

Opening Statement

Honorable Chair, Distinguished Delegates and Observers : Ladies and Gentlemen

Greetings and salutations from government and people of the multi-island country of **St Vincent and the Grenadines**. Special greeting from the whalers of Bequia and Barrouallie and our IWC commissioner Mr Edwin Snagg.

We are extremely thankful for the opportunity to be at this meeting as an observer. Gracious thank you to the Florida International University for facilitating this outcome and Heartfelt thank you to the NAMMCO secretariat for extending the invitation to be here and for ensuring the entire process of attendance ran smoothly.

St Vincent and the Grenadines find itself in the unique position of being the largest hunters of whales and other small cetaceans in the Caribbean region. Nevertheless, our hunting activity can only be described as aboriginal subsistence whaling. No matter its perceived commercial nature, it remains the main source of livelihood for large grouping of people, Vincentian.

The Barrouallie Whalers Project (BWP) seeks to preserve the oral tradition of the Barrouallie whaling heritage and promote sustainable whaling. We are very happy that our whalers understand and whole heartedly embrace the approaches to sustainability even as we acknowledge the importance of food security. Barrouallie Whalers have, over the last 20yrs gladly participated in scientific research in marine food quality, cetacean genetics, population abundance estimates and identification surveys.

This is a first for St Vincent and the Grenadine at this meeting. We are happy to be a part of this exercise and look forward to the collaboration, the sharing of information, knowledge and experience as we collectively promote sustainable hunting and the welfare of marine mammal.

Again, thank you for inviting us to this important function.

V S Reid
Director
Barrouallie Whalers Project.