



## **TIME TO WALK THE TALK: ACCOUNTABILITY.FISH CALLS FOR WCPFC GENERAL MEETING TO OPEN UP ITS KEY PROCEEDINGS**

Reykjavik, Iceland, November 25, 2024 - With the General Meeting of the Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) beginning on November 28, Accountability.Fish is calling on Commission members use the occasion to finally open the General Meeting to media, and reverse its longstanding practice of closing the key elements of its all-important Technical & Compliance Committee (TCC) meeting to NGO observers.

“WCPFC governs almost 60% of the world’s tuna supply, and it continuously brags about the job it is doing from an ocean sustainability standpoint. Yet, despite all the bragging, it conspicuously conducts its key compliance meetings behind closed doors and bars the media from its General Meeting. These practices fly in the face of its founding charter, which explicitly demands transparency,” said Ryan Orgera, Accountability.Fish Global Director.

Article 21 of the WCPFC Convention and rules of procedure states:

*“The Commission shall promote transparency in its decision-making processes and other activities. Representatives from intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned with matters relevant to the implementation of this Convention shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies as observers or otherwise as appropriate. The rules of procedure of the Commission shall provide for such participation. The procedures shall not be unduly restrictive in this respect. Such intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations shall be given timely access to pertinent information subject to the rules and procedures which the Commission may adopt.”*

Orgera continues, “The General Meeting represents an important opportunity to get this right, and to remove the cloud that WCPFC’s anti-transparency culture represents over the activities its staff present as praiseworthy. The closure of the General Meeting to the media is nothing short of gratuitous, and the exclusion of observers from the draft compliance report meeting at the TCC essentially renders the WCPFC region as a massive, unverified gap in the global ocean sustainability picture.”

Orgera concludes, stating “WCPFC members that talk a good game on sustainability - notably the likes of Tuvalu, New Zealand, Canada and the European Union - can take a big step towards walking that talk by moving to end the Commission’s secrecy practices during the General Meeting.”

### **About Accountability.Fish**

Accountability.Fish is an international non-governmental organization focused on enhancing transparency, accountability, and public participation in the governance of the world’s fisheries. Through its advocacy and outreach efforts, the organization seeks to ensure that decision-making processes in fisheries management bodies remain open and inclusive. It is funded by the Oceans Five Foundation.

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