

JOINT DEMARCHE BY Australia, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and Uruguay

Objection to Japan's Scientific Whaling

We, the Governments of Australia, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and Uruguay present our compliments to the Government of Japan and wish to take this opportunity to inform the Government of Japan of our strong objection to the resumption of the second Japanese Whale Research Program under Special Permit in the Antarctic (JARPA II), which started on November 18, 2007.

We recall previous International Whaling Commission (IWC) Resolutions calling for the withdrawal of the JARPA II proposal, and most recently Resolution 2007/01, adopted during the Commission's 59th Annual Meeting, which urges the Government of Japan to suspend indefinitely the lethal aspects of JARPA II conducted within the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary.

We deeply regret the decision of the Government of Japan to disregard repeated requests from the international community to refrain from issuing special permits for research involving the killing of whales within the Southern Ocean Sanctuary, which was established by the IWC in 1994.

We are profoundly concerned that the Government of Japan has endorsed the take of up to 935 minke, 50 fin and 50 humpback whales under JARPA II this season – the largest lethal scientific take ever – despite the IUCN (World Conservation Union) classification of fin whales as 'endangered' (at a very high risk of extinction) and humpback whales as 'vulnerable' (at a high risk of extinction). The IWC recognised the threatened status of humpbacks several decades ago, enacting a ban on whaling of the species in 1963. We have grave concerns that JARPA II will undermine any future recovery and the long term viability of these species.

We note with concern that the program will target species that are essential to the whale watching industries of several IWC Member States, and the subjects of long-term non-lethal research programs which are yielding wide-ranging insights into the species' biology and ecology.

We deeply regret the large numbers of whales taken under JARPA programs which, notably, outnumber the whales killed globally by Japan for scientific research in the 31 year period prior to the entry into force of the moratorium on commercial whaling. We are extremely concerned that more than 11,000 whales have been killed under scientific programs since the introduction of the moratorium. We call upon all members of the IWC to fully adhere to the word and spirit of the whaling moratorium, which is intended to protect all whale species worldwide.

While we note Japan's position that its JARPA programs are consistent with the text of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, we once again draw attention to the availability of non-lethal research techniques to obtain adequate data for biological, population and management purposes, rendering Japan's lethal research programme unnecessary.

Taking into consideration the Government of Japan's environmental credentials in several areas, we strongly urge Japan to join the international community and cease all its lethal scientific research on whales, and assure the immediate return of the vessels which are implementing JARPA II.