

New Zealand is pleased to be able to participate in the first meeting of this Sub-Committee, and thanks the Secretariat for their efforts in bringing us together. We'd also like to thank the COFI Chair for his leadership and for convening us prior to the opportunity to elect a chair later today. Recalling that this body has been established for a trial period subject to review at COFI 38, we feel that our focus in that time should be on ensuring we explore the potential of this forum to benefit the broader work of the FAO and Fisheries Management globally. We think the agenda items before us this week provide a good framework to undertake a productive technical discussion on the challenges and opportunities before us in the fisheries management arena and provide support to the wider work of COFI. To this end, we would raise for consideration this week and beyond, whether the Sub-Committee should task the Chair and Bureau, once appointed, with developing a work programme based on our discussions this week. This would allow us to agree on clear and defined workstreams and goals, to ensure there is substantive work against which to review the existence of this body in 2028. Such a work programme could be presented for approval at either COFI 36 or the 2nd meeting of this Sub-Committee. Our preference would be for a programme to be presented to COFI 36, however recognise that the short turnaround to that meeting may make presenting a programme intersessionally or to the 2nd Meeting of this Sub-Committee more practical. New Zealand is committed to doing our part to make this week and the next two meetings work to the benefit of COFI and to fisheries management more generally.