

Declaration of the Buenos Aires Group:
The Conservation of Cetaceans in the 21st Century and the International
Whaling Commission

Ilha do Papagaio, Brazil, 24-26 April, 2008

I. The Representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Uruguay, member countries of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), met in Ilha do Papagaio, Santa Catarina, Brazil, from 24 to 26 April 2008. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the governments of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Honduras.

II. The participants welcomed the Chairman of the IWC, Dr. William Hogarth, who was invited to the final session of the meeting for a discussion on the common interest in the negotiation process currently underway regarding the future of the Commission.

III. The participants reaffirmed their full support for this complex process, whose resolution will demand an adequate amount of time. This process must necessarily include the interests of all Parties.

IV. The participants stressed the importance of signaling the interests of the Group in order to achieve a global agreement for the conservation and adequate management of cetacean populations. In this context, they underlined the following:

- a) The maintenance of the global moratorium on commercial whaling;
- b) The recognition of the non-lethal use of cetaceans as an inalienable right of the peoples that have chosen such a management system for the benefit of their coastal communities, as well as the establishment of protection mechanisms within the IWC;
- c) The end of "scientific" whaling and that under objection;

- d) The full respect of Whale Sanctuaries already established by the IWC, as well as the creation of new Sanctuaries, in particular the South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary;
- e) The further development of discussions on conservation issues in the context of the regular work of the Commission, including environmental issues such as climate change, habitat degradation, ship collisions and other threats; and
- f) The creation of mechanisms that promote and facilitate the participation of developing countries in the activities of the IWC, the establishment of technical cooperation mechanisms and the review of the composition and functioning of the Scientific Committee with a view to ensuring wider geographic representation.

V. The participants underlined the importance of a wide participation of the countries of the region in the debate on the future of the IWC, which will take place on the 19th and 20th of June in Santiago, Chile, for which an effective coordination of positions will be necessary in the course of this process.

VI. In the context of the Latin American Strategy for the Conservation of Cetaceans, adopted at the previous meeting of the Group, in December 2007, the participants reiterated their commitment to regional cooperation in non-lethal research and use of cetaceans.

VII. The participants considered proposals for the implementation of the Regional Strategy. They agreed to carry out an analysis of cooperation activities currently being undertaken, as well as a diagnosis of regional needs, with an emphasis on the exchange of experiences in order to strengthen management capacities in the region.

VIII. The participants took note of the cooperation program being promoted by Argentina on whalewatching and which had benefited several countries of the region to date. In this context, they welcomed with satisfaction the interest of Panama in organizing, with regional support, a seminar on the non-lethal use of cetaceans, which constitutes an example of an activity to be carried out under

the Regional Strategy. They also took note of the efforts being undertaken in this context in other regional and subregional forums.

IX. The participants were of the view that whalewatching, if developed according to criteria of sustainability, creates significant economic and social benefits and should be supported and promoted in the countries of the region.

X. The participants recognized the efforts of countries of the region for the creation of national whale Sanctuaries, which contribute to the promotion of common Latin American objectives in the conservation and non-lethal use of cetaceans.

XI. The participants agreed to keep the Buenos Aires Group in permanent consultation and to continue to hold periodic meetings to monitor the progress of its activities.

XII. The participants expressed their satisfaction with the return of the IWC to the region, with the holding of the 60th Annual Meeting of the Commission in Santiago, Chile.

XIII. The participants thanked Brazil for its hospitality and the excellent organization and management of the meeting.