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## OVERFISHING: CITIZENS IN LATAM/SOUTH PACIFIC SEE ECONOMIC CASE FOR CHANGE

PORT MORESBY/GUAYAQUIL: Overfishing is not merely an environmental concern - it's a pressing economic issue and is seen as such by citizens in developing countries on opposite ends of the world.

That was the conclusion of public opinion research released today by Clearpath on behalf of Accountability.Fish, a recently-launched global campaign to refocus international fisheries management towards economic and environmental sustainability. The research included surveys in the South Pacific and Latin American regions, and focus groups in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, and Guayaquil, Ecuador.

"Mismanaged fisheries are a threat to people's jobs, livelihoods, and long-term wellbeing, according to participants. Respondents in both Latin America and the South Pacific show overfishing and illegal fishing are serious economic threats. People view fisheries as important natural resources that should benefit everyone, not just a select few, said Ryan Orgera, Global Director of Accountability.Fish." Moreover, fisheries management requires an economic framework that enables all residents to benefit equitably for generations to come."

It's important to note that comparable numbers of participants are struggling to meet their daily needs: 39% in Latin America and 41% in the South Pacific. In focus groups in Papua New Guinea, residents report "even graduates are roaming the streets looking for employment opportunities," said John Garrett, Founder and Partner at ClearPath Strategies. In Ecuador, many people are "not currently employed. We're barely living, making ends meet."

[\*\*A memo with more findings from ClearPath can be found here.\*\*](#)

Garrett explained: "Overfishing is not only a massive environmental problem, but a massive economic problem as well. This research demonstrates that residents in the South Pacific and Latin America view fish as a valuable natural resource. They also recognize fishing is under threat from overfishing and illegal fishing. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing has led to massive declines in fish stocks



within the national exclusive economic zones (EEZs) which include the coastal fisheries that the surveyed countries are most dependent on economically.”

Orgera noted that the findings underscore the case for a citizen movement to refocus the current process for management of international fisheries towards economically and environmentally sustainable policies and away from the current stranglehold industrial fishing interests have over the current regime.

“People understand the environmental threat to fisheries. Overfishing, illegal fishing—these are massive problems, and people see it.

Sustainable fishing is not just about the environment. “It’s about the economy and people’s livelihoods. And not just for fishers. Coastal and inland communities alike are affected—truck drivers, canners, market vendors, grocery workers, boat repair and maintenance services, chefs, restaurant workers, and many more. The unsustainable mismanagement of fisheries causes severe economic harm to people already struggling to provide for their families, whether they are a fishing community or not, and we want to change this script before it’s too late,” said Orgera.

### **RESEARCH APPROACH**

*On behalf of Accountability.Fish, ClearPath Strategies conducted this two-part public opinion study on fisheries management in Latin America and the southern Pacific. ClearPath Strategies is a research-driven strategic partner to leaders and progressive organizations around the world and employs decades of experience in campaign strategy to solve their most pressing challenges. Part 1 of the Accountability.Fish/ClearPath study consisted of focus groups in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea and Guayaquil, Ecuador in June, 2022. Part 2 consisted of a face-to-face survey across the South Pacific (Papua New Guinea, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Cook Islands) from July-August 2022, as well as a mixed mode online and face-to-face survey across Latin America (Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and Panama) in August 2022.*