**TEXTE N°1**

*Outraged Japan fails to overturn whale ban*

Japan accused the chairman of the International Whaling Commission of “deviousness” on Monday after its attempt to shift the balance of power inside the world body ended in rancorous failure.

On a stormy opening day to the IWC meeting, the pro-whaling lobby led by Japan and Norway was unable to get the majority it expected, ensuring that the 17-year moratorium on commercial hunting will stay in place for another year.

However, plans to create two new whale sanctuaries, in the South Pacific and South Atlantic, were turned down on Tuesday after failing to gather the 75% vote needed to approve them.

To the delight of conservationists, delegates began the annual gathering by rejecting an application by Iceland — a pro-whaling country — to rejoin the commission because it refuses to sign up to the moratorium on hunting. The Icelandic delegation then stormed out of the meeting.

The vote had been expected to be tight because the pro-whaling camp has been swollen by the addition of four new members who are heavily dependent on Japanese aid.

With the meeting also taking place in Shimonoseki, one of Japan’s whaling heartlands (pamphlets in a local market stall declare that whales are “fun and delicious”), the hosts were confident they could wrest control of the IWC away from conservationists for the first time in two decades.

But amid confusion over a protracted procedural wrangle, Iceland’s bid for membership was voted down by the comfortable margin of 25-20. Japan’s attempt to introduce secret ballots was also easily defeated.

Japan claimed that at least two of its supporters had made a mistake in voting because they had not understood the convoluted phrasing of the motion by the Swedish chairman, Bo Fernholm.

“The chairman was devious. We had high expectations, but the other side was so desperate to stop us that they created a deliberate misunderstanding,” said Joji Morishita of the Japanese fisheries agency.

(*The Guardian Weekly*)