WTO is about to win a big prize after 20 years of fish discussions

File Photo: March 1, 2021, at a traditional market in Jakarta, Indonesia, a seafood vendor cooks fish while servicing customers. REUTERS / Willy Kurniawan / File Photo

July 13, 2021
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Geneva (Reuters) – Negotiators hope that the World Trade Organization will not only hurt overfishing after a 20-year attempt on Thursday, but will dispel doubts about its usefulness in doing so. I’m out.

The World Trade Oversight Agency, whose 164 members are also worried about how to resolve disputes, has not signed major trade agreements for years, and analysts are trying to maintain its credibility. Says that one needs to land this year.

This award could be a significant reduction in a wide range of fishing subsidies commonly considered to be the number one factor in depleting the world’s fish stocks.

The WTO states that it is at the “front line” of trading. Secretary-General Ngozi Okonjo Iwara said the de facto ministerial meeting “should kick us along the path to an agreement” before the November meeting aimed to reach an agreement. Stated.

Some delegations personally say that there is still a gap in views on the distribution of subsidies between wealthy member states such as the European Union on the one hand and developing countries such as India on the other. I’m more skeptical.

“Many members feel that larger subsidies need to significantly reduce subsidies given the global impact of both historical and current fishing, but many developing countries I feel the rules should be different, “said Alice Tipping of the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

Reuters’ May confidential proposal by African, Caribbean and Pacific countries calls for an exemption for members who make up less than 2.5% of the world’s catch.

“Race to the bottom”
According to a 2019 study, China is the largest single donor, but accounts for only 21% of the $35.4 billion that countries and trade blocs around the world, including the EU and Japan, spend each year to support their fleets. Not https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X19303677 According to scholars from universities and research institutes in Canada, China and the United States. (Https://tmsnrt.rs/3AyX2Jh)

Meanwhile, sustainable fish inventories plummeted from 90% of the total in 1990 to less than 66% in 2017, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations said. (Https://tmsnrt.rs/3yt6ufv)

A 2018 survey by researchers based in the United States, Canada and Australia https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/4/6/eaat2504 found that many fisheries in the high seas, or "high seas," are stateless. I found that it was not profitable. Distribution.

Daniel Pauly, a fishery biologist at the University of British Columbia, Canada, said: tuna. "This is a race to the bottom."

According to tipping, the WTO is closer to an agreement than ever before, but there are 84 locations in the draft text that have not yet agreed.

Negotiators say China can help by withdrawing opposition to high seas subsidies, and the EU can withdraw opposition to fuel subsidies as well.

Some also want to upset Washington, perhaps by withdrawing its proposal to curb forced labor. This is another cost-cutting measure that spurs overfishing.

“This is the last chance to trade," said Remi Parmentier of the Friends of Ocean Action. “Otherwise, there is an existential crisis in the WTO."

(Additional report by Philip Blenkinsop in Brussels, edited by Kevin Liffey)

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