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PRESS RELEASE

Belize Fisheries Council Inaugurated

Belmopan. July 5, 2021. 1:30 p.m.

The Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation, headed by Hon. Andre Perez, held the inaugural meeting of the Belize Fisheries Council. The council serves as an advisory body to the ministry on all areas related to fisheries and fisheries management.

The Belize Fisheries Council is focused on improving coordination for the sustainable growth of the fisheries sector of the nation's blue economy and overall economic development.

“Every decision we make is based on the science of the blue economy geared at sustainable development to benefit all now and for the years to come,” said Minister Perez. “The council is critical for our success as it brings together all sectors and most importantly our stakeholders who earn their livelihoods from the fisheries sector making recommendations and guiding policies for the use and management of our marine resources.”

The main responsibilities of the Fisheries Council include:

- matters relating to the conservation, management, use and development of fisheries;
- the development and implementation of comprehensive fisheries policies;
- the monitoring and review including the evaluation of conservation guidelines and ecosystem-based management measures;
- consideration and review of fisheries management plans; and
- the coordination of fisheries policies with government departments and agencies including joint venture agreements.

The 10-member council is chaired by Kennedy Carrillo, chief executive officer in the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation. It includes

representation from government agencies, fisherfolk and fishing cooperatives, nongovernmental organizations, civil society, academia and researchers/fisheries. Sectors represented include the Ministry of Blue Economy, Fisheries Department, Belize Coastal Zone Management and Authority, economists from the Ministry of Economic Development, technocrats from the tourism, environment and conservation public sector, marine researchers, resource users and stakeholders, environment and conservation management.

The first virtual gathering reviewed the progress towards the Blue Economy Strategic Management Plan being derived via a consultative approach with partners such as the United Kingdom Government with technical assistance from UK experts, the Inter-American Development Bank, local and international NGOs, World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, MarFund, and most importantly, fisherfolk associations and cooperatives in Belize.

The Belize Fisheries Council is legally enshrined in the Fisheries Resources Act (FRA) No. 7 of 2020, which was legislated on January 30, 2020, and the Commencement Order came into effect on February 14, 2020. The council meets monthly with the next meeting slated for August 9, 2021.

Ends