

Global Justice for Animals and the Environment

Media Advisory

Photo Opportunity * Photo Opportunity

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FUR FREE FRIDAY:

Activists Dressed As WTO Director-General, Canadian & Norwegian Prime Ministers Beat Baby Seals At “Animal Cruelty Olympics” at Canadian Consulate

Demonstration Decries Canada & Norway's WTO Challenge to EU Seal Product, Calls for Boycott of 2010 Vancouver Olympics * Part of National Week of Action Commemorating 10th Anniversary of Seattle WTO Protests in Anticipation of WTO Meeting in Geneva, Beginning Nov 30 & Copenhagen Climate Summit

Who: Global Justice for Animals and the Environment, an activist organization fighting against free trade policies that harm animals, the environment, and indigenous communities.

What: In a street theater performance, activists dressed as WTO Secretary General Pascal Lamy, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg will club activists dressed as baby seals with mock hakapiks, the device used by sealers to club baby seals to death. “The officials” will stand in front of a backdrop reading “2010 Animal Cruelty Olympics, Vancouver, Canada” as a play by play announcer on a megaphone narrates the bludgeoning as a sports event. The “Olympians” will be disrupted chanting protesters with signs, banners, and leaflets, who will grab the clubs, rescue the seals, declare a boycott on the Olympics, and demand that the US pull out of the WTO.

When: Friday, November 27th, 12-1PM.

Where: [The Consulate General of Canada, New York](#), 1251 6th Ave between 49th and 50th Sts, Manhattan, New York City.

Why: In 2009, 72,000 harp seals as young as 12 days of age were bludgeoned or shot to death. Beginning at 12 days of age, the seals are clubbed (often with illegal weapons), hooked in the eye, cheek, or mouth to avoid damaging the fur, and are at times skinned alive because of the carelessness of the hunter. In some areas, seals are shot. For every seal landed, another is shot and lost under the ice. Activists believe that the hunt is gradually pushing seals to the brink of extinction as overhunting exacerbates a population already in decline as global warming melts the ice floes where seal normally brood.

A total of 30 countries have now banned the sale of seal products, including 7 of Canada's top 10 export markets. In anticipation of the EU ban, pelt prices plummeted and many hunters stayed home. As a direct result, the total number of seals killed fell from 217, 857 to 72,000 in 2009, despite the ban not taking effect until 2010. According to Adam Weissman of Global Justice for Animals and the Environment, “Canada and Norway's WTO challenge is a shameless attempt to undermine democracy at a time when a growing global consensus is forming around the idea that the seal trade should be abolished. With all eyes on the Copenhagen Climate Summit, Canada and Norway need to recognize that loss of arctic ice floes coupled with their commercial hunts are driving seals to extinction.”

The protest is held as part of Worldwide Fur Free Friday, a day of action against the cruelty of the fur trade observed in 21 countries, and WTO Turnaround Week of Action, a week of protests and educational events celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Seattle WTO protests and protesting the WTO meeting beginning in Geneva on November 30.

Since the 1990s, nations seeking to undermine animal protection in pursuit of profit have gone to the WTO and its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. In some cases even the threat of a WTO challenge was sufficient to pressure nations to drop animal protective measures. In the 90s, Canada and the US threatened a WTO challenge against the EU's wild fur ban, leading the EU to drop the ban before it was ever enacted. Actual and threatened WTO and GATT challenges have also led to the elimination of laws to protect dolphins from being killed in tuna nets and sea turtles from being killed in shrimp nets.

Additional information is available at <http://freetradekillsanimals.org/?page=SealMedia>.