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PRESS RELEASE

Belize-Taiwan Technical Cooperation for Deep Sea Fishing Resource Exploration Program

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The Government of Belize through the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation (MBECA), and in collaboration with the Belize Fisheries Department and the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan), held a technical meeting on September 12, 2022, to discuss the “Fisheries resources survey in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of Belize” under the request for “Deep Sea Fishing Resource Exploration Program,” which is focused on improving sustainable fisheries management and strengthening Belize’s blue economy.

Present at the meeting were H.E. David Kuan-Chou Chien, Ambassador of Taiwan to Belize; Ms. Kennedy Carrillo, Chief Executive Officer in the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation; Mr. Rigoberto Quintana, Ag. Fisheries Administrator at Belize Fisheries Department; Mr. Robert Robinson, Deputy Director of Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit; Dr. Hsin-Ming Yeh, fisheries expert from Taiwan’s Fisheries Research Institute; Dr. Sheng-Ping Wan, fisheries expert from National Taiwan Ocean University; and other GOB technical staff.

Discussions focused on conducting a fisheries stock assessment of Belize’s EEZ under the Deep Sea Exploration Program and to proceed with a technical mission from Taiwan. Through the mission, Taiwanese experts will engage with the national fisheries authority, key government agencies, businesses, fishers, and other stakeholders in a fact-finding mission on current and future fishing activities. This information will be used to develop a proposal for Belize, which will include an implementation plan to guide the deliverables of the project.

The proposed objectives of the project are:

1. Develop sampling methodology for surveys to determine species diversity, abundance, size structure, and sex composition of fish biomass within Belize's EEZ.
2. Conduct tagging to obtain much-needed information on fish growth rates and movement.
3. Employ stock assessment modeling approaches of different complexities (size-structured yield-per-recruit model, production model, and size-structured simulation model) to evaluate the dynamics of the fish stocks, estimate the current status of the fishery, and evaluate alternative management strategies.
4. Determine in-country capacity (technical, fishing, processing, storage, marketing, feasibility, incentives).

This activity is consistent with the priorities embedded within the Belize Fisheries Policy Statement, the Oceans Economy and Trade Strategies for Belize, and the Belize Blue Economy Development Policy and Strategy. It also highlights the government's commitment to obtaining an understanding of fish stocks, in-country capacity, and resource needs for the EEZ that support ecosystems-based management and science-based decision making. This undertaking also supports diversification opportunities in Belize's fisheries sector for the enhancement of fishers' livelihoods and well-being.

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