

LATIN AMERICAN COOPERATION STRATEGY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF CETACEANS

I. The Commissioners of Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Panama and Peru to the International Whaling Commission (IWC) met in the City of Buenos Aires on 4 December 2007, together with the Acting Commissioner of Chile. The meeting was also attended by the Ambassadors of El Salvador and Nicaragua, diplomatic observers of Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and representatives of the governments of Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras and the Dominican Republic.

II. The attendees:

Recognizing that cetaceans are an integral part of the marine ecosystem to be preserved for the benefit of present and future generations.

Aware that cetacean populations can be adversely affected by factors such as climate change; degradation and alteration of their habitats; acoustic and chemical pollution; reduction of food sources; collision of ships among others.

Highlighting that the Latin American States have protected cetaceans in their jurisdictional waters and that they do not make any lethal use of cetaceans.

Recognizing that it is necessary to develop cooperation mechanisms to promote scientific research with the aim to facilitate the implementation of conservation measures by the States of the region. Highlighting the active participation of Latin American countries in the different international fora on conservation of cetaceans and their habitats.

Recalling the agreements already reached at the regional level, such as the Buenos Aires Declaration (Buenos Aires, November 2005) and the Latin American Meeting on Cetacean Conservation (Buenos Aires, December 2006) at which it was established:

- The regional commitment to the non-lethal use of cetaceans by promoting whale-watching tourism as an instrument for economic, cultural and social development of local communities.
- The right of coastal communities to benefit from the non-lethal use of whales in the same manner that other communities benefit from a limited hunting quota for the livelihood of aboriginal communities.
- The importance of Civil Society's support to Government activities in this field.
- The commitment to the maintenance of the whaling moratorium within the current context of the International Whaling Commission (IWC).
- The promotion within the IWC of the creation of Sanctuaries in the Southern Atlantic and Southern Pacific Oceans.
- The need for scientific research on cetaceans to be restricted to non-lethal methods.

Agree on the following regional strategy for cetacean conservation which includes:

1. Increasing the coordinated action of the countries in the region in the different international organizations with jurisdiction over cetacean conservation, particularly in the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and in the Convention on Migratory Species CMS-, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora CITES-, the Convention on Biological Diversity CBD-, the Protocol

concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA-W-Cartagena Convention), among others, so as to promote the objectives stated in the above Buenos Aires Declarations. In this regard, the Buenos Aires Group is a suitable tool for achieving such an objective, for which the undersigned agree to carry out periodic follow-up meetings.

2. Promoting the development of responsible whale-watching tourism in the region as a non-lethal alternative- through regional workshops for training and exchanging national experiences.

3. Supporting the States of the region which are considering the establishment and/or implementation of areas for the protection and conservation of cetaceans. Within the IWC, promoting the creation of Sanctuaries in the Southern Atlantic and Southern Pacific Oceans and evaluating future proposals.

4. Exchanging experiences on the enforcement of the pertinent national legislations in cetacean conservation and management.

5. Promoting the protection of cetacean habitats, identifying the myriad threats that affect them so as to apply mitigation measures.

6. Encouraging and offering support for scientific research and the exchange of researchers and technical information in the region.

7. Strengthening regional capabilities in the management and conservation of these species, favouring the collection and dissemination of information in this regard, as well as promoting technical training of officials with competence and responsibility on the subject, through cooperation among the States of the region.

8. Contributing to the development of national programmes to address any contingencies which negatively affect cetaceans.

9. Encouraging international cooperation and the funding of cetacean conservation and research programs in Latin America.

10. Promoting the participation of the Latin American peoples in activities related to the conservation of these species.

11. Raising public awareness in the region with regard to cetacean conservation through environmental education programs, which favour the exchange of existing experiences in this field.