

SANCTUARY PROPOSALS

REJECTED AT IWC

July 24, 2001.

After today's votes at the International Whaling Commission in London, Japan's Commissioner to the IWC Minoru Morimoto, said that New Zealand, Australia and Brazil should now face the fact that their proposals to establish unscientific whale sanctuaries in the South Pacific and Atlantic are dead and they should now concentrate on the core business of the IWC, the completion of the Revised Management Scheme.

"New Zealand and Australia should now work to complete the conservative and risk-averse RMS. As members of the IWC, Australia and New Zealand have a legal obligation to work towards this objective in good faith. Any attempt to bring their sanctuary proposal to the table again will not be taken with the same humour delegates have given it in the past."

New Zealand and Australia failed in their bid by attracting 20 votes to 14, including Iceland, with four abstentions. Brazil's proposal attracted 19 votes with 14 against and 5 abstentions. Both proposals needed a clear 75% majority if they were to be adopted by the Commission.

Mr Morimoto said: "No-one should be surprised that these sanctuary proposals have failed again. They have no scientific basis, were not needed for conservation and contradicted the requirements of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, which is to manage whaling on a sustainable basis."

"New Zealand and Australia have now twice lost their bid and they should leave it at that. Any attempt to resurrect it, for domestic political reasons, will further threaten the continued existence of the International Whaling Commission."

"The proposals also undermine a decade of work by the IWC and its Scientific Committee to complete and implement its Revised Management Scheme, which would allow the resumption of whaling on abundant stocks. A sanctuary would be contrary to the principle of sustainable use of resources that is now the world standard in the management of fisheries resources, adopted as part of the United Nations Agenda 21."

"It needs to be remembered, whales are already protected by the current moratorium. When it is lifted, abundant species will be managed under an extremely conservative quota system, while other species not considered abundant will remain protected. This is the approach New Zealand, Australia and Brazil should take at this international forum."