

# Whale meet nations in flare up over Brazil project

September 13 2018

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Supporters and opponents of whale hunting were at loggerheads late Wednesday at a meeting of the 89-nation International Whaling

Commission (IWC) in Brazil.

The meeting erupted into rancor over attempts to forge a common vision for the 72-year-old organization, which is torn between pro- and anti-whaling countries.

Japan's acting commissioner Hideki Moronuki said Tokyo could not support host country Brazil's vision for the future of the IWC—the Florianopolis Declaration—because it made no provision for lifting a 32-year moratorium on [commercial whaling](#).

"Unfortunately this proposal would lead us into conflict and seriously hamper both the conservation and management of whaling based on science," he said.

The Brazilian proposal insists commercial whaling is no longer a necessary economic activity and would allow the recovery of all whale populations to pre-industrial whaling levels.

Japan is proposing a "Way Forward" package which envisages a twin-track future of conservation and commercial whaling which would be managed by a new "Sustainable Whaling Committee."

Japan currently observes the moratorium but exploits a loophole to kill hundreds of whales every year for "scientific purposes" as well as sell the meat.

Both Brazil and Japan had been trying to reach a compromise on a hybrid resolution at the IWC's request.

Iceland, which along with Norway, ignores the 32-year moratorium on commercial whaling, said the Brazilian document—which would outlaw Japan's "scientific" hunt—"is intended to be divisive."

"I would be disappointed if the countries that supported aboriginal whaling earlier went along with this," said Iceland's whaling commissioner Stefan Asmundsson.

Countries on both sides of the whaling divide earlier voted to renew quotas for limited whale hunts for indigenous communities in Alaska, Russia, Greenland and the Caribbean.

"This morning I had a sense of hope and a feeling of euphoria with the widespread support given to aboriginal subsistence whaling, but this resolution brings home that there is a major and serious division in the IWC," said St Vincent's Commissioner Edwin Snagg.

Monaco's commissioner Frederic Briand said the world had changed a lot since the IWC was created in 1946 to manage whaling.

"We understand the fragility of our planet, only one planet. Of our ocean, only one ocean. The Florianopolis Declaration is calling on the IWC to reorient itself away from lethal use to non-lethal use of [whales](#) on the high seas.

"We do not see how it can be adopted together or fused in some way with Japan's 'Way Forward,' which offers a counterview and brings us back to the disastrous years of commercial whaling".

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Citation: Whale meet nations in flare up over Brazil project (2018, September 13) retrieved 17 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-09-whale-nations-flare-brazil.html>

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