

**Speech by the Vice President for the Opening
Ceremony of the International Secretariat of the
Fisheries Transparency Initiative in Seychelles -
Tuesday 28th May 2019 at 1000hrs**

It is my pleasure and privilege to address you today on the occasion of the launching of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) secretariat in Seychelles. This marks a milestone in our journey with this organization which is better referred to as FiTI.

Seychelles became one of the first countries to endorse FiTI at the First International Conference on the Fisheries Transparency Initiative held in Nouakchott, Mauritania, on 3rd February 2016.

Then, at the “Our Oceans Conference” in Bali in October 2018, I, on behalf of Seychelles, made an engagement to host the FiTI International Secretariat in Victoria. The Secretariat has been based in Berlin.

President Faure at the Global Conference on Sustainable Blue Economy in Nairobi, Kenya in November last year stated: I quote;

“Seychelles firmly believes that good governance, transparency and accountability are critical to sustainable development. This is why my government made a commitment to host the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) headquarters in Seychelles”.

So, it is a pleasure to see our commitment turn into reality today.

We are officially opening the offices in Seychelles, which will in time and with the support of donors, grow into the international secretariat that we all wish and deserve for FiTI.

It is also one of the first international transparency initiative headquarters to be located in the global South.

Transiting to sustainable fisheries is and will be particularly challenging in the Indian Ocean. Our Ocean is populated by numerous coastal states that differ greatly in terms of their socioeconomic context, culture and aspirations.

Tuna is an important common fisheries resource, shared among small-scale and industrial fishing fleets. The institutions we have erected to govern the exploitation of these such resources require strengthening and support.

FiTI will be an ideal tool in institutionalizing and improving the dialogue and cooperation with all bona fide stakeholders.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we all know that overexploitation of fisheries resources is both a global and a national challenge.

For too long we have been exploiting our resources beyond sustainable levels.

As the former Director General of the World Trade Organisation, Pascal Lamy said, and I quote

“We must act quickly to reverse this trend and help our oceans regenerate. But this can only be achieved if governments, business and civil society work together and if more information on fisheries is available in the public domain. The Fisheries Transparency Initiative, with its build-in multi-stakeholder orientation is a unique effort to enhance the public availability of credible information for the benefit of a more sustainable management of marine fisheries.”

FiTI is not only about contributing towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 14 but it is also about helping countries and

their citizens to gain maximum benefits of their fishery resources.

FiTI as a global multi-stakeholder initiative will complement and support other national regional and global efforts for achieving responsible fisheries governance and thereby establishing a global playing field of transparency in fisheries.

In Seychelles we already have set up a Multi-Stakeholder Group consisting of fishermen, industrial, artisanal, and sports fishermen, civil society, government and politicians. Many of you are here present.

We are planning to extend the membership from 7 to 12 members so as to be more inclusive; by adding processors, representative from Praslin fishermen, the Transparency Initiative (Seychelles) and the youth.

I believe that FiTI will reinforce the trust among all stakeholders. It is also complimentary to the government's work on advancing a sustainable Blue Economy.

We are committed to empowering all stakeholders in the fisheries industry to participate in its development and to hold the authority and decision makers accountable.

Transparency will help to combat corruption, inefficiency and wastage. It will assist governments in being more proactive and take decisions based on real and verifiable information rather than on emotions.

It is only normal that our citizens know what fisheries agreements comprise of, what are the vessels licenced, the catch, the fees paid and what is the revenue is used for. This information is often lacking in many countries and also needs to be improved here.

These efforts would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of Professor Dr. Peter Eigen, Chair, International Board of FiTI, its Director Mr. Sven Biermann and to the support of numerous international and national governments and entities.

I would like to mention among others, the World Bank, the German Government, BADEA, the FAO and ADB.

We hope that with the establishment of the International Secretariat in Seychelles the support of the international community will be reinforced as this is vital for its success in the first few years of its existence.

I am encouraged by the enthusiasm of the members of the MSG and by the commitment of all stakeholders. I take this opportunity to thank you and call upon you for the next chapter in our journey.

I thank you for your attention.