



Lima, 17 September 2024

- During the 69th Biennial Meeting of the IWC in Lima -

IWMC World Conservation Trust Calls on Latin America to Support the Resolution on Food Security in the Whaling Sector

Considering the ongoing challenges to global food security, IWMC World Conservation Trust calls on Latin American countries to support the “Resolution on Food Security,” which aims to enhance the nutritional and economic well-being of people in over 114 countries worldwide, while ensuring that whale populations remain healthy and robust. This call comes as part of the 69th Biennial Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), which will be held from Monday, 23 September to Friday, 27 September, in Lima, Peru.

The resolution, which calls for the recognition of whale populations as essential natural resources, underscores the importance of sustainable use, particularly in the context of global food security. It will be presented for consideration by the Commission’s members during the plenary session, where several countries and organisations are expected to strongly support it, especially Latin American states with communities that depend on marine resources for their livelihoods.

Proponents of the resolution highlight that the vision of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) aligns closely with its objectives, particularly by promoting sustainable fishing and aquaculture as key strategies for human well-being, poverty alleviation, and food security. In particular, proponents of the resolution underscore that the FAO’s support for these initiatives directly ties into the global need for sustainable resource management.

The resolution also cites published data showing that marine mammal consumption contributes to food security in more than 114 countries, offering economic and nutritional benefits in all regions. Effective whale conservation, therefore, would support these communities without threatening global whale populations.

For Eugene Lapointe, president of IWMC World Conservation Trust, which promotes habitat conservation, whales and other marine mammals are key elements in the oceanic food web. Lapointe, who will be arriving in Lima to advocate for support of the resolution, stressed the critical role these species play.

"Protecting these species and their habitats is not only crucial for biodiversity but also has direct implications for the food security of millions of people who depend on marine resources. This is why Latin American countries that support the resolution will position themselves as defenders of balanced and equitable ocean governance," Lapointe said recently.

In addition, the advocates of the resolution hope to gain the support of Latin American states, reflecting their respect for indigenous and coastal communities where whales have

held enormous spiritual significance since ancient times. In these communities, marine resources have been integral to livelihoods and cultural heritage for centuries.

It is important to note that during the previous meeting—the 68th, held in October 2022 in Slovenia, where an earlier version of this resolution was discussed—IWMC made it clear that the proposal was never about commercial whaling that could deplete whale populations. Instead, it highlighted the fundamental right to safe and sustainable access to food as a human right.

During that session, following a review, debate, and some expressed doubts, the proponents were asked to work collaboratively to refine the resolution further, with the aim of adopting it by consensus at a later date. Now, it seems, that moment has arrived during this IWC69 meeting.

The International Whaling Commission is an organisation dedicated to adopting regulations and mechanisms that allow for the conservation and sustainable management of whales and cetaceans worldwide, based on the best available scientific information. This important body, which celebrates 78 years of existence, currently has 88 member countries.