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Group slates ad blitz over Canadian seal kills

TORONTO (Reuter-Kyodo) An international animal welfare group Tuesday said it will launch a \$780,000 advertising campaign early next year to stop an increase in the killing of Canadian seals.

But the Canadian government claims it does not intend to allow an expansion of the annual harp seal hunt in Newfoundland and believes the campaign by the International Fund for Animal Welfare is misleading.

"It is clear to us that with the collapse of the cod fisheries on the east coast of Canada, there will be great pressure on the government of

Canada to expand the seal hunt," IFAW founder Brian Davies said at a news conference Tuesday.

He said expanding the hunt from the current level to a full-scale slaughter to kill off excess animals would hurt Canada's reputation. He suggested that IFAW could launch an international campaign against Canadian fish exports if the slaughter is allowed.

Department of Fisheries program officer Claude La Marche said there are no such plans in the works. "There is no way. I think this (is) very misleading," he explained.