

Minister of Economy and Finance

S.E. EL Moctar OULD DJAY

Nouakchott/ Mauritania

19 December 2018

Candidate application of Mauritania to the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)

You Excellency,

Dear Minister Ould Djay,

On 12 December 2018, I received the official Candidate Application of Mauritania to the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI). With this, Mauritania became the first country to submit its Candidate Application to the FiTI International Board. This is an important milestone for the FiTI, to which Mauritania has shown support from the beginning.

The application was presented at the 5th meeting of the International Board by Ms. Nedwa Nech, Member of the FiTI International Board (stakeholder group: Civil Society) and Member of Mauritania's National Multi-Stakeholder Group¹. The meeting took place on 12-13 December in Berlin/Germany. After important deliberations within the Board, I am pleased to announce that the Board approved this Candidate Application, making Mauritania the first country to be granted the status of a **FiTI Candidate** country. The Board was pleased with the thoroughness of the Candidate application, which reflects the conscientious and hard work that the FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group invested in the FiTI sign-up step process (in accordance with the FiTI Standard, Section A). The Board also recognised the transparency around the sign-up step process, e.g. by making all important documents publicly available on ministerial websites. The completion of these sign-up requirements now lays strong foundations for Mauritania to embark on the next step of the FiTI process: undergo regular assessments on the accessibility and completeness of information in the public domain for all transparency requirements set forth in the FiTI Standard. Through this, the FiTI will support Mauritania's national authorities to develop and strengthen their own systems for collating and publishing information online in a complete and accessible manner.

On behalf of the Board, I wish to extend my congratulations to you and the FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group for this significant achievement.

¹ In accordance with the FiTI Global Code of Conduct, Ms. Nedwa Nech did not participate in the decision-making process regarding Mauritania's application.

Kindly allow me, however, to bring two important matters to your attention that were raised during the deliberations of the International Board regarding Mauritania's Candidate application.

First, the Board raised concerns about the composition of the Business stakeholder group within the FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group, which only comprises representatives from the Fédération Nationale des Pêches (FNP).

The FiTI Standard (*Section A.4. – FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group*) states that for each stakeholder group represented on the FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group, *“it is encouraged that the nomination process considers the desirability of pluralistic and diverse representation.”*

Whilst the National Multi-Stakeholder Group intended to include all segments of the Mauritanian fisheries sector, it justified its decision to only include representatives from this one federation with the argument that the FNP is the only organisation that is registered within the employers' organisation in Mauritania². However, the International Board argued that, based on the Principle of inclusiveness that is at the heart of the FiTI, the nomination process to a National Multi-Stakeholder Group should include all professional organisations, regardless of whether they have received an official accreditation from the country's government.

Based on this discussion, the International Board requested the **following two modifications** to be implemented by Mauritania:

- (1) The current composition of the business stakeholder group (as shown in the list of National Multi-Stakeholder Group Members)³ must be amended and opened to representatives from other professional fisheries organisations in Mauritania. This must be completed within 2019; and**
- (2) For the remaining business representatives that are affiliated to the FNP, their original organisation must be stated in addition (e.g. [Name of organisation], a member of FNP).**

Second, the Board was discontent with the late arrival of this Candidate Application, as it was only received on the eve of the meeting. This short period did not allow Board members to review the Candidate Application in detail and obtain additional information from their constituencies. Given the noticeable efforts of Mauritania in fulfilling the sign-up steps and the fact that (except for the composition of the National Multi-Stakeholder Group, as mentioned above) no Board Member had substantial concerns about Mauritania completing the six sign-up steps in accordance with the FiTI Standard, the Board decided not to postpone the decision on Mauritania's Status and to officialise its status of a FiTI Candidate country. However, this should be seen as exceptional

² Candidate Application of Mauritania, page 10

³ See “Liste des membres du Groupe National Multipartite » to be found at <http://www.peches.gov.mr/documents-fiti> (last accessed 18 December 2018)

circumstances to encourage Mauritania to continue its efforts on its path to becoming FiTI compliant.

Based on this, the Board decided that for the future, all countries submit their Candidate Application at least one week before a FiTI International Board meeting. If this deadline is not met, the decision on the application will be postponed to the following Board meeting.

Excellency, once again I wish to extend the congratulations of the FiTI International Board to you and all FiTI actors in Mauritania for this achievement, which is an important first step of Mauritania towards achieving and maintaining high levels of transparency on the management of the marine fisheries sector and the activities of fishers and fishing companies.

According to the FiTI Standard, *the National MSG must publish their first FiTI Report within the subsequent year of becoming a FiTI Candidate country (FiTI Standard, Section B.2.2)*. We are therefore looking forward to continuing working with you for this next phase of the FiTI and are excited to receive Mauritania's first FiTI Report within 2019 (containing information from 2018).

I wish you a lot of success for the continuation of the process.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Peter Eigen
Chair of the FiTI International Board