



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

NOUAKCHOTT DECLARATION ON THE FISHERIES TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE (FiTI)

**3 February 2016
Nouakchott, Mauritania**

**Declaration adopted by the participants of the 1st International Conference
of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative**

WE, the participating Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives, with participation of representatives from international organizations, business, civil society, and other fisheries stakeholders met in Nouakchott, Mauritania, on February 3rd 2016 on the invitation of His Excellency Mohamed OULD ABDEL AZIZ, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania:

1. **RECALL** the January 2015 “Nouakchott Declaration On Transparency And Sustainable Development In Africa”, which (inter alia) announced the launch of a new transparency initiative for fisheries.

2. **WELCOME** the adoption of United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1: “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in particular Goal 14.
3. **REITERATE** that global fisheries are a critical source of jobs, food, and socio-economic development for millions of people around the world.
4. **RECALL** that fisheries are not reaching their full potential contribution to socio-economic development; that unequal access to fisheries all around the world prevents coastal communities from harvesting the full benefits of the fish in their nearby waters, while overfishing, ecosystem damage, and climate change mean this precious resource faces an even more uncertain future; and that wherever communities feel injustice at the loss of access to the benefits of their natural resources, social and political pressures may ultimately grow.
5. **RECOGNIZE** that addressing these challenges requires an approach that is simultaneously addressing the systemic lack of transparency in fisheries sector management and the lack of inclusive participation from all fisheries sector stakeholders in policy decisions and management.
6. **EMPHASIZE** that transparency on access to marine fisheries is essential to protect the rights of fishers and fishing communities, to facilitate a fisheries trade that is fair, to support healthy systems and habitats, and to ensure that in the long-run our fisheries are sustainable and responsible.
7. **RECOGNIZE** that transparent reporting of catches is vital for maintaining the quality, diversity and availability of fishery resources, ensuring that fishing is kept within sustainable limits and that decision-making is informed by the best scientific evidence available.
8. **RECOGNIZE** the important contributions of responsible large-scale and small-scale fisheries to employment, income, food and nutrition security, community, and cultural heritage.
9. **RECALL** that other major efforts to reform international fisheries governance have also emphasized the need for participation and transparency, including most notably;
 - Conduct of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1995);

- Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (1998);
 - Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2009);
 - Guidelines for the Development of National Legislation on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (UN Environment Programme, 2010);
 - Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2012);
 - Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (African Union, 2014);
 - Voluntary Guidelines for Security Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2015);
 - Common Fisheries Policy (European Union).
10. **WELCOME** the leadership of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in establishing the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) as a global multi-stakeholder initiative, which aims at enhancing responsible and sustainable fisheries through transparency and participation.
11. **NOTE** that implementation of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) supports Sustainable Development Goal 14: “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”.
12. **NOTE** that the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) approach could be gradually extended from information related to access to marine fisheries to other value chain activities.
13. **ADOPT** the following FiTI Principles as foundation for the initiative to reflect the beliefs, objectives and expectations of the FiTI Stakeholders:

Principle 1: Sustainable fisheries contribute significantly to food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable development, and therewith to national and regional political stability and increased resilience to impacts of climate change.

Principle 2: Sovereign governments are responsible for the sustainable management of fisheries, utilizing the country's national fisheries wealth for the benefit of its citizens, to promote the national interest, food and nutrition security, and equitable socio-economic development.

Principle 3: All stakeholders have important and relevant contributions to make, including governments and their agencies, large-scale and small-scale fisheries, multilateral organizations, financial organizations, investors, organized civil society, and academia.

Principle 4: Transparency is essential for responsible fisheries, as it can stimulate an active demand for accountability, contributing to improved decision-making in fisheries management.

Principle 5: Transparency is most effective when information is shared and verified through the active, free, effective, meaningful and informed participation of governments, business, civil society, scientists, and other stakeholders as equal partners, thereby allowing all stakeholders to ensure that information is credible and legitimate.

Principle 6: For transparency to be effective relevant information has to be made available in an accessible format and in a timely manner to society.

Principle 7: Increasing transparency and participation must be feasible and introduced progressively in order to ensure the wide acceptance of this initiative.

14. **WELCOME** the announcements by the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Republic of Indonesia, the Republic of Senegal – as Senegalese President Macky Sall confirmed at the conference – and the Republic of Seychelles to start the process of forming a dedicated National Multi-Stakeholder Group for the FiTI within 2016, implementing transparency in their fisheries sectors based on a participatory process.
15. **URGE** States, business, civil society, international partners, and providers of financial and technical assistance to take active steps in promoting the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) and supporting its long-term sustainability.

16. **EXPRESS** our gratitude to His Excellency Mohamed OULD ABDEL AZIZ, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, to the Government and People of Mauritania for their warm welcome and generous hospitality as well as the excellent organization of this International Conference.

Done At Nouakchott, this third Day of February, 2016.