



Contact:

Ryan Orgera, Global Director
ryan.orgera@accountability.fish
+1-941-374-0863

20 March 2023

CALL FOR URGENT ACTION TO KEEP INDUSTRIAL FISHERS FROM
"PULLING A FAST ONE" FOLLOWING UN TREATY AGREEMENT

Alexandria, VA - Noting that the timing for ratification and implementation of a new UN High Seas Treaty has yet to be set, Accountability.Fish Global Director Ryan Orgera today called for "urgent action" to open up the deliberations of international fisheries management bodies to keep industrial fishers from "pulling a fast one" by ramping up overfishing before a treaty comes into effect.

"The UN High Seas treaty agreement is great news for the long term. But there are short term dangers that it brings that require urgent attention," said Orgera. "Currently, the only ocean management bodies active in the world are Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), and there is every indication that some RFMOs will give overfishing a green light until they are forced to do so by a treaty."

Key among the red flags are the extent to which industrial fishing interests were involved in fighting a UN agreement, and the fact that many RFMOs have policies that discourage citizen, market, consumer and conservationist observers from attending RFMO deliberations and decisions, and the media from reporting on them."

"Two good examples are ICCAT (the Atlantic Tuna RFMO), which recently held its meetings at an isolated golf hotel in Portugal, and the WCPFC (the RFMO governing tuna fishing in the western Pacific) which has not admitted NGO or Media observers to its compliance meetings. Without robust oversight, there's every reason to believe that the RFMOs will let overfishers cash in before the treaty comes into effect."

Accountability.Fish is a global movement aiming to open the decision-making processes of all RFMOs to a level equal to those of member countries like the US, France, Canada and New Zealand. "The irony is that the democracies have strong traditions of open meetings and visible decision-making processes at home, yet they tolerate a disgusting level of secrecy in these critical global bodies. We are asking for urgent action - by these countries and others - to open the RFMO decision-making process before it's too late," said Orgera,

For more information, or to sign the Accountability.Fish Pledge for an alternative approach to fisheries management, visit www.accountability.fish.