

EUROPEAN UNION

Item 12. Enhancing COFI discussion on fisheries management: Proposal for a new COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management
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UNION POSITION

(On behalf of the EU and its Member States)

- I have the honor to speak on behalf of the EU and its Member States.
- Two years ago, the **COFI already expressed a strong interest in discussing the establishment of a new sub-committee on fisheries management** to assist the international community, especially developing States, to consider small-scale fisheries, and requested to develop a proposal for the possible establishment of such a new sub-committee.
- Therefore, the EU and its Member States **regret that there is today no proposal on the table** for the COFI to decide on. There is an urgent need to ensure that COFI's work on fisheries management, small-scale fisheries, cross-cutting themes and ocean governance be better prepared at technical level.
- What is at stake here is nothing less than the ambition set out in the FAO Declaration on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture: we want to **ensure that COFI remains the main global forum for discussions and decisions on fisheries issues**.
- We however **understand the legitimate concerns** raised in relation to the possible **financial and human resources costs** that a new sub-committee on fisheries management might entail and **their possible impact on participation**. We are therefore **ready to explore an alternative solution for finding ways to improve COFI's efficiency**.
- In this respect, we **support the approach suggested by Japan and the continuation of the work by the Joint Task Force – or a group differently named** – to look at the current terms of reference and functioning of the COFI and its sub-committees. But, considering the importance of this for all of us, the **Joint Task Force should be enlarged to all the willing COFI members**.
- Finally, as we said at the beginning of this meeting, a **first step** towards improving the functioning of this Committee would consist in **providing the session documents sufficiently in advance** to allow adequate preparation and coordination.