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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Belize Files for Advisory Opinion to UNCLOS**

*Belmopan, June 16, 2023.*

The Government of Belize has filed a submission for an Advisory Opinion to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The Advisory Opinion sought from ITLOS aims to allow states and international organizations to seek non-binding legal advice on issues related to the interpretation and application of UNCLOS, providing an important avenue for promoting cooperation in the maritime domain. This legal mechanism will help Belize navigate the complex intersection of environmental protection, sustainable development, and international law. The Advisory Opinion will provide Belize with adequate support to make informed decisions and implement effective policies to safeguard the health of its marine resources under international law and ensure a sustainable future for its people.

Belize's legal position as a vulnerable state, whose marine ecosystem and UNESCO world heritage site are significantly affected by climate change, is of critical importance. By seeking an Advisory Opinion from ITLOS, Belize aims to solidify its legal standing and ensure the preservation of its rights and interests under international law. As part of the updated Nationally Determined Contributions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Belize has integrated ambitious plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience in various sectors. These efforts demonstrate Belize's commitment to addressing climate change and contributing to global efforts to limit global temperature rise, "1.5 to Stay Alive" and net zero global emissions by 2050. Additionally, Belize's active participation as a signatory to numerous multilateral conventions, and as a participant in the "High Ambition Coalition" for Climate Change, further

exemplifies the country's dedication to combatting the effects of the climate crisis.

Belize's submission follows Antigua and Barbuda's submission to ITLOS under UNCLOS, as well as Belize adopting resolution (A/RES/77/276) of the UN General Assembly, requesting the International Court of Justice to give an advisory opinion on "the obligations of States in respect of Climate Change". Belize co-sponsored and voted in favor of that resolution.

The government looks forward to a just resolution through the Advisory Opinion process, and to continue working closely with international partners to address the pressing challenges of climate change and environmental conservation.

## **Ends**

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