

**BELIZE'S SUBMISSION FOR CO-OPERATING NON-MEMBER
STATUS OF THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC
FISHERIES COMMISSION DATED 29TH AUGUST 2005**

For the attention of: **Mr. Glenn Hurry – Chairman**
 Jacinta Innes - Senior Policy Officer

Further to our recent correspondence, we hereby wish to formally apply for Co-operating Non-Member Status. In so doing, we are guided by Article 32 of the Convention as well as the procedures for becoming a Co-operating Non-Member which were forwarded to us by Jacinta Innes on 24th June 2005.

1. It is our intention to become a Contracting Party to the Convention in about one year after being accepted as a Co-operating non-Contracting Party.
2. This Application is submitted on 29th August 2005 which is in excess of 90 days in advance of the annual meeting of the Commission which will take place 5th - 16th December 2005.
3. We hereby confirm Belize's commitment to cooperate fully in the implementation of conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission and to ensure that fishing vessels flying our flag and fishing in the Convention Area and, to the greatest extent possible, our nationals comply with the provisions of the Convention and conservation and management measures adopted under it.

In this regard, we wish to inform you that:

- 3.1 This commitment is part of our overall policy to comply with the requirements of all RFMOs in whose areas we have a presence. This is evidenced by the fact that in recent years, we have been cooperating with ICCAT of which we are now a Contracting Party, IATTC, IOTC, NEAFC. Furthermore, Belize is an active member of the following organizations: FAO, CRFM (Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism), OSPESCA (Organizacion del Sector Pesquero y Acuicola del Istmo Centroamericano), OLDEPESCA (Organizacion Latinoamerica de Desarrollo Pesquero), PROARCA (Programa

Ambiental Regional para Centroamerica), COPACO (Comision de Pesca para el Atlantico Centro Occidental). Also,

- The International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) is dedicated to providing “an efficient, cost effective quality ship registration service and to enforce national laws and international Conventions which have been ratified by Belize in the interests of safety at sea and the protection of the environment.” It is a Gold Corporate sponsor of Belize’s Audubon Society which became the first Belizean member of the World Conservation Union, the world’s largest environment organization, based in Switzerland.
- The Fisheries Department of our Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Cooperatives is committed “to provide the country and the people of Belize with the best possible management of aquatic and fisheries resources with a view to optimize the present and future benefits through efficient and sustainable management.”
- Belize has issued instruments of adherence/acceptance of:
 - The 1993 FAO “Compliance Agreement”
 - The 1995 Fish Stocks Agreement
 - The International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

Also, in accordance with Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Article VI of the FAO “Compliance Agreement”, we have sent to the FAO our detailed list of all fishing vessels operating worldwide.

2.2 The principal measures which we have taken to ensure compliance by our vessels and their Owners/Operators are as follows:

- Our High Seas Fishing Act of 2003embodies the requirements of the 1993 FAO Compliance Agreement, the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, the U.N. Fish Stocks Agreement insofar as these relate to the Flag State in relation to its High Seas Fleet and Co-operation with other States in this regard. Briefly, the Act provides for:

- Part III Section 4: the mandatory licensing of all high seas vessels in compliance with the abovementioned Agreements
- Section 3(2): the “monitoring, control and surveillance of the operations of fishing vessels of Belize pursuant to Articles V and VII of the Compliance Agreement.”
- Part IV: International Co-operation which includes the provision of information to international organizations as well as the exchange of information with other States in compliance with Articles V and VI of the Compliance Agreement, Sections 28-32 of the IPOA as well as Articles 20 and 21 of the Fish Stocks Agreement.
- Part V: Enforcement of the Act which incorporates the provisions of the Merchant Ships (Disciplinary Regulations 1999) S.I. Number 56 of 1999. This enables us to impose fines, suspend or revoke fishing licenses, prohibit a vessel from sailing, to board, search and confiscate gear and catches, to request security for release of a vessel, to deregister a vessel and to take other measures/penalties in cases of any breach of this Act or other applicable national or international Conventions/Agreements.
- Part IV: Prohibitions and Offences which, inter alia, prohibits activities which undermine the effectiveness of international conservation and management measures.
- **Fishing Vessel Licensing**
In addition to compliance with the requirements of the Registration of Merchant Ships Act as amended in 1996, the Registration of Merchant Ships (Fishing Vessels of 24 meters in length and above) Safety Regulations, all new registrations as well as fishing vessels which are already registered are required to apply for a High Seas Fishing License by completing the relevant Application Form detailing, inter alia, a description of the vessel, its fishing gear, area of fishing, the species targeted, method of processing etc. Vessels which wish to fish in breach of conservation measures or for species for which Belize has no catch quotas in areas where quotas apply, are not registered or licensed. Furthermore, the High Seas Fishing

License itself specifies as a condition that “Vessel has not and shall not engage in any activities which may undermine the effectiveness of International Conservation and Management Measures applicable to the authorized area of fishing.” All licenses are valid for one year. Renewal is dependent upon the license holder having adhered to all conditions of this license.

- **Vessel Monitoring (VMS)**

We have successfully implemented VMS Reporting on our fishing vessels. It is based on Inmarsat, utilizing Inmarsat C, Inmarsat Mini-C and Inmarsat D+ equipment. Our provider is Pole Star Space Applications Limited who utilize an automatic, real time, internet based service called Purple Finder Vessel Management Solutions. This reporting system complies with the recommendations of conservation organizations such as ICCAT.

- **Catch and Effort Reporting**

Fishing vessel Owners/operators are required to submit data of their fishing operations based on our format for such reporting which includes a detailed Fishing Log showing information regarding positions, time/dates, catches, discards etc. as well as a Fishing Vessel Voyage Report showing dates, quantities and species unloaded, names of ports or details of transshipment.

- **Inspection Schemes and Compliance**

For purpose of ensuring compliance, we have a system of surveillance conducted by random inspections or as a result of an investigation by: boarding at sea or in port, plant checks, observer teams, requesting the assistance of other Governments/organizations as necessary.

- **Overseas Offices/Inspectors**

In the exercise of our regulatory and enforcement functions, the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) Head Office in Belize City is supported by its 29 offices overseas as well as a team of 182 inspectors worldwide.

We believe that the above demonstrates not only our commitment to but also our effective implementation of conservation and management measures.

4. In Attachment 1, you will find full data of our historical fisheries in the Convention Area for the year in which the Convention entered into force, 2004. These data include nominal catches, number/type of vessels, name of fishing vessels, fishing effort and fishing areas.
5. Please advise, as soon as possible, if there are any other data which you require.
6. In Attachment 2, you will find details of our current fishing presence in the Convention Area, including the number of our vessels and their characteristics.
7. We have not conducted any research program in the Convention Area hitherto.
8. Please advise as soon as possible if there is any other relevant information required by the Commission.

Finally, we wish to inform you that we have expended much time, effort and resources in order to properly regulate our fishery. At the same time, we wish to emphasize that the funds derived from our fishing activity are an important source of income/foreign exchange for our small, developing nation. We therefore look to your organization to support us by granting Belize Co-operating non-Contracting Party Status.

Yours sincerely,

Angelo Mouzouropoulos FICS, FCI Arb.
Director-General
International Merchant Marine Registry
of Belize (IMMARBE)

Beverly Wade
Fisheries Administrator
Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries