



World Society for the Protection of Animals

For immediate release:

News Release

WSPA is against animal cruelty in art

San José, 15 of May 2008 - The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) reiterates its contempt concerning the cruelty act committed by Mr. Guillermo Vargas (Habacuc) against a dog during an art exhibition in Nicaragua during 2007.

For WSPA there is no possible justification for animals to be mistreated, whether it is for artistic purposes, or any other context. What the artist did was cruel and went against the five freedoms of animals¹. For these reasons, WSPA is opposed to Vargas' participation in this and future exhibitions, and has urged the organizers of the VIth Central American Visual Arts Biennial to withdraw the artist's right to exhibit.

Representatives from "Empresarios por el Arte" in Costa Rica acknowledged that this organisation is opposed to the animal cruelty for artistic purposes, but also said that they cannot impede Vargas to participate in the Honduran exhibition. In a letter sent to WSPA with date on the 30th of April, Mr. Ronald Zürcher –president of this association- emphasized that the artists will use no animal in Honduras.

WSPA is still waiting answer from "Mujeres en las Artes" to the petition sent asking to not allow Vargas to participate in the exhibition; and also clarifies that neither the Asociación Hondureña Protectora de los Animales y su Hábitat (AHPRA), nor any other representative from WSPA will act as observer in the biennale.

Furthermore, WSPA is working and allocating resources to support the project led by a special commission within the Nicaraguan Congress, which aims to update and reform the law about the protection of animals in the country. This will enable prosecution and punishment for any mistreatment to animals in the future.

Ends.

For more information contact the WSPA Media Office on +44 (0)20 7587 5000 or + 44 (0)7801 386670.

¹ Freedom from hunger and thirst, freedom from discomfort, freedom from pain, freedom to express normal behaviour, freedom from fear and distress. Source: Farm Animal Welfare Council.

The World Society for the Protection of Animals is the world's largest alliance of humane societies and animal protection organisations, representing more than 900 member societies in 153 countries. Through direct fieldwork, campaigning, legislative work, education and training programmes, WSPA strives to create a world where animal welfare matters and animal cruelty ends.