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Call for a Fundamental Review of “Research” Whaling in the Southern Ocean

Yoshihiko Noda, Prime Minister of Japan

Michihiko Kano, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

The whaling fleet led by Institute of Cetacean Research is due to depart for its annual “research” whaling activities in the Southern Ocean soon. On this occasion, we, Japanese NGOs, demand the Japanese Government:

1. Fundamentally review the “research” whaling program
2. End all taxpayer subsidies to the whaling program from next year
3. With full transparency, publish the details of all expenses and payees of the additional 2.28 billion yen subsidy given to the industry this year as a part of the 3rd extra budget to fund reconstruction after the March 11 tsunami and nuclear crisis.

International opposition to Japan’s “research” whaling has been growing for many years due to its lack of scientific value and consensus building. Also, domestically, in the review committee established by the Fisheries Agency of Japan this year clearly stated that the “research” whaling program should be either scaled down or phased out due to international criticism and the ineffectiveness of the program.

Stockpiles of whale meat have been growing for many years due to consistently declining demand, and it has been revealed that this lack of demand has left the whaling fleet mired in 1.9 billion yen of debt out of 3 billion yen operational budget as of February 2011.

It is clear that the Japanese government’s stated goal of “resuming commercial whaling in the Southern Ocean” using the “research” whaling program is unachievable. The whaling program cannot survive without taxpayer handouts, and all other ex-whaling companies had publicly stated they have no intention of resuming commercial whaling.

We demand the government not waste any more taxpayer money on the whaling program, but instead spend this money on projects that actually help the people, communities and region affected by the tragic March 11 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis. We call for a fundamental review of the whaling program so that Japan can fulfill its responsibility as a marine nation, and follow the spirit of the agreement it signed to protect whales and the whale sanctuary in the Southern Ocean.