

## News Release

## EUROPEAN UNION PROPOSED SEAL PRODUCTS BAN PUTS PROPAGANDA BEFORE ANIMAL WELFARE

**IQALUIT, NUNAVUT (July 23, 2008)** – The Government of Nunavut is disappointed that the European Union Commission is responding to the propaganda of animalist fundraisers rather than the science of animal husbandry in its proposal to ban the trade in seal products.

"Following decades of misinformation and millions of dollars raised on the backs of hunters the European Union Commission is making decisions based on distorted media images rather than the facts around a regulated and sustainable hunt," said Government of Nunavut Environment Minister Olayuk Akesuk.

The lack of understanding around the tradition and economic necessity of hunting seals can be found in the continued EU proposal to exempt seals hunted in an undefined traditional Inuit manner. There is no value in an exemption when the market is destroyed.

"Virtually all of the seals hunted in Nunavut and southern Canada are shot with rifles. Is the EU now telling us we are not allowed to use the same tools as they do when hunting?" asked Akesuk. "We have repeatedly told European legislators that past attempts at an Inuit exemption didn't work. The exemption is nothing more than an excuse to allow Europeans to pretend that they are not acting like colonialist."

In conjunction with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Nunavut government has called for a ban on the use of the European designed hakapik as a tool in the hunting of seals.

"If the European Union was concerned with ensuring high standards of animal husbandry rather than reacting to propaganda campaigns it would engage in a serious discussion in all forms of domesticated and wild animal harvesting practices," said Akesuk.

The Government of Nunavut is calling on the federal government to react strongly in the international arena to defend this traditional form of providing nutritious meat and highly valued seal products.

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## For further information:

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