

PRESS RELEASE:

Ecuador becomes the first country in Latin America to join the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)

For immediate publication

March 11, 2022. Ecuador sets a new precedent by becoming the first country in Latin America to join the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI). This public commitment was announced today by the Vice-Minister of Aquaculture and Fisheries, Andrés Arens J.D., at an event organized by the Ecuadorian Government in the city of Manta.

The country's commitment was previously transmitted by the Minister of Production, Foreign Trade, Investments, and Fisheries, Mgs. Julio José Prado Lucio-Paredes, via a letter addressed to Dr. Valeria Merino, Chair of the FiTI International Board. In this communication, the Government of Ecuador declared its interest in implementing the FiTI Standard, which aligns with their administration's objectives to increase transparency and participation within the fishing sector.

Ecuadorian fishing activities generate annually more than 1,600 million dollars in exports, more than 250 thousand direct and indirect jobs, and contribute to food security. Through this commitment, Ecuador seeks to promote enhanced public access to information in the fishing sector in order for the sector to continue benefiting its citizens. Ecuador's unequivocal objective is to improve fisheries transparency through a participatory process involving the different actors in the sector, in accordance with the principles of FiTI.

On behalf of the Ecuadorian Government, Vice-Minister Arens J.D. emphasized that *"being part of the FiTI reinforces the importance that transparency is a value that is not presumed, but demonstrated. As a government, we reiterate our commitment to manage fisheries in a responsible and transparent manner."* Likewise, he emphasized *"this efforts will mark a before and after in Ecuador's fisheries administration."*

During the event, Dr. Valeria Merino, Chair of the FiTI International Board, expressed, *"on behalf of the FiTI, and as an Ecuadorian by birth, I am delighted that Ecuador has become a leader in the region by adhering to our initiative. I trust that the authorities' commitment, together with the contribution of the private sector and civil society, will improve the levels of*

transparency contributing to more sustainable fishing in Ecuador, for the benefit of all Ecuadorians and the planet."

Likewise, on behalf of Conservation International Ecuador, a partner of the FiTI in the country, CI-Ecuador's Vice-President Mr. Luis Suárez highlighted *"the importance of transparency in promoting sustainable fisheries, and, at the same time, combating illegal fishing"*.

As the first country in Latin America to commit to the FiTI, Ecuador takes the lead in the region as a defender of fisheries transparency in a context where the sector faces significant and existential threats. The FiTI International Secretariat, in coordination with Conservation International Ecuador, will continue providing technical guidance to Ecuador to ensure that the process of the country's candidate application to the FiTI can be completed in due time.

For interviews, please contact:

Dr. Valeria Merino Dirani, Chair of the FiTI International Board

Phone: +1 202 250 0376

E-mail: vmerino@fiti.global

Twitter: @FisheriesTI

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/valeriamerino/>

For more information, please contact

Mr. Nicolás Rovegno, Regional Coordinator for Latin America

International Headquarters: Providence / Seychelles

c/o Lima – Peru

Phone: +51 942 611 923

E-mail: nrovegno@fiti.global

Web: <http://www.fiti.global>

Twitter: @FisheriesTI