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## Japan. Conservationists and fishermen join forces for Sustainable Sushi

Friday, 17 October 2008

An unlikely alliance of conservationists and fishing industry representatives took the podium under the banner of "Marine Reserves for Sustainable Sushi" at the International Marine Environment Symposium in Tokyo. Speakers included scientist Daniel Pauly, head of University of Columbia's Fisheries Centre, well known for his research into the decline of fish stocks worldwide, former Japanese Fisheries Agency officer and whaling Commissioner Masayuki Komatsu, and Japanese Tuna fisherman, Tatsushi Sasaki.

The symposium, attended more by more than 200 delegates, was organised by Greenpeace Japan to encourage more open and constructive dialogue on marine environment issues. At the United Nations University, which hosted the symposium, Dr Pauly gave a talk titled "The Transformation of Seascapes by Fisheries and the Need for Marine Protected Areas".

"Our oceans, and in particular, our fisheries, have been drastically modified by human activity", said Dr Pauly. It is vital to establish marine reserves as soon as possible, in order to return the ocean ecosystems to a sustainable level".

In a lecture titled "Future of Japanese marine industry", Masayuki Komatsu discussed the continual decline of Japanese marine industries, and the reluctance of Japanese fisheries to keep pace with changes occurring in marine biodiversity. He emphasised that a fundamental reform of Japan's fishing industry is required to sustain its fisheries.

Several important talks were given by tuna fisherman and retailers; Mr Yasuyuki Yamamoto, of the Aeon Topvalu supermarket chain, explained his company's corporate identity is based on the concept sustainability and food safety, and how corporations can live up to their responsibilities to protect marine biodiversity.

"Both the fishermen and dealers at Japan's fish markets have told me that they are seeking to preserve the oceans, so that their jobs can be passed on to the next generation. As an environmental organisation, we are working to conserve the ocean ecosystems, while listening to the concerns of all involved", said Wakao Hanaoka, Greenpeace Japan oceans campaigner.

"The fact that the venue for today's symposium was packed, shows how urgent the protection of our oceans has become. I am convinced that Greenpeace can work with those who are concerned with fisheries in Japan for sustainable fisheries. We all want fish for tomorrow - and that's why we need marine reserves today."

Greenpeace advocates the creation of an effectively enforced network of marine reserves, protecting 40% of the world's oceans - with regulated, sustainable fishing in other areas - as the long-term solution to overfishing and the recovery of marine life in our overexploited oceans.

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