Norsk sluttinnlegg, CITES CoP12
Santiago 15/11-02.

Conclusion of the meeting

Agenda Item 68 - Closing remarks

Statement by Norway

Mr. Chairman,

The Norwegian delegation would like to use this opportunity to thank the Chilean Government and the Chilean people for the hospitality that they have so generously accorded to us during these 2 weeks. We would also like to thank the Chairman, as well as the Chairmen of Committees I and II, for having so patiently and diligently guided us – with the tireless assistance of the Secretariat – through these 2 weeks of demanding deliberations.

I do, however, have to call your attention to one rather less pleasant matter. I am referring to Doc. CoP12 Inf.16, which was distributed at the request of the German delegation. Incidentally, this document is identical with the text of a notorious resolution from the 53rd Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission held in London one and a half year ago.
It is bad enough that this document contains language which is insinuating, patronizing and highly insulting towards the country which I represent. Even worse, it contains slanted information, unfounded allegations, factual inaccuracies and misrepresentations concerning Norwegian whaling policies.

The contents of this document, Mr. Chairman, were thoroughly refuted at IWC53 in London, and I will not go into the details of repeating it all here. It should be sufficient to give but 2 examples to illustrate the vicious nature of this document:

- Norway is criticized for having lodged a reservation to CITES Appendix listings of certain stocks of whales. If Germany thinks it is wrong for a CITES Party to avail itself of its rights under the Convention to lodge reservations to Appendix listings, how come that Germany has itself lodged more reservations to such Appendix listings than Norway has?
- The document also mentions so-called "recent reports" allegedly confirming high levels of contaminants in samples of blubber from minke whales taken in the Norwegian hunt.

Confronted with the question of what reports the document referred to, Germany has not – neither at the London IWC meeting nor later – been able to respond (apparently the allegation was taken out of the air or from a tabloid newspaper...).

Mr. Chairman, I do not know why Germany has chosen to persist in pursuing this malicious smearing campaign against Norway. I do, however, find it highly objectionable that CITES has opted to let its name be associated with a document of this nature. The very act of smuggling such a document into this Conference amounts to circumventing the rules for handling resolutions in CITES.
Mr. Chairman: We do not do things like this in CITES, we don't use offensive language undermining the rights of Contracting Parties to other Conventions, in this case the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling.

Mr. Chairman, it will be recalled that two and a half year ago, the Secretary-General of CITES sent a letter to the then Chairman of the IWC, calling on the IWC to get its house in order lest the political problems of that dysfunctional Commission are allowed to spill over into CITES.

By associating itself with this Doc. Inf. 16, CITES has fallen into this very trap which the Secretary-General warned against in his letter 2 ½ years ago. What we see here is exactly an example of CITES importing the selfdestructive habits of the IWC.

I am aware that the problem caused by this unfortunate document was raised in the Bureau at an early stage during this Conference, and that Germany was gracefully accorded the opportunity of retracting the document. Since Germany has not chosen to do so, I regret having no option but calling the attention of the Conference in its closing plenary to this matter.

Thank you for your attention.