



September 20, 2023

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**"THERE IS NO SUSTAINABILITY WITHOUT ACCOUNTABILITY"**  
Accountability.Fish Blasts WCPFC For Continued Meeting Secrecy

POHNPEI, MICRONESIA: Fisheries governance watchdog Accountability.Fish today blasted the Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission for continuing its practice of holding key compliance meetings in secrecy, saying the practice threatens to make a sham of the Commission's rhetoric around sustainability.

A prepared statement read by Mike Klein, Accountability.Fish Communication Lead, at the WCPFC's Technical & Compliance Meeting after the closure of its session to outside observers, called out the Commission directly:

"WCPFC represents nearly 60% of our planet's tuna supply, making its decisions far-reaching and indeed global in scale. Yet for another year, members have chosen to keep observers out of one of the most critical meetings you hold.

"The public has every right to understand WCPFC's decision-making processes and the outcomes thereof.

"Consequently, Accountability.Fish has a right - and a responsibility - to call this secrecy out, and, for as long as it continues, we intend to call it out openly, publicly and throughout our interactions with the commercial, political and social actors with whom we engage.

"This secrecy is corrosive to WCPFC's credibility, both in terms of its overall legitimacy and as a credible player in ocean sustainability.

The message reflects Accountability.Fish's unique status among fisheries NGOs, with a focus entirely on fisheries governance and the need for change as the world seeks greater transparency and influence around what is taking place in the world's oceans.

Klein continued: "As you may or may not be aware, Accountability.Fish as an organization is solely focused on improving the openness, transparency and accountable function of RFMOs."

Noting that many of WCPFC's members are countries that claim adherence to, and even advocate the spread of transparent and open governance in other areas of activity, Klein added:



“As individual members, many of the WCPFC nations agree to these norms and ideals, and some even go to lengths to publicly promote them. Yet you persist in violating them here today.”

As for WCPFC’s rationale for conducting key meetings in secret, the statement concluded by saying:

“WCPFC Members are not saving face by editing their actions for public consumption.

“Indeed, members’ behavior merits legitimate questions not only about the behaviors that such secrecy aims to protect, but also about the willingness of all member states and other economic stakeholders to continue to tolerate this secrecy.

“There can be no accountability without openness.

“Without accountability, there is no sustainability.”