

For Immediate Release

## Valeria Merino appointed as new Chair of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)

**Berlin/Victoria – 28 October 2019.** The International Board of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) appointed today Dr. Valeria Merino as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chair of the FiTI. She will serve for an initial term of 3 years, starting 01 January 2020, succeeding Prof. Dr. Peter Eigen, who initiated the FiTI and served as its Founding Chair since April 2014.

Valeria Merino, born in Ecuador and currently living in Washington D.C., has devoted the last 30 years of her professional career to achieving system change in areas such as transparency, anti-corruption, democracy, and sustainable development.

“I am honoured by this opportunity and would like to thank the International Board and Peter Eigen for their trust in me. The sustainability of our fisheries is an existential issue for humanity and the planet. I strongly believe that public availability of credible information is critical, and I am looking forward to working with all stakeholders to accelerate the growth of the initiative and make the FiTI the preeminent global network for the publication of baseline national fisheries data” said Dr. Merino.

Under Peter Eigen’s leadership, the Fisheries Transparency Initiative released the FiTI Standard, a global agreement that defines for the first-time what information on fisheries should be published online by public authorities. Several countries already joined the initiative and started to implement its requirements, with Mauritania becoming the first country to reach the status of a FiTI Candidate country last year.

“It has been an honour and a privilege to lead this initiative, which is now more crucial than ever. Global fisheries are a critical source of jobs, food & nutrition, and trade for millions of people around the world. But global fisheries face a variety of tremendous challenges, which we must address in a collective effort by bringing governments, business, civil society, academia, and media together on this important quest. The FiTI helps countries to overcome these challenges by providing internationally recognized procedures to achieve and maintain high levels of transparency on the management of the marine fisheries sector and the activities of fishers and fishing companies,” said Peter Eigen. “I am delighted to hand over the initiative at the end of the year into Valeria’s very capable hands and would like to express my sincere gratitude to all members of the International Board and the International Secretariat for their tireless efforts in making this idea a reality.”

### About the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) is a global, voluntary multi-stakeholder initiative that seeks to increase transparency and participation in fisheries governance for the benefit of a more sustainable management of marine fisheries and the well-being of citizens and businesses that depend on the marine environment.

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