

COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES
ITEM 12: PROPOSAL FOR A NEW COFI SUB-
COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

The Committee on Fisheries is the only global intergovernmental forum where major international matters related to fisheries and aquaculture are discussed, and that role has become even more important because of the greater relevance and more complex challenges that the global fisheries sector is currently facing.

The Committee systematically and technically discuss the fisheries and aquaculture trade, through the two corresponding sub-committees, and thus, has managed to tackle technical matters of those issues in a detailed way, which facilitate the further work at the plenary of the Committee.

However, fisheries management has not been addressed in the same way, since there is no body that works it technically and in depth. As indicated in the document COFI/2020/10, the Committee sessions have 3 components: 1) procedural items; 2) permanent themes; and 3) other matters, including in recent years illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and sustainable artisanal fisheries.

In other words, fundamental topics for the Committee are IUU fishing, artisanal fisheries, monitoring the implementation of the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA), and the Code of Conduct, which are not technically addressed nor in depth, as their discussion in the plenary of the Committee does not allow it to be done to that extent, due to the political and high-level nature of participants, as well as the limited time available due to the multiplicity of topics that are being discussed during the sessions of the Committee on Fisheries.

We note that the Joint Action Group has not yet agreed on the analysed options, including the creation of a new sub-committee. However, what the Group agrees on is the need to better address fisheries management. In our opinion, option A (which proposes to tackle the topic in independent and consecutive meetings to the Sub-Committees or the plenary), and option B (which proposes to reformulate the Sub-Committees mandates to include capture fisheries) are not the most adequate, as it could affect the quality and depth of the discussions, both on the issues already addressed by the Sub-Committees and on the new issues that should be discussed within the fisheries management scope; in addition, these options could imply a time reduction of the Sub-Committees or plenary sessions.

Ecuador supports option C that proposes the creation of a new Sub-Committee, which addresses in depth and in a more technical and systematic way relevant and complex issues for the Committee, as the IUU fishing, artisanal fisheries, capacity development of countries, strengthening relations with the regional fisheries management organisations, and monitoring the Agreement on PSMA and the Code of Conduct, among other issues.

The experience and results of the Sub-Committees on Fish Trade and Aquaculture allow the creation of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management would help to guide, conduct, and in general, improve efficiency in dealing with the aforementioned issues.

In line with the Action Group discussions, we support the idea of creating a funding mechanism to facilitate participation of countries in the development of technical debates about the new Sub-Committee. In addition, innovative measures to reduce costs of the Sub-Committee meetings could be explored.

Finally, Ecuador considers necessary that the discussions on the creation of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management will continue in a wider participation format that the current Joint Action Groups allows, for example through an open-ended working group.