

# PRESS RELEASE



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## **Civil society groups launch Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency at 2023 Our Ocean conference**

*The launch of the Charter by the Coalition for Fisheries Transparency lays out a new roadmap to advance marine governance around the world.*

Panama City, Panama – [The Coalition for Fisheries Transparency](#) - a new international community of civil society organizations - today launched the [Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency](#). The Charter pinpoints the most essential policy priorities needed to combat fisheries mismanagement, illegal fishing, and human rights abuses at sea. Experts, ministers, and delegates from international organizations and companies around the world discussed the benefits of the Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency at [Our Ocean conference](#) in Panama this Thursday and Friday – an annual meeting for countries, civil society and industry to announce significant actions to safeguard the world’s oceans.

*“Ghana recognizes the critical role that transparency plays in the fight against illegal fishing to protect livelihoods and provide food security to our coastal communities,” said Hon. Mavis Hawa Koomson, Ghana’s Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development. “With the significant progress Ghana has made in the last year on ending harmful fishing practices that have encouraged illegal fishing in our waters, we are now working towards making greater efforts towards sustaining fisheries transparency in Ghana.”*

Prof. Maxine Burkett, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans, Fisheries and Polar Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, highlighted how the U.S. plays a leading role in increasing transparency in global fisheries.

*“Last year, President Biden released a National Security Memorandum that recognizes the importance of transparency for combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and associated forced labor abuses,” she said. “By enhancing productive information-sharing, the Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency will serve as an important complement to the U.S. government’s activities to end IUU fishing through improving fisheries and ocean governance, increasing enforcement efforts, and raising ambition to end IUU fishing globally.”*

Additionally, global partnership initiatives, like the [Fisheries Transparency Initiative \(FITI\)](#), emphasized the importance of equal, multi-stakeholder collaboration to increase transparency in coastal countries for achieving sustainably managed marine fisheries.

*“Given the complexity of fisheries governance, multiple transparency efforts are needed to address the various challenges of unsustainable marine fisheries, such as overfishing, IUU fishing, unequal access to fisheries resources, and unfair benefit sharing,”* said Dr. Valeria Merino, Chair of the International Board of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI). *“The 10 principles of the Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency recognize the need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to fisheries transparency, and has the potential to support existing global endeavors, such as the FiTI, through a much-needed mobilization of civil society organizations to ensure that marine fishing activities are legal, ethical, and sustainable.”*

Finally, the role of the civil society to maximize collective impact to improve transparency has been underlined by Mr. Wakao Hanaoka, Chief Executive Officer of Seafood Legacy (Japan), and a steering committee member of the Coalition for Fisheries Transparency. *“Our membership in the Coalition for Fisheries Transparency represents a voice of an international community that allows us to strengthen and amplify our efforts amongst the seafood industry and government towards achieving our goal of making Japan a global leader in environmental sustainability and social responsibility,”* he explained.

The Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency lays out a new roadmap to advance marine governance internationally, by providing a set of advocacy principles that are both effective and achievable by all stakeholders involved in fisheries governance and management.

*“Continuous advocacy efforts by civil society organizations are critical to improving fisheries governance internationally as well as protecting the ocean and the people who depend on its resources,”* commented Maisie Pigeon, Director of the Coalition for Fisheries Transparency. *“The Coalition’s mission to deliver an urgent shift towards greater transparency in fisheries will be achieved through supporting our members in developing joint strategies, harmonizing and strengthening efforts, and finally - closing transparency policy gaps in fisheries governance,”* she concluded.

Through civil society organizations from around the world, the Coalition for Fisheries Transparency calls on governments to apply the Charter’s principles in legislation and practice.