

THE LORD ASHCROFT KCMG



May 2007

An open letter to the nations of:
Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Dear Friends

Independent sovereign nations must of course be free to make their own decisions. I ask you though to reconsider your nation's support for the Japanese proposal to re-commence the killing of whales. I write as someone who cares deeply for the Caribbean, and who believes that standing now against the Japanese is in the best interests of these nations.

The pressures upon our governments and upon their peoples are numerous. Every Caribbean nation needs revenue from beyond its shores, and public projects everywhere are crying out for overseas support.

For these reasons, no-one can blame those who have taken financial help from the Japanese, but that assistance should be freely given. Japanese aid often has unacceptable strings attached. In return for that help, they expect voting support from your nation at the International Whaling Commission. That voting support should now be removed.

We all need the whales. They represent the enduring qualities of our planet. Unfortunately, they also represent our own fragility. We must never take the whales for granted, in the same way that we should never take our planet and these beautiful islands for granted.

Throughout the Caribbean we welcome income from tourism, and tourists come because of the environment. That includes the whales, and the whales themselves represent a much bigger opportunity of sustainable income. In many parts of the world, tourist industries thrive because of whale watching activities. That is not yet the position in the Caribbean, although there are a number of whale watching operations which should be encouraged. These have the potential to generate substantial overseas earnings.

Conversely, supporting a move to reintroduce commercial hunting could well mean that those same tourists turn their backs on the Caribbean, and especially on those island nations that have been the supporters of Japan.

I cannot understand how or why anyone would wish to take the life of one of our most beautiful creatures. It is impossible to justify. The Japanese aid to the nations of the eastern Caribbean is resulting in Japan killing more and more species protected under international law.

I ask you please to reconsider and to support the continuation of the whaling ban. Whales have inhabited our oceans for millions of years. Help to protect them. Please.

Thank you for reading this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Ashcroft". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Lord Ashcroft, KCMG