



PRESS RELEASE

27 May 2011

FIRST-EVER MUSIC CAMPAIGN TO FREE RESORTS WORLD SENTOSA DOLPHINS

SINGAPORE, 27 May 2011 – ACRES today launched the “Save the World’s Saddest Dolphins” campaign. Through a first-of-its kind “music campaign”, ACRES aims to secure the freedom of the remaining 25 wild-caught dolphins bought by Resorts World Sentosa (RWS) for their attraction in Singapore.

Between 2008 and 2009, RWS damaged Singapore’s good international reputation by buying 27 wild-caught Indo-pacific bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops aduncus*) from the Solomon Islands. In 2010, two of the dolphins died whilst undergoing training, despite the top-class care that RWS had promised.

The dolphins are currently being trained in The Philippines and will be transported to RWS this year for an interactive dolphin spa programme.

Local and international outrage has been growing. United Parcel Service (UPS), which transported the first shipment of RWS dolphins from the Solomon Islands to The Philippines, said it would stop moving this kind of cargo, as the practice violated its environmental principles.

Chris Porter, who sold the wild-caught dolphins to RWS, called for RWS to “review its motivation for using these animals as a tourist draw”. He was concerned that “RWS is using the animals primarily to make money while telling the public that its aim is to educate the public on marine conservation.”

Mexican Senator Jorge Legorreta Ordorica (Chairman, Committee of Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries) was so dismayed at the plans of RWS that he wrote to Singapore’s National Development Minister about it. Senator Jorge wrote that Mexico’s international reputation was dented as a result of its importing 28 Solomon Islands dolphins in 2003. At least 12 of the dolphins have since died.

“Mexico’s experience with this single import led to our government imposing an outright ban on importation and exportation of live cetaceans for entertainment purposes and this ban is still in place,” the Mexican senator said. He urged Singapore to consider Mexico’s experience and ‘the disturbing mortality’ of the animals when evaluating applications for the permits to import such dolphins.

The Singapore government has, however, decided to approve the import of the dolphins by RWS.

The dolphins have endured being removed from their homes in the Solomon Islands and stressful transportations. Some of the dolphins watched their family members die, were subjected to living in small, rusty enclosures and endured a year of training sessions. The only thing in store for all of them now is the final stressful transportation to Singapore to entertain RWS guests.

ACRES will be creating awareness about the plight of the dolphins through music videos and urging people to take action through video petitions. All of the videos will be uploaded to www.saddestdolphins.com which will be linked to a Facebook group and Youtube. Petition videos will be sent directly to RWS.

The main campaign music video features children and members of the public urging RWS to free the dolphins. Local and foreign bands have produced different covers of the campaign song, including an acoustic version by Jack and Rai, a retro version by Nancy Gibson, a jazz version by Alicia Pan and Michaela Therese, a rock version by Zal Empty and a pop version by Grey Matter.

“We hope that by being a part of this social movement, we play a role in helping to free the dolphins, and raise awareness about the ills that captivity brings to dolphins. Resorts World, please let the dolphins go” said Singapore musicians, Jack and Rai.

91 Jalan Lekar, Singapore 698917

Tel +65 6892 9821
Fax +65 6892 9721

Wildlife Rescue Hotline +65 9783 7782

www.acres.org.sg

acres

Animal Concerns Research & Education Society



“Using social media and by approaching this issue more creatively, we will be able to engage the public more effectively and reach out to a wider audience.

We hope that RWS will make a socially responsible decision and free the dolphins. Let us follow the example set by other progressive countries such as Chile and Costa Rica who have banned the capture and display of dolphins, recognising that these animals belong in the vast open oceans” said Mr. Louis Ng, Executive Director of ACRES.

Richard O’Barry of the Earth Island Institute and star of the Oscar Award-winning documentary “The Cove” is offering the possibility of setting up a rehabilitation and release project for these dolphins in conjunction with RWS.

“RWS’ cooperation would ensure that these dolphins be returned to their natural habitat where they can thrive, as opposed to keeping them in captivity, separated from their original home range, their pod and their extensive social environment.

In helping return these dolphins, RWS would show the people of Singapore and the world that you are a true steward of the environment and a responsible company sensitive to the harm captivity inflicts on dolphins.” said Mr. O’Barry, a Marine Mammal Specialist.

Whilst economic growth is important, moral progress of our country is equally, if not more, important. Our economy and tourism sector must grow, but it is time for us to ask “at what cost?”

ACRES will be embarking on a series of “Save the World’s Saddest Dolphins” roadshows. The first roadshow will be held at Far East Plaza (Level 2 Concourse) from 27th until 29th May.

Contact:

Louis Ng (Executive Director, ACRES)
Email: louis@acres.org.sg
Tel (O): +65 6892 9821 Hp: +65 9796 8592

- ends -

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.