

EMBASSY OF JAPAN
THE NETHERLANDS

16 December 2008

Her Excellency the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Mrs Gerda Verburg
PO Box 20401
2500 EK The Hague

Excellency,

Thank you for your letter dated December 3rd 2008 regarding dolphin hunting in Taiji, Wakayama Prefecture of Japan. Under the instruction of my Government, I am writing to your Excellency to convey to you Japan's position on this matter.

The Government of Japan is of the view that cetacean resources should be utilized in a sustainable manner along with other marine resources. For centuries dolphins have been utilized as an important protein source in Japan. The drive-hunting manner in which dolphin hunting is carried out in Taiji, as referred to in your letter, is an intrinsic tradition in this part of Japan.

As long as man subsists on mammals, cattle as well as dolphins, humane slaughter is inevitable. The Government of Japan firmly believes that mammals destined for consumption should be slaughtered as quickly and as painlessly as possible. With this in mind, the Fisheries Agency of Japan and other authorities concerned continue to work on developing and introducing new techniques for hunting dolphins as well as providing guidance to fishermen on humane and acceptable methods of their disposal.

It is indeed unfortunate that our two countries hold different views with regard to dolphin hunting and whaling issues. Japan, however, remains steadfast in its commitment to continue to cooperate with the Netherlands and hopes that these issues will not influence the excellent relations that exist between our two nations.

Yours sincerely,



Minoru Shibuya
Ambassador of Japan
to the Netherlands