



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 19, 2023

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WCPFC Refusal to Address Compliance Secrecy Calls Sustainability into Question

WASHINGTON: "90% transparency is not transparency." That was the verdict from Accountability.Fish Global Director Ryan Orgera, who today blasted the Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission for failing to address continuing secrecy issues in WCPFC's compliance processes during its Annual Meeting earlier this month.

"The WCPFC and its cheerleaders in the industrial fishing community have been patting themselves on the back for a 'successful' annual meeting. From a standpoint of maintaining the secrecy of its compliance processes, it certainly was."

Orgera added that the closure of the Annual Meeting to the press and closing three out of six days of its Technical and Compliance Committee Meeting in September to the NGO observers in attendance, calls into question the sustainability of the WCPFC catch, and the legitimacy of its sustainability certification by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC).

"WCPFC is trying to have it both ways, approving policies to placate the demands of conservationists, but rendering the enforcement toothless through the continuing secrecy of key parts of its compliance process. And then, when it gets criticized, a cheerleader like fisheries blogger [Francisco Blaha chides us](#) for being dissatisfied with what he calls '90% open access.'"

"Selective open access is a joke. It's essentially like having a punctured tire with 99% of its tread intact. All of the air can be let out by that one percent. And in three days of meeting secrecy, no small amount of curation or outright sanitizing of the data can take place, which should call the legitimacy of WCPFC's MSC certifications into question. There is no sustainability without accountability."