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International Celebrities Rally For WTO Agreement On Fisheries Subsidies In New Film

NEW YORK, Oct. 12, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Hollywood icons and environmentalists Ted Danson and Billy Joel have stepped up to support a critical World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement on fishing subsidies, as the international community races to lock the deal in place before it expires. Their advocacy takes center stage in the groundbreaking documentary film, [‘Change Makers: The Global Race to Save our Seas’](#), produced by Jayde Lovell, CEO of ReAgency Lab, which exposes the global problem of fishing subsidies and their damaging effect on our oceans and communities.

Marine biologist and marine economist Daniel Pauly and Rashid Sumaila, the distinguished recipients of this year’s Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, also feature in the documentary to lend their support for the WTO agreement.

ABOUT THE ISSUE

Globally, Government subsidies to the fishing sector total over [US\\$35 billion](#), incentivizing industrial fishing even when it is no longer profitable, and causing a drastic decline in global fish stocks. Despite two decades of activism and negotiations, an international agreement to address the problem seemed impossible.

But on 17 June 2022, the WTO unexpectedly achieved a global consensus to ban some of the most harmful fishing subsidies. This legally enforceable agreement would allow fish stocks to recover, and protect the food security and livelihoods for millions of people.

The [WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies](#) is an historical achievement:

- The first WTO agreement to focus on the environment.
- The first Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target to be fully met ([Target 14.6](#)).
- Only the second agreement reached at the WTO since its inception.

On the potential impact of the agreement, Ted Danson said:

“If you manage the world's fisheries correctly, you could provide a billion fish meals a day forever, and that's at a time when food security is a huge, huge issue”.

ABOUT THE PROBLEM

The agreement requires ratification by two thirds of the 164 WTO member countries by 26 February 2024 to come into effect, and so far that has not happened. According to the WTO, only [17 countries](#) have submitted their instruments of acceptance to ratify the agreement.

ABOUT THE SUPPORTERS

Actor Ted Danson is renowned for his unwavering commitment to ocean conservation, having co-founded the American Oceans Campaign in 1987, which eventually became the influential campaign organization [Oceana](#). Billy Joel also has a history of marine conservation initiatives, having generously donated his Commuter Yacht to the International Seakeepers Society.

In the documentary, Ted Danson discusses ocean futures and overfishing concerns, while Billy Joel's 1990 hit '[Downeaster "Alexa"](#)' underscores the impact of overfishing on everyday Americans.

ABOUT THE FILM

'*Change Makers: The Global Race to Save our Seas*' is an international effort between filmmakers in the US, UK, and Australia. The women-led documentary highlights the urgent race to achieve the global support necessary to bring the WTO Agreement into force.

On creating the film, Director Simone Kisiel, CEO of Magic Dog Productions stated:

"With fewer than 20 weeks to go until the WTO Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi, the eyes of the world will be on those countries who've not yet submitted their acceptance. It's inspiring to know that celebrities like Ted Danson and Billy Joel are behind us as we fight to make a real difference for our oceans and the people who depend on them to live."

MEDIA ASSETS

[Media packet, including behind the scenes high resolution photos, is available here.](#)

To stay updated on 'Change Makers: The Global Race to Save Our Seas', please visit ChangeMakerFilm.com

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