

8. Enhancing COFI discussions including Recommendations of the Working Group on the Proposal of the Establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management

1. The EU expresses its appreciation for the excellent chairmanship by Japan of the Working Group in charge of elaborating a proposal for a new sub-committee on fisheries management, as well as for the excellent support provided by the Secretariat.
2. We are happy that many delegations actively participated in the virtual meetings. We believe that the transparency and the wide participation in the intersessional work was conducive to a good outcome.
3. On substance, this outcome does not entirely reflect EU's views, but we consider that the compromise is satisfactory: we have good terms of reference for the new sub-committee; we have a clear process and working method, including to ensure the participation of developing countries and remote delegations.
4. A review clause will allow COFI to assess whether the sub-committee will contribute improving COFI's preparation on fisheries management issues and to ensuring that COFI can work more effectively, focusing on strategic discussion and decisions.
5. So, the EU supports the proposal for establishing a new sub-committee on fisheries management.
6. If all delegations can support the proposal, let's give it a try. The EU is ready to participate in supporting the first virtual meeting of the sub-committee due to take place between this and the next COFI meeting. As soon as the COFI is over, we will liaise with the Secretariat to consider the concrete next steps in that perspective.
7. Allow me a final word: establishing this new sub-committee is one step in the direction of improving COFI's working method. We should continue exploring other ways to reach this objective, such as streamlined agendas, earlier circulation of the documents, more precise description of the agenda items, better planning of meetings taking into consideration the meeting calendar of the relevant other regional and international organisations, better coordination

between COFI and its sub-committees and among sub-committees, intersessional use of hybrid meetings, etc.

8. We therefore invite the Bureau to continue its reflection on how to improve the working method of COFI.
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