



Lausanne, 19 September 2024

OPENING STATEMENT

It is unfortunate that we find ourselves in a position where the International Whaling Commission, an institution of such global significance, must contend with discussions on the issue of quorum. The fact that we are debating whether we can proceed with critical conversations on the sustainable management of marine resources is troubling and a testament of the adversarial nature by which discussions are taken forward. In light of the growing challenges that require our *collective* attention, the general rules of diplomacy and consensus should prevail. The discussions on the quorum, however, once again demonstrate that this body has moved away from being a body that considers the interests of all its members and the different views that exist concerning the conservation and sustainable use of whales.

In the context of the recently conducted survey on human and indigenous rights in the context of Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling, it has become increasingly clear that the work of this Commission cannot exist in isolation from the broader framework of human rights. The decisions made here have direct and profound implications for the livelihoods and rights of people and peoples, especially those who depend on marine resources for their sustenance and cultural identity.

This is why the proposed Resolution on Food Security is not just timely but essential. It is a testament to our respect for the countries and communities that may face food security challenges in the future, particularly in the context of changing environmental, political and economic landscapes. It is true that whales are not part of the diet of many countries, but while this is the case, they *may* become essential in the alleviation of food security concerns. Therefore, the IWC must take a forward-thinking approach, acknowledging the intersection between conservation, sustainable use, and human well-being, and based on the best available scientific knowledge.

As we move forward in this session, let us remain committed to a balanced and equitable approach that honors both the conservation of marine life and the basic rights of people whose futures are tied to these vital resources.