

## **Statement by the Chair of the International Whaling Commission, Cristian Maquieira, on the Future of the IWC**

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“This was the third meeting of 12 countries charged by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to advise the IWC Chair on ways to improve how the IWC operates and to seek ways to reconcile differences in views about how whales are conserved and whaling is managed. The meeting concluded in Honolulu today.

Despite our differences, we agree that some whale populations and stocks are recovering, due in part to the ban on commercial hunts in 1986. However, we also agree that some whale populations and stocks have not recovered and are considered depleted or endangered, and that whales face a range of new threats. Scientists need to further study these whales and the environmental threats they face.

We are exploring many issues, including taking stronger conservation measures for whales, creating a cooperative environment for managing current whaling, while at the same time reducing the overall number of whales killed each year.

My report on the progress of these multilateral discussions will be made to the larger group of 34 member countries and the public prior to a meeting of the Small Working Group in St. Petersburg, Florida in early March.

It is important to note that nothing has yet been agreed and participation in talks does not imply acceptance by member governments.

We are committed to this process of discussion and diplomacy which we are hopeful will successfully conclude at the annual meeting of the IWC in Agadir, Morocco in June.”

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