

MINUTES
LDAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting: Madrid (Hotel Meliá Madrid Serrano)
Wednesday, 8 November 2023
09:30-17:00 h

Chair: Iván López van der Veen
Vice Chairs: Béatrice Gorez, Juan Manuel Liria and Marc Ghiglia
Rapporteurs (Secretariat): Alexandre Rodríguez and Manuela Iglesias

1. Welcome by the LDAC Chair, Mr. Iván López van der Veen

The Chair, Mr. Iván López van der Veen, welcomes all attendees and apologises for the absence of WG4 Chair, Mr. Julio Morón (OPAGAC), and WG5 Chair, Mr. Julien Daudu (EJF).

He then indicates the vote delegations received as follows:

Member not able to attend	Delegating to
Sara Fröcklin (SSNC)	Béatrice Gorez (CFFA-CAPE)
Julien Daudu (EJF)	Ignacio Fresco (OCEANA)
Iris Ziegler (Seas at Risk)	Ignacio Fresco (OCEANA)
Juan Manuel Trujillo (ETF) while he is not present in the meeting	Béatrice Gorez (CFFA-CAPE)

The Chair informs that there is the necessary quorum (50% plus one) for adoption of decisions by members present or represented.

The complete list of attendees is included in **ANNEX I**.

2. Opening speech by the Secretary General for Fisheries of Spain (SGP), Ms. Isabel Artime.

The Chair, Mr. López, gives the floor to the Secretary General for Fisheries, Ms. Isabel Artime, highlighting and thanking the SGP's important and constant support to the LDAC.

Ms. Artime gives a speech, the full version of which is included in **ANNEX II**.

3. Approval of the agenda.

The agenda is approved with no comments or modifications.

4. Adoption of the minutes of the last Executive Committee - Stockholm, 25 May 2023

The minutes of the previous Executive Committee meeting held on 25 May 2023 in Stockholm are approved.

5. EU work priorities for 2024 related to International Ocean Governance.

The Chair, Mr. Iván López, informs that the Unit B Director at DG MARE has not been able to attend this meeting, nor has anybody in his team.

He then suggests drafting a technical document (some kind of dossier or position paper) with the LDAC priorities regarding International Ocean Governance. The idea is to make this publication available in the second half of 2024 to serve as a guide to the new Commissioner and his cabinet (and for the new DG MARE hierarchy), as well as for the new members of the Committee on Fisheries elected following the European Parliament elections. After having some members complement on this idea, it is suggested to include the following in the content of this document: the importance of fish in sustainable food systems, food sovereignty and security.

The following **ACTION** is agreed:

- To start drafting a document, similar to that prepared under the reform of the CFP, adding new arguments in each working group.

6. Report on actions agreed at LDAC working groups and formulation of advice:

6.1. Summary report on actions from the LDAC WGs (17-19 October + 7 Nov):

- Working Group 1 - Tuna Fisheries and their RFMOs
- Working Group 2 - Regional Fisheries Organizations and North Atlantic Agreements
- Working Group 4 - EU sustainable fisheries partnership agreements with third countries
- Working Group 5 – Horizontal issues

ACTION: Due to time constraints, it is agreed that a summary on the state of play of actions taken within the working groups will be sent via email.

6.2. Report on the state of play of draft LDAC advice for discussion/adoption:

- Draft LDAC advice on Morocco (WG5)

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, General Secretary, explains in great detail the last version of the LDAC draft advice on "Cooperation with Morocco to improve fisheries governance and resilient fishing communities" prepared by WG5 and presented now for approval.

After several technical comments and discussion among the members, the following is agreed regarding the adoption procedure:

There will be a period of 8 additional days to ratify the vote on the advice. If, during this time, any member wishes to abstain, it will be recorded in these minutes.

Mr. Francisco Marí, BFW, abstains arguing the following reason:

"Bread for the World abstains on this matter since it does not wish to take a position before the Court of Justice of the European Union has voiced its opinion on the issue regarding whether there should be a fisheries agreement with the Kingdom of Morocco in the future that refers to the Economic Exclusive Zone of Western Sahara, occupied by Morocco in violation of international law. However, BFW supports the rest of critical points in support of a dialogue between the EU and Morocco on fisheries issues".

Ms. Fröckling, SSNC, abstains arguing the same reasons as BFW.

Post-scriptum: The advice is approved 8 days later with no changes and with those two abstentions.

- Draft LDAC advice on ICCAT (WG1)

It is unanimously agreed to approve the advice and send it to the European Commission.

It is also agreed to organise a coordination meeting with the rest of ACs interested in this RFMO in the next few months and/or to invite them to the next WG1 meeting in March 2024.

- Draft LDAC advice on WCPFC (WG1)

Mr. Alexander Rodríguez, General Secretary, informs that the drafting of this piece of advice is a pending action for Working Group 1. Therefore, he requests attendees to volunteer to be part of the drafting committee within the Focus Group (FG).

Ms. Anne-France Mattlet, EUROPÊCHE Tuna Group, volunteers to hold the position of rapporteur and coordinator of this piece of advice, with the assistance of the Secretariat.

7. Presentation on state of play of FAO Common Oceans ABNJ Projects:

- Deep-Sea Fisheries Project — Ms. Eszter Hidas

The presentation by Ms. Hidas is available on the following link:

https://ldac.eu/images/Presentation_Common_Oceans_Deep-Sea_Fisheries_Project_Eszter_Hidas.pdf

- Tuna Project — Mr. Kim Stobberup

The presentation by Mr. Stobberup is available on the following link:

https://ldac.eu/images/Presentation_CO_Tuna_Kim_Stobberup.pdf

8. Administration, logistics and finances:

8.1. Report from the Secretariat on the state of play of finances:

- Feedback on implementation of the new lump sum approach.

The General Secretary, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, informs that the new agreement with the Commission, following the lump sum approach, has finally been approved after several months' delay, and that on 7 November the Commission made the advance payment of EUR 221,841.50 that was due, nearly six months after the date when the LDAC financial period starts. He says that the maximum sum given by the Commission is of EUR 277,301.88 after having requested the 2% increase of the inflation rate of last year as set out in the Commission rules.

- Update on rules and process to claim reimbursement of expenses.

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, General Secretary, explains that all members' per diem rates have been increased from EUR 90 to 113, following the updated criteria in the guidelines of the Financial Regulation of the EC.

It was also approved that hotel expenses will be reimbursed prior invoice submission (indicating the price of the room, including service rates and taxes, except for breakfast) within the limit set for each country as it is established in Annex I of the regulation. If the hotel invoice is not submitted, the member will receive a fixed amount of EUR 100 per night.

He then informs about the new online reimbursement form that is available on the LDAC website complementing the existing paper form:

[Application - LDAC - Long Distance Fisheries Advisory Council](#)

Members are invited to use and test the new online form to request reimbursement for this

meeting and subsequent meetings. In addition, any feedback or suggestions for improvement will be welcomed by the Secretariat.

All information related to the reimbursement process can be found here:
[Reimbursement process - LDAC - Long Distance Fisheries Advisory Council](#)

8.2. Work programme priorities for 2024:

- Selection of topics for Focus Groups and Inter-AC collaboration.

The General Secretary, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, suggests the following topics be considered by the members:

- Consequences of climate change on high seas fisheries and in SFPAs.
- Science and management of small pelagic stocks in West Africa.
- International ocean governance processes:
 - MPA in international waters and in the high seas: Links between BBNJ and CBD
 - Deep-sea mining in international waters (ISA Mining Code negotiations)
- Application of the CFP external dimension in the next decade.
- Feedback on the retrospective assessment on SFPAs by the EC and future recommendations.
- Review of EU fisheries control and of the regulation against IUU fishing: consequences for the long distance fleet.
- Social and labour dimension of the CFP.

Regarding Inter-AC meetings: it is decided that only three representatives may have the floor, so the role and mandate of each one must be respected at all times. The person talking on behalf of the LDAC must have a mandate to do so, it is suggested that this point be added to the Code of Conduct.

The importance of coordinating actions with other ACs is highlighted, particularly to be aligned when agreeing on a specific mandate regarding institutional representation and messages to be sent by the ACs when issuing joint pieces of advice. This is of special importance when these pieces of advice are defended before European or international bodies or institutions, in fora and events outside the ACs scope. In this case, a negative example is mentioned involving MAC at a recent visit to a high-level forum with China without previous notification by the Secretary.

ACTION: It is agreed that the LDAC Chair and Secretariat inform their counterparts in other ACs about the need to ensure enhanced coordination, respect for the leader and constructive collaboration everywhere before, during and after the adoption of joint pieces of advice.

- Decision on meeting formats for WGs in 2024 (onsite/hybrid/online).

It is agreed that:

Meetings will be held onsite, although rapporteurs or those who cannot attend owing to force majeure may -prior authorisation by the LDAC Secretariat- connect via Zoom.

It is suggested that the next Working Group meetings be held on the first week of March (5-7, tbc), as well as the ExCom.

- Proposal for venue of GA/ExCom meetings in 2024.

Mr. Francisco Marí, BFW, offers to hold the General Assembly and Executive Committee meetings in May in Berlin. Moreover, he offers to hold a reception in the evening after the GA to talk with representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Development Cooperation, as well as with representatives of NGOs and civil society.

Furthermore, Ms. Béatrice Gorez, CFFA-CAPE, suggests holding a workshop on fishing companies investing in third countries on those same dates. She highlights that the experience from the workshop held in Stockholm was very positive, and that having another one will strengthen the relationship with African partners.

She suggests also including the topic of food security.

In addition, Ms. Béatrice Gorez explains the possibility of making the Workshop on joint ventures the place where the EU develops a legal framework for transparency and sustainability of fishing investments in third countries that may be extrapolated not only to EU fishing vessels but also to non-EU ones, particularly Chinese, so that a level playing field, compliance and fair competition are ensured.

Mr. Edelmiro Ulloa, OPP3/OPNAPA/ACEMIX, informs that the report on the economic impact of joint enterprises conducted by the Ardán Chair of the University of Vigo together with the Free Trade Zone of Vigo will soon be presented.

Mr. José Ramón Fontán, ANEPAT, extends the invitation to the presentation of this report to all LDAC members, the exact venue and date to be soon defined.

It is agreed to hold the GA, ExCom and Workshop on joint enterprises in May in Berlin.

- Performance and functioning of Working Groups.

The Chair, Mr. López, reflects upon the topics addressed by the working groups in order to find a balance among the groups. For instance, WG5 usually has a great load of topics, whereas in WG2 these have changed following Brexit. In addition, RFMOs such as SIOFA, SPRFMO or CCAMLR that used to be included in the extinct WG3 should be covered.

To this end, he suggests: reflecting upon the possibility of restructuring the content and strengthening WG2 with new areas, and even consider the possibility of recovering WG3.

ACTION: The Chair will present an updated proposal at the next LDAC ExCom meeting.

9. State of play of partnerships and international collaborations:

FAO:

- Outcomes of 19th FAO Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (Bergen, 10-15 September) and of FAO Guidance on Social Responsibility in Fisheries Value Chains.

Ms. Mariana Toussaint, FAO, makes a presentation on the outcomes of the 19th Session of the FAO Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, which is available on the following link:

https://ldac.eu/images/Fao_Presentation_on_COFI_FT_outcomes_Mariana_Toussaint.pdf

The rest of documents related to this meeting are available here:

<https://www.fao.org/about/meetings/cofi-sub-committee-on-fish-trade/session19-documents/es/>

After a round of comments, the following **ACTION** is agreed:

- To request the questionnaire on SSF from FAO in order to share it with the secretariats of our partners ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT and AFRIFISH-Net.

The FAO representative, Ms. Mariana Toussaint, informs about FAO Guidance on "social responsibility in fisheries and aquaculture value chains: industrial fishing" and declares that the Sub-Committee suggested a series of specific measures such as:

- Raising awareness on the importance that FAO Guidance may have in the promotion of decent working conditions in the context of social problems existing in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.
- Providing guidance to continue drafting FAO Guidelines.
- Inviting partners to support FAO to continue drafting Guidelines, particularly, due to their timeliness regarding gender issues and small-scale fisheries.

For more information, please click on: <https://www.fao.org/3/nm847es/nm847es.pdf>

10. Items for discussion by the Executive Committee:

10.1- Updating the draft Code of Conduct for LDAC meetings.

The Chair, Mr. Iván López, and the OCEANA representative, Mr. Ignacio Fresco, explain the proposal to update the current code of conduct.

After listening to the comments by several members, the following **ACTION** is agreed:

- **To present the changes to the document at the General Assembly (and subsequently at the ExCom for its approval in May) and to have it drafted as clearly as possible.**

10.2- Member representation at LDAC meetings - discussion on new criteria:

- Number and appointment of organisation representatives.

The Chair, Mr. López, informs that in the latest LDAC Executive Committee and General Assembly meetings, held in May 2023, some members put on the table issues related to the participation of member organisation representatives in LDAC meetings. There was a discussion as to whether limits should be agreed in terms of number of representatives per organisation and interventions. As a result, it was suggested to think about if there should be a strict limit on the number of participants per organisation. In terms of interventions, only one person per organisation should be allowed to speak on the same agenda item (to avoid hoarding), but there should be flexibility in this respect.

- State of play of LDAC member organisations: EU Transparency Register.

The General Secretary, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, explains that the 54 LDAC organisations have been contacted, some of which are already trying to register while others have not responded to the request. He summarises the situation as of today:

- 43 organisations are duly registered in the EU Transparency Register.
- 4 organisations within the fisheries sector have declared that they are part of another organisation.
- 7 organisations within the fisheries sector have not replied or have failed to provide sufficient information on their registration status.

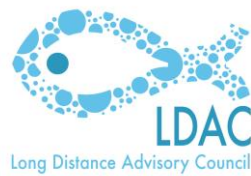
The following **ACTION** is agreed:

- **To give members that have still not done so sufficient time to register in the EU Transparency Register.**
- **Since it is an obligation that has been self-imposed by the LDAC, it shall be recorded in its code of conduct and/or rules of procedure.**
- **The General Assembly will conduct an annual review both on payment of fees and on registrations in the EU Transparency Register.**

16:15h

AOB – CLOSE OF THE MEETING

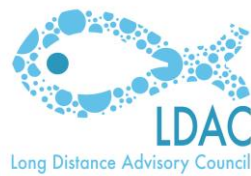
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Mr. Xavier Leduc, UAPF, explains what happened at the IOTC meeting in Mauritius regarding IPLNF, since there were leaks of interferences with contracting parties with interests conflicting with those of the EU. He points out that inclusion or continuity of a member within the LDAC should not be accepted if in negotiations they show a conflicting opinion to that approved in our organisation to inform the EU. Therefore, he believes that an internal investigation process should be initiated and, if appropriate, the organisation involved should be held accountable. In addition, the possibility of including cases of conflicts of interests, whether evident or perceived, in the LDAC code of conduct shall be analysed.

With no other issues to address, the session is adjourned by the LDAC Chair, Mr. López van der Veen, thanking members and observers for their attendance and collaboration, the LDAC Secretariat for their efforts in organising and coordinating logistics and documents, and the interpreting team for their technical quality and excellent work.

The meeting is closed.



ANNEX I: List of attendees
Long Distance Advisory Council Executive Committee
Madrid, 8 November 2023 9.30-17:00h

ATTENDEES

1. Iván López. AGARBA/CEPESCA
2. Béatrice Gorez. CFFA-CAPE
3. Ignacio Fresco. OCEANA
4. Raúl García. WWF
5. Aivaras Labanauskas. Lithuanian Long Distance Fisheries Association
6. Edelmiro Ulloa. OPP3/OPNAPA/ACEMIX
7. Alexandra Philippe. EBCD
8. Rocío Béjar. CEPESCA
9. Felicidad Alonso. ANFACO-CECOPECA/AIPCE
10. Emil Remisz. NAPO
11. Marc Ghiglia. CNPMEM
12. Francisco Mari. BFW
13. Esben Sverdrup-Jensen. DPPO
14. Juan Manuel Trujillo. ETF
15. Juan Manuel Liria. CEPESCA
16. Javier Garat. CEPESCA

WG CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS

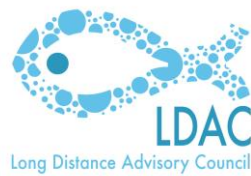
17. Xavier Leduc. UAPF
18. Tim Heddema. Dutch Pelagic Fisheries Association
19. Michel Goujon. ORTHONGEL

OBSERVERS

20. Anne-France Mattlet. EUROPECHE
21. Jorge López. OPAGAC/AGAC
22. José Ramón Fontán. ANEPAT.
23. Eszter Hidas(NFIGD) virtually
24. Alberto Martin. MSC
25. Isabel Artime. Secretary General for Fisheries, Spain
26. Carmen Asencio. SGP
27. Natalia Sánchez. SGP
28. Margarita Mancebo. Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA) Secretariat General for Fisheries
29. Luis Belmonte. Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA) Secretariat General for Fisheries

LDAC SECRETARIAT

30. Alexandre Rodríguez. LDAC
31. Manuela Iglesias. LDAC
32. Marta de Lucas. LDAC



**ANNEX II: Speech by the Secretary General for Fisheries
LDAC Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, 8 November 2023**

Good morning,

- It is a pleasure for me to participate in the opening of this Executive Committee meeting of the Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC).
- This meeting takes place at a very special moment, when we are entering the final stretch of our Presidency of the Council of the European Union.
- Six months where we have set some priority axes for the fisheries field with which you will certainly resonate and with which we intend to make our own small contribution to the consolidation of a sector as important to the European Union as Fisheries.
- Please allow me, therefore, to start my opening remarks with some comments about these issues:

- o The first axis, the necessary **progressive decarbonisation** of the European Union fleet. Not only to contribute to the climate objectives set for 2030, but also for a practical reason, since only a modern and competitive fleet can truly be a guarantee for the future of our sector.

This priority was portrayed at the Informal Meeting of EU Fisheries Ministers held in Vigo on 16 and 17 July, with the participation of some of your members who gave voice to the private sector at the gathering.

- o Secondly, we have focused on the contribution of the EU Common Fisheries Policy to **Food Security**, more important than ever in these moments of geopolitical instability that we are currently witnessing.

Thus, we devoted the traditional meeting of **EU General Directors for Fisheries** to discussing this issue, analysing very different elements such as the importance of fish being adequately present in the diet to contribute to improving people's health, FAO's view according to which Blue Transformation is an essential paradigm for food worldwide, without forgetting key aspects such as the need to ensure a level playing field where EU fleets can compete under the same conditions as their competitors from third countries.

- o And finally, we have committed ourselves to opening a discussion that enables to **improve the procedures to determine fishing opportunities**, optimising work methods, exploring the possibility of setting multiannual quotas offering further foreseeability to the sector, as well as strengthening the relevance of the socio-economic dimension in decision-making.

These priorities have called your attention at the Long Distance Advisory Council in your activity to represent the interests of the fisheries sector, civil society and the different stakeholders.

I would like to congratulate you on this activity, since your **pieces of advice and reports, and in general your active participation** in the different fora where discussions take place about **international ocean governance**, and particularly within the **Regional Fisheries Organisations**, contribute in a decisive way to attaining a common aim, which is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources worldwide.

I invite you to continue playing this active role, since in the new paradigm of International Ocean Governance it is essential to join forces and work together to defend the future of sustainable fisheries.

Looking back, 2023 was certainly a year worth highlighting in this sense, with the following having taken place:

- o The finalisation of the negotiation process of the **international legally binding instrument regarding marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction** under the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.¹
- o The 4th session of the **Review Conference on 1995 United Nations Agreement on straddling and highly migratory stocks** (UNFSA), that was held in May and where Spain was part of its Bureau.

Spain attaches a great deal of importance to this Treaty, the only one within the UN which deals exclusively with fisheries management.

¹ So far, this Treaty has been signed by 81 States and by the European Union. However, 60 ratifications need to be completed for it to come into force.

- o **8th Our Ocean Conference**, held in March in Panama, where the European Union acquired relevant economic commitments in terms of sustainable fisheries, highlighting the EUR 900,000 investment related to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
- o **The negotiation process for the future Mining Code** that is being carried out within the International Seabed Authority.
- o And in this same week, informal consultations regarding the Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries are being conducted, with Spanish participation, for subsequent approval by the United Nations General Assembly. This is the only document where the international community as a whole takes stock of the year and sets priorities with regard to sustainable fisheries.

Moreover, **2024 presents itself as a key year** where we need to continue working together in the field of international ocean governance.

- o In June next year a high-level theme event will take place in Costa Rica to prepare for the **Third UN Ocean Conference on SDG 14** that will be held in France.
- o In July the **36th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries** will be held. In addition, in January the first session of the **new Sub-Committee for Sustainable Fisheries** will be held, which was set up at the COFI35 meeting in September 2022.

In short, Oceans are growing in relevance at multilateral level and that is why it is essential to ensure the **participation of the fisheries sector and civil society in the construction of such international governance**, underlining fisheries' added value and the important role it plays ensuring sustainability and providing quality food.

Before I finish off, I would like to briefly refer to **bilateral fisheries agreements with third countries**, for which, as you know, we will have a very busy negotiation agenda the next few months.

During the first week of December, the **Joint commission to follow up on the Agreement with Mauritania** has been called for, the most important one of these agreements both in terms of economic compensation and amount of opportunities.

Moreover, we have the renewal of several Protocols ahead of us: **Cape Verde** and **Guinea-Bissau**, which will come to an end in the first half of 2024, and **Côte d'Ivoire**, **Senegal** and **Sao Tome and Principe**, which will do so in the second half of the year.

And of course, we cannot forget about the **renewal of the agreement with Morocco** that, as you

know, is still awaiting the decision by the European Court on the lawsuit filed by the Polisario Front regarding Western Sahara.

Furthermore, in Spain we have repeatedly declared our interest in starting as soon as possible negotiations to close 2 new agreements with **Angola** and **Republic of Guinea**, for which ex ante evaluations have already been conducted with extremely positive outcomes and for which there is an interest from all stakeholders.

And of course, we will continue to insist on the possibility of reporting, once and for all, the **dormant agreements** that have been suspended for a good number of years, particularly those with Equatorial Guinea and Mozambique, not applied since 2001 and 2015, respectively, and for which third countries have not shown any interest in their renegotiation.

Reporting these agreements would open the possibility for interested fleets to operate under direct authorisations.

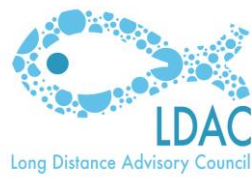
The EU fleet has the mission of demonstrating before the international community that its activity contributes significantly to sustainable fisheries and, in this sense, the role of the EU within RFMOs is key.

A clear example of this is the measure recently approved at the IATTC annual meeting in Canada on sharks that takes to the Pacific a rule approved over a decade ago in the European Union banning shark finning for all IATTC fleets.

This way, the EU plays a fundamental role in watching over the **elimination of transshipments in the high seas and monitoring vessels by means of the MCS system** that ultimately limits IUU fishing and leads to improved management of fish stocks. An example of this are the measures recently approved at SIOFA, where the only European vessel is Spanish, or at IATTC.

And last but not least, attention should be drawn to the next annual meetings at **ICCAT** and at the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (**WCPFC**) to be held in November in Egypt and in December in Cook Islands.

In the case of ICCAT, it is worth pointing out the importance of setting an optimal TAC for bigeye tuna, as well as an allocation key where EU interests are respected. The purse seine fleet fishing in the Atlantic strictly meets all measures approved, including the limitation of FADs and the closure and cannot limit its activity any more with a TAC reduction. Spain has requested the effectiveness of this closure be assessed. Likewise, in the framework of ICCAT, we are actively working on setting a **management procedure for swordfish**.



And now I would like to finish off reiterating at this LDAC Executive Committee meeting that in Spain, particularly at the General Secretariat for Fisheries, you have an ally and that together we can keep moving forward towards the attainment of our common aim: the conservation of marine biodiversity and the sustainable use of fisheries resources.

In short, we will continue working on the consolidation of a responsible, profitable and competitive community fleet that, leading by example, continues to contribute to the design of an International Ocean Governance where fishing receives the attention it deserves.

Thank you