fish processors and consumers, school teachers, restaurant owners, university students, journalists and people interested in dietary culture.

We have attended the IWC as an NGO for 15 years to help explain the present conditions about whaling to Japanese consumers of whale meat and to school children. You may recall that I gave a presentation at the IWC Anchorage meeting where I introduced the children's picture book I published entitled "Whales in the World". I hope many of you in this room have read our book.

Japan has a marine dietary culture as compared to the terrestrial dietary culture of other countries. Every 5 kilometers along the Japanese coastline there is a fishing village, some 6,000 altogether. We eat more than 500 kinds of fish caught by our coastal fishermen. Whale meat has always been viewed as a natural food for the Japanese people, like fish. On the other hand, we did not eat beef and pork until 150 years ago. Therefore, our per capita consumption of meat is less than half that of the US and European people. Yet the commercial whaling moratorium adopted over 20 years ago has made whale meat hardly appear in the Japanese market. Therefore the cost is now very high for us.

Our world is now facing a food crisis. Furthermore, it is said that the world population will reach 10 billion people in 30 to 50 years, and that 2 billion will not be able to get enough food. Food production on land will be further limited by climate change and the fact that it takes 7 kilos of corn to produce 1 kilo of beef.

I believe that it is the sea that will help us now. Two-thirds of our earth is covered by the sea. Marine resources, including whales, managed in a sustainable manner for food in their natural environment can help relieve the world food crisis.

Ahead of such times, the Women's Forum for Fish will continue our efforts. I strongly recommend the sustainable use of marine resources which include whales.

Thank you.

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## Miguel Marengo, CONCEPESCA

CONCEPESCA is the Central American Council for sustainable fisheries development and marine management in coastal communities. Our members include users of marine resources in the Central American region.

One of the key objectives of CONCEPESCA is to promote full respect for cultural diversity and tradition in our coastal communities. The objective is strongly supported by Article 1 of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted unanimously by 185 member states in 1981.

Our purpose is also consistent with the critical need to maintain diversity in food culture in the face of a global food crisis.

My observations here are based on my experience both as a Commissioner and now as an NGO. The IWC has become ideologically deeply divided and has reached an impasse as a decision-making body. It is a conflict over “whaling” versus “no whaling” and has nothing to do with science-based management of the Convention itself.

It is clear to me that there are contradictions between these fundamental attitudes on the preservation of cultural heritage and diversity, and the manner in which the IWC deals with cultural heritage involving whales. At the IWC, we have continued discrimination between aboriginal whaling that allows certain coastal communities a right to catch whales for food, and small-type coastal whaling which does not. All coastal communities have the right of access to their marine resources for cultural diet as long as that access is sustainable.

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of my organization, I express the hope that the IWC puts in place a management system that allows the orderly development of whaling, and replaces aboriginal subsistence quotas with quotas for coastal community whaling to enable participating communities to derive the full social and economic benefits of their resources.

Mr. Chairman, we fully support your initiative “The Future of the IWC” recognizing that its success will require a change of attitude within the Commission.

Thank you for granting me the opportunity to address the Commission.