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CONTACT:

Ryan Orgera

Global Director

+1-941-374-0863

ryan.orgera@accountability.fish

SHEDDING LIGHT ON RFMO DECISIONS

RFMO Accountability Tracker Update Highlights Deflected Accountability

Results of recent meetings of leading Regional Fisheries Management Organizations underscore the need for greater transparency and accountability in their decision-making processes.

That was the conclusion from Accountability.Fish as it published the latest results from annual meetings of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) which took place late last year.

The results can be found in our RFMO Accountability Tracker, which may be found here:

<https://accountability.fish/rfmo-accountability-tracker/>

"As the RFMOs do not always release their decisions in a timely fashion, and in the cases of NEAFC and WCPFC, do not release the actions of countries in torpedoing or delaying proposals, it's a fairly arduous process to corroborate and publish the actual results," said Ryan Orgera, Accountability.Fish's Global Director.

Orgera added: "Industrial fishing interests and their allies in the international fisheries space have long encouraged secrecy and opacity - to make it easier for them to maintain their one-sided advantages in the key decision-making processes. The support we had from observers and national delegations at NEAFC and WCPFC has been invaluable in illustrating the continuing shortcomings of the RFMO world in the basics of openness," Orgera said.

A key shortcoming that the Tracker's results expose is how the pervasiveness of consensus-based decision-making not only allows bad actors to sabotage proposals, but also how the clubbiness of the RFMO culture simply allows delay or postponement if the body has a general sense that consensus is missing.

"Given the direct involvement of industry leaders and lobbyists in country delegations, it's clear that a lot of these decisions are being made in private, and killed or 'postponed' in a way that deflects accountability from the countries responsible. Shedding a light on the process can at least expose it for the sham that it often is," added Orgera.



Accountability.Fish is a global initiative committed to increasing openness and accountability in international fisheries decision making. It is funded by the Oceans Five Foundation.

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