



**EASTERN CARIBBEAN COALITION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS
(ECCEA)
COALITION DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT DE LA CARAIBE DE L'EST**



**MONA GEORGE DILL
PRESIDENT OF THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN
COALITION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL
AWARENESS (ECCEA)**

**FROM THE "OCEAN LIFE - ON THE BRINK"
SYMPOSIUM
HELD IN GRENADA, WEST INDIES FROM THE
19TH TO 21ST MAY, 2010**

**A MESSAGE
TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS PILOLEVU,
ROYAL PATRON OF WHALES, TONGA
and to THE PACIFIC ISLANDERS**

**DELIVERED BY MONA GEORGE DILL OF DOMINICA THE NATURE
ISLAND ON BEHALF OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND
PEOPLE OF THE CARIBBEAN**



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Your Royal Highness, The Princess Salote Mafille'o Pilolevu Tuita

Madam,

We are pleased to assure you that the aspirations of all of us assembled here at this second Ocean Life Symposium held at the Grand Anse Beach Hotel, Grenada 19-21st May, 2010, are in keeping with those expressed in your message regarding your vision for the future of the oceans and the species that inhabit them.

Our journey to the awareness of the plight of the whales in our waters took the opposite trail to yours. With you, a king was blessed with wisdom to seek to preserve the earth and its creatures and was able to prescribe the necessary statutory rules and orders for their protection, and proceeded to educate his subjects accordingly. With us it was the other way around. A few of the ordinary citizens of our countries became aware of the need to protect certain inhabitants of our oceans that are either endangered or becoming so, and sought to educate the powers that be to this need.

In the case of protecting the whales in our waters, there is more to the movement than protecting them from extinction, we realize that this must be a movement to "Stop the Killing and Let the Whales Live!" because experience has shown us that the call for protecting them based on "sustainable use" tends to bring out the basest in man as they become engrossed in designing nebulous counts to make their case for "use" or "wise use" which we recognize as loopholes for killing. We realize that these mysterious animals cannot be counted, so any policy based on numbers at this stage simply begs for contention.

In our Caribbean sub-region we have mainly sperm whales, pilot whales, bottle nosed dolphins, and a scattering of others like the humpback whales who come to breed in our waters, orcas, etc.

Our provable commercial whaling experience came from the mind and training of a well-meaning American - and this has placed one of us in the classification of a traditional whaling country that is entitled to its whaling quota. Since then, under the promptings of those who would benefit from whaling, the history of these islands' under the microscope by those searching for proof of whaling in our past.

We have had the unenviable experience of defending the whales from those who condemn them as the cause of dwindling catchable fish because, they claim "The whales eat fish." It is known of course, without even the introduction of science that both whales and fish have been in the ocean before man set foot on dry land, and the sea was full of both whales and fish – never

having a shortage; and that it was precisely at the time when man maximized his efficiency at reigning in the fish into factory sized loads that the fish stock started to dwindle. Nevertheless that myth still circulates by and among the exact people who should know better.

In these little islands we have had to deal with the blatant abuse of our image when certain economically capable countries spread the news that they use “cheque Book Diplomacy” to buy our votes at fora like the International Whaling Commission, CITES, and the Convention on Biodiversity.

We, also, have in our folklore about the whales that guided our ancient ancestors from the Orinoco across the seas to the safety of these islands. Islands that were verdant and nurturing. It is not difficult to see the truth in this recount, since as a child when the sea was still full of whales, I remember that from the moment our boat left Dominica and hit the rough Guadeloupe channel the Botts (Pilot Whales) would come up and swim with us, or pilot us through to paths where the depth would allow our ships safe passage to the next land mass.

These days the Botts are either very reduced in numbers or they seek to keep their distance from what must seem to them a fickle breed of creation - mankind.

The mammalian dolphins, too, until very recently could be depended on to meet and greet you if you were on a boat making a joyful sound. They would liven up any party with their natural smiles and frisky companionship – particularly if you were playing on board a calypso by the Mighty Sparrow. Now I understand that they are not quite as trusting of man as they used to be.

However, all is not lost for us. At the Ocean Life Symposium I held in Dominica in March of 2009 – our Prime Minister the Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit announced his decision to support the conservation and preservation of the environment and to stay clear of voting for whaling. This was a wonderful step forward and a break-through from the stance of a small group of island nations that for whatever reason supported the Japanese position on whaling. We still go forward cautiously but take comfort on the Prime Minister’s assurance that he will not renege on this Commitment.

For these reasons, we are heartened that someone of your stature is leading the call for the protection of the whales, and are happy to support and surround you in that mission.

Madam,

We are honoured to remain Your Highness’s most humble associates in this cause.
Mona George Dill

*ECCEA Martinique: Boite Postale 4030 Terres Sainville 97254 Fort de France Cedex,
Martinique Antilles Françaises - Tel :Fax 596 596 65 67 25
ECCEA PO Box 456 Roseau, Commonwealth of Dominica, East Caribbean
Tel. +1 (767) 440-3835/277-1377
www.eccea.org*