



P.O. Box 953
Georgetown, CT 06829 USA
Ph: 203.770.8615
Fax: 860.561.0187
rossiter@csiwhalesalive.org
www.csiwhalesalive.org

President
William Rossiter

Vice-President
Brent Hall

Secretary
Jessica Dickens

Treasurer
Barbara Kilpatrick

Director Emeritus
Dr. Robbins Barstow

1 March 2008

Calestrous Juma
Professor of the Practice of International Development
Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs
Special Advisor, International Whaling Commission
John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University
79 John F. Kennedy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138 USA

Re: Future of the International Whaling Commission

Dear Professor Juma;

Two decades ago, at the 39th Meeting of the International Whaling Commission, held in June, 1987, at Bournemouth, UK, one of the commissioners observed: "We all have dreams of what the IWC should be. The problem is that we have different dreams."

We believe that the reason that discussions to date within the IWC have not led to a more consensus-based resolution of IWC's problems is that within the commission there are two fundamentally different beliefs about what should be the relationship between humans and whales. How can the concepts of lethal, commercial exploitation and universal benign protection be reconciled? Essentially it is a moral issue.

The purposes asserted in the 1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (Article V, Section 2) are "to provide for the conservation, development, and optimum utilization of the whale resources."

The determination of what constitutes "optimum utilization" of whale resources ultimately is a moral decision. It is up to the member states, through the International Whaling Commission, to make the judgment as to whether whales are best used by lethal exploitation or benign protection.

At its core, the issue now before the IWC is not that of sustainable yield, but rather whether or not it is morally acceptable, in the eyes of the world today, to sanction any renewed commercial killing of such large, sentient, and peaceful fellow creatures as whales.

Moral standards in human society have evolved and changed over the years. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1945 established on a global basis the wrongness of killing or torturing human beings anywhere on earth.

Today, increasing numbers of persons, groups, and nations have come to feel that the killing and torturing of great whales anywhere on earth, for commercial purposes, is so abhorrent a practice that it can no longer be morally justified.

The IWC is the recognized international organization which must make the moral decision concerning the reauthorization of whaling for profit, on behalf of the present and future generations whose interests and values its members represent.

Professor Calestrous Juma
1 March 2008
Page two

What is there about whales that gives them a special moral claim for long-term protection as the best use of these “great natural resources”?

Whales are unique. They are the largest animals on earth. The sperm whale’s brain weighs four or five times as much as a human brain. They fulfill a unique niche in the ecology of the ocean. Their status as non-national animals, beyond the legal control of any one country, makes them politically unique. Dwelling in the world’s oceans as a common heritage of all humankind, their future must be based on global standards and determined by the recognized international organization, the IWC.


The adoption at the Commission’s 1982 meeting, in Brighton, England, by a vote of 25 to 7, with 5 abstentions, of the resolution providing that “Catch limits for the killing for commercial purposes of whales from all stocks for the 1986 coastal and the 1985/86 pelagic season and thereafter shall be zero” represented a moral turning point, backed with scientific judgments. Since this decision has continued to be supported by the majority of member states, it might be best and more productive for the IWC in the future to concentrate its attention on the many other items on its agenda relating to the welfare of cetaceans.

If the polarizing issue of the Revised Management Scheme can be set aside, we urge that future discussions and negotiations be organized and conducted by seeking consensus and the building of trust in dealing constructively with such other matters as benign research, conservation, environmental effects, whalewatching, welfare issues, small cetaceans, and cetacean biology.

The wide-ranging reports of the IWC Scientific Committee might provide a good basis for seeking consensus and taking action on matters other than quotas for commercial whale killing.

The Cetacean Society International hopes these thoughts may be helpful in the challenging task of seeking how to improve the functioning of IWC. We appreciate very much your requesting such input.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robbins Barstow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robbins Barstow
Director Emeritus
190 Stillwold Drive, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109 USA
Phone: (860) 563-2565
Internet Address: RobbinsB@aol.com