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PRESS RELEASE

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ACRES URGES RESORTS WORLD SENTOSA TO RETRACT ITS CALL FOR MORE DOLPHINS TO BE COLLECTED

SINGAPORE, 2 June 2011 – ACRES urges Resorts World Sentosa (RWS) to retract its calls for more dolphins to be collected. RWS has already bought 27 wild-caught Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins from the Solomon Islands for their Marine Life Park attraction, and two have since died.

In a statement issued by a Marine Life Park spokesperson on 27th May 2011, RWS stated “It is our belief that to avert species crises, more controlled dolphin collections should be occurring from a multitude of places and more quality zoological facilities built to increase our understanding of vulnerable species and for breeding purposes.”

ACRES strongly believes in the need to protect dolphin species, but we should focus our efforts on addressing the root cause of the problem of why they are disappearing in the wild.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a leading authority on the environment and sustainable development, the threats facing the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins include live capture for oceanariums, pollution, overfishing, incidental catches and environmental degradation.

Establishing captive breeding programmes does not address or eliminate the root cause of wild population declines, and subjects countless dolphins to the stress of capture, transport and captivity.

Furthermore, catching more dolphins might drive species such as the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin towards extinction. IUCN states that “their preference (Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins) as a captive display species makes them vulnerable to depletion from such catches.”

RWS should also follow the progressive example set by other facilities with regard to dolphin captures. In the late 1980s, facilities in the United States implemented a voluntary moratorium on collection of bottlenose dolphins from the wild, and this remains in place.

“RWS believes in being environmentally responsible and is committed to marine conservation. They should now walk the talk and not only retract their call for more dolphins to be collected but also release the remaining 25 dolphins back into the wild. RWS should note that in less than a week, more than 6,000 people have joined ACRES in asking them to let the dolphins go” said Mr. Louis Ng, Executive Director of ACRES.

“In a world where so much that is wild and free has already been lost to us, we must leave these beautiful mammals free to swim as they will and must. They do us no harm and wish us none and we should leave them alone. The fact that Resorts World offered a cash incentive for captured dolphins is going to put the wild dolphin populations in great danger. It shows the world how hypocritical Resorts World is as they try to hide behind the dark curtain of “research and education.”” said Richard O’Barry of the Earth Island Institute and star of the Oscar Award-winning documentary “The Cove”.

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Notes to editors

- Photos of RWS wild-caught dolphins are available on request.
- ACRES is a pioneering Singapore-based charity and Institution of Public Character, founded by Singaporeans in 2001 with the aim of promoting animal welfare.
- Earth Island Institute is a non-profit, public interest, membership organisation that supports people who are creating solutions to protect our shared planet. For 25 years, Earth Island Institute has been a hub for grassroots campaigns dedicated to conserving, preserving, and restoring the ecosystems on which our civilisation depends.

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