



## NEWSLETTER

### A FEW WORDS FROM PETER EIGEN

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI - pronounced "Feet-ee")!

Fisheries are a major source of livelihood in coastal countries all over the globe – as for example in Mauritania, which fishing grounds are amongst the most abundant in the world.

Good governance in the fisheries sector is key to ensure that all stakeholders receive a fair share for their marine fisheries and that those resources are managed sustainably.

Transparency is key to good governance as it enables civil society oversight and stakeholder participation. Making credible information public can certainly help improving governance in fisheries to reduce opportunities for corruption and over-fishing.

Since the announcement by His Excellency Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, to launch a new transparency initiative for fisheries in the "Nouakchott Declaration on Transparency and Sustainable Development in Africa" in January 2015, a team at the HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA Governance Platform is collaborating with the Mauritanian Government and international fisheries experts to bring this global initiative to life.



*Gerard van Balsfoort, Small Pelagic Freezer Trawler Association, Peter Eigen, HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA Governance Platform and Javier Garat, Cepesca*

Indeed, since the beginning of the conceptual phase, Mauritania has been taking a leading role in supporting the FiTI to develop this new, global initiative for fisheries.

As the FiTI is taking shape, I am very pleased that more and more countries – such as the Seychelles, Indonesia and Costa Rica – are showing interest in the initiative. The more countries will implement the FiTI, the stronger the initiative will be. Indeed, the vision is that the FiTI will play a key role in improving governance in fisheries and help maintain marine resources as a sustainable source of livelihood for coastal communities all around the world.

The strength of the FiTI lies in its powerful procedure of bringing together representatives of government, companies and civil society to one single table. I saw this again and again while being the founding chairman of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). The simple act of talking helps different parties to overcome their mutual suspicions and to concentrate on the collective challenge at hand. How can we all benefit more from our fish stocks? And how do we make sure that nobody cheats the system? In that regard, the lessons learned from global transparency initiatives have greatly inspired my vision of the FiTI.

We are keen to ensure that this initiative will build on the excellent international efforts of the last few years to increase transparency and participation in fisheries.

And by enhancing responsible and sustainable fisheries through transparency and participation, the FiTI will also contribute to the implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14: 'Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development'.

We have a lot of work ahead of us. I am hugely grateful to all the fisheries experts who attended the 1st International Advisory Group meeting of July 24th in Berlin/Germany – especially those who came from afar as Mauritania, Indonesian, the Seychelles, Costa Rica, and Washington.

For the way forward, we are proud to announce that the FAO will host our 2nd Advisory Group Meeting, which will take place in Rome/Italy on October 21st, 2015.

The overall goal is to start implementing the FiTI in a series of countries in 2016. On this journey, the 1st high-level conference of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative on December 14, 2015 in Nouakchott / Mauritania will mark an essential milestone.

Please do book these dates in your diaries! I hope to see you there.

Peter

## THE FiTI AT A GLANCE

Fisheries provide jobs, trade and protein for millions of people in coastal countries all around the world. Managed well, this renewable resource can continue to benefit the current and future generations, underpinning sustainable and inclusive economic growth and social stability.

[We are now facing the tremendous task to reform global fisheries governance in ways that support sustainable development and food security.](#)

To meet this challenge, there is increasing agreement that the way forward must address poor governance at all levels.

This includes addressing the chronic lack of transparency and participation in fisheries management. In many countries contracts are kept confidential, thus preventing oversight of who has which fishing rights, and at what cost.

Participation in key decision-making processes is often limited, especially for civil society.

The need for transparency and participation is central to major fisheries reform efforts, including: the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (FAO; 2015); the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (FAO; 2012); and the Guidelines for the Development of National Legislation on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (UNEP; 2010).

Yet, progress has been limited and inconsistent. This is partly because no global consensus exists on which information should be made publicly available. Important policy agreements and guidelines refer to transparency reforms in general terms, but do not specify the details.

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) is a global multi-stakeholder initiative, which aims at enhancing responsible and sustainable fisheries through transparency and participation.

**Transparency:** The FiTI will produce reliable, publicly-accessible and generally-accepted information in form of regular country reports as a product of a consultative process. The provision of such country reports will be based on a coherent framework, which is currently being developed by the FiTI Secretariat, supported by an International Advisory Group.

**Participation:** The FiTI will enhance the credibility of this information through a deliberative process, which involves all major stakeholder groups (i.e. government, companies, civil society). Over time, this approach will help establish a trust-based, consensus-oriented multi-stakeholder environment for collective action.

Increased transparency and multi-stakeholder participation provide a credible basis for national debate. They also create positive competition amongst countries and companies to enhance responsible fisheries.

The FiTI is now in its conceptual phase. A detailed framework (the so-called FiTI Standard) is being developed by the FiTI Secretariat, which is currently supported by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

This framework will build on and support existing efforts that seek to strengthen transparency and participation in fisheries. It will define:

- What information should be made public;
- How transparency can be achieved; and
- How the initiative will be governed.

Cornerstones of this initiative are the FiTI Principles, which reflect the beliefs and aims of all FiTI Stakeholders. The FiTI Standard is being developed in close consultation with an International FiTI Advisory Group.

This high-level multi-stakeholder group consists of renowned fisheries and governance experts from governments, companies and civil society. The group advises the FiTI Secretariat on strategic directions regarding the overall framework.

The **core characteristics** of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) are:

- The FiTI is a **global initiative**. The initiative does not focus on a single country or a region/continent. It seeks to establish a global level playing field among fisheries countries. The more participating countries, the more powerful this initiative will get!
- The **implementation of the FiTI is country-centered**. The intention to join the FiTI and the initiation of the official process must come from a country's government. For this, a country's government must demonstrate active support for the implementation of the FiTI. This includes – inter alia – the commitment to an enabling environment, the establishment of a National Multi-Stakeholder Group and the publication of timely information.
- The FiTI is a **voluntary initiative with mandatory requirements**. The implementation of the FiTI is voluntary; however, once a country has decided to participate, mandatory requirements must be followed.
- The FiTI is built on a **multi-stakeholder governance**, ensuring that stakeholders from government, companies and civil society are equally represented.
- This multi-stakeholder governance will be applied at an international level through an International **Multi-Stakeholder Board** as well as in all participating countries through **National Multi-Stakeholder Groups**.
- The FiTI will provide clear procedural guidelines for gathering, verifying and disclosing relevant information on fisheries. A key deliverable of this process is the timely publication of a **FiTI Country Report**.

## THE FiTI WELCOMES SDG 14 ON THE CONSERVATION OF THE OCEANS

The FiTI welcomes the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably SDG 14 on the conservation of the oceans. Adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in New York, 25-27 September 2015, those SDGs shall determine global course of action to end poverty, promote prosperity and well-being for all, protect the environment and address climate change.

The strong focus on oceans and fisheries of the SDGs reflects the increasing awareness of the international community regarding the importance of oceans for sustainable development. In fact, in many countries, fish assume an important role for the population's food security and livelihood.

By enhancing responsible and sustainable fisheries through transparency and participation, the FiTI seeks to contribute to the implementation of SDG 14: 'Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development'.

The FiTI supports the implementation of SDG 14 in several aspects (and particularly the targets 14.4, 14.7 and 14.b on the protection of fish stocks and equal access to fisheries):

- By increasing transparency on access to marine fisheries, the FiTI will support the identification of information gaps, regulatory shortcomings and corruption hampering the implementation of science-based fisheries management plans. Moreover, the goal of the FiTI is that this information will enable fisheries industries' stakeholders to fight unsustainable practices such as overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

- By increasing participation, the FiTI also supports small-scale and artisanal fishers. As a multi-stakeholder initiative, the FiTI gives equal weight to all groups of stakeholders of the fisheries industry: government, companies, civil society. Artisanal fisheries are major beneficiaries of this approach, as they often lack a voice in fisheries management decision due to unavailable discussion platforms and lack of credible information. Hence, increased transparency and multi-stakeholder participation will provide a credible basis for national debate on access to fisheries.

Conserving and using the oceans, seas and marine resources sustainably must be a priority for sustainable development. During its implementation starting in 2016, the FiTI seeks to play a key role in improving governance in fisheries and help maintain marine fisheries as a sustainable source of livelihood for coastal communities all around the world.

*„Responsible management of natural resources is key for sustainable development. Transparency has been proven to be a central element to support good governance and lead to more accountability, which is desperately needed in order to ensure equal access and fair distribution of natural resource wealth. This is true for extractives like oil, gas and minerals as well as for marine resources including fisheries.“ Peter Eigen.*

**An extended version of the article is available at [www.fisheriestransparency.org](http://www.fisheriestransparency.org)**



## 1ST ADVISORY GROUP MEETING CONDUCTED IN BERLIN



Bread for the World, Cepesca, the CAOPA, the Environmental Justice Foundation, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, Greenpeace, the Long Distance Advisory Council, Oceana, the Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association and WWF.

His Excellency Sid'Ahmed Raïss, Minister for Economic Affairs and Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, welcomed the participants and reiterated the commitment of Mauritania to support the conceptual phase of the FiTI and take a leading role in implementing this global initiative.

The meeting informed participants about the current status of the initiative. Participants also discussed the value of transparency and participation for responsible and sustainable fisheries and how the Fisheries Transparency Initiative could help achieving this.

At the end of the meeting, the participants discussed the next steps for the FiTI, especially with regards to the 2nd International Advisory Group meeting in October and the 1st International Conference of the FiTI, which is to take place in Nouakchott/Mauritania on December 14th, 2015.

**Download the report of the meeting at [www.fisheriestransparency.org](http://www.fisheriestransparency.org)**

The 1st International Advisory Group Meeting of the FiTI took place on July 24th in Berlin / Germany. It was hosted and conducted by the HUMBOLDT VIADRINA Governance Platform, the organization acting as the International Secretariat for the Initiative. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Dr. Peter Eigen, Chair of the FiTI Advisory Group.

The Secretariat welcomed over 25 participants, including senior government representatives from Costa Rica, Indonesia, Mauritania and the Seychelles, from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, GIZ,

## INTERVIEW WITH H.E. SID'AHMED RAÏSS MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT, MAURITANIA



With some of the world's most abundant fishing grounds along its 600km coastline separating the Atlantic Ocean from the Sahara Desert, Mauritania has great hopes that the new Fisheries Transparency Initiative will help the country improve its fisheries management by making the sector more transparent. This is what His Excellency Sid'Ahmed Raïss, Minister for Economic Affairs and Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania said in an interview conducted after the 1st International Advisory Group Meeting of the FiTI.

When His Excellency Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, announced the launch of a new Fisheries Transparency Initiative in the Nouakchott Declaration in January 2015, he was aware of the challenges at stake. "The fisheries sector is a very important industry in Mauritania", H.E. Sid' Ahmed Raïss said. "The sector represents 40% of the country's exports and 25% of the budget revenue".

For the population fisheries is an important source of livelihood. In fact, a large part of the population works in fisheries-related activities and women play an important role in the sector, the Minister stated. Beyond the economic aspect, the minister also highlighted the importance of fish for food security, in a country where an estimated 42% of the population still live below the poverty line.

And Mauritania wants to increase even more the share of the fisheries sector in the economy: "Mauritania wants to benefit more from its fisheries and to link this sector to its wider sustainable development efforts," H.E. Sid'Ahmed Raïss said. The economic reforms intended by the Mauritanian Government – which include increased landing and processing capacity – will treble the number of fishery jobs to 120,000 within five years, he added.

Yet, in the long-term, the Minister is aware that only a sustainable management of the country's marine resources will enable Mauritania and its population to continue benefiting from them.

Improving governance is also necessary to fight illegal fishing and prevent the overexploitation of our marine resources, he said. "Our economic reforms will mean nothing if our fisheries sector is not sustainable," Minister Raïss continued. In the light of these challenges, Mauritania expects that the FiTI will increase transparency regarding the way resources are used, the Minister stated. "The credible information released by the FiTI will help Mauritania to understand how it can benefit most from its fisheries and maintain fishing at sustainable levels," he said.

As a former central bank governor and Minister of Finance, H.E. Raïss also knows as the publication of this information will help reassure foreign investors and international organizations supporting Mauritania's sustainable development.

"More transparency means more responsibility", he concluded. "By helping us to manage and protect our fisheries resources, the FiTI is a very good initiative for Africa and for the future generations. Mauritania is very committed to implement it."

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## THE FiTI IN THE NEWS

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- "Fighting Corruption in Mauritania's Iron, Gold, Oil and Fisheries Sectors", The World Post, 26 August 2015
- "Liar's Poker in Africa: How Hidden Agendas Drive the Politics of Fish in Mauritania", The World Post, 25 August 2015
- "The Professor, the General, and the World's Fishiest Business", Foreign Policy, 5 August 2015
- "Greenpeace Calls for End of Private Fishing Deals in West Africa, Questions E.U. Food Security Claims", Huffpost Green, 3 August 2015
- "Berlin meeting shapes initiative on fisheries transparency", Edward Harris, 30 July 2015
- "Progress with the Fisheries Transparency Initiative?", Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements - Coalition pour des Accords de Peche Equitables, 30 July 2015 (French/English)
- "Berlin meeting shapes initiative on fisheries transparency", Edward Harris, 30 July 2015
- "Transparency Advocate: Mauritania's Fishing Sector Still Opaque", The World Post, 30 July 2015

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## THE FiTI ON THE SEAS

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### January 2016

- The FiTI Secretariat will conduct its third International Advisory Group meeting (tbc).

### December 2015

- 14 December 2015: The Islamic Republic of Mauritania will host the 1st International Conference of the FiTI, Nouakchott/Mauritania.

### October 2015

- 26-28 October: The FiTI Secretariat will be in Senegal to promote the FiTI. Amongst others, the Secretariat will meet members of the Senegalese Government, international organizations which are active in Senegal; civil society organizations; as well as artisanal fisheries organizations.
- 21 October: The FiTI Secretariat will conduct the 2nd International Advisory Group meeting, Rome/Italy (hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations).
- 04-07 October: The FiTI Secretariat conducted its 2nd country visit to Mauritania. The Secretariat met Government representatives; international organizations which are active in Mauritania; as well as Mauritanian civil society organizations.

### September 2015

- 17 September 2015: The FiTI was presented at the conference of the Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC) on "The External Dimension as a driver for change", Las Palmas de Gran Canaria/Spain.
- 4 September 2015: The FiTI was presented at the "International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC)", Putrajaya/Malaysia, at a panel on global multi-stakeholder transparency initiatives.

### July 2015

- 24 July 2015: The FiTI Secretariat conducted the 1st International Advisory Group meeting, Berlin/Germany.

### April 2015

- 16 April 2015: FiTI was presented at the World Bank's Spring Meeting event "Improving livelihoods and creating wealth through sustainable fisheries", Washington D.C./United States.

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