



PR#473

PRESS RELEASE

Belize Participates in UN Regional Experience Sharing Workshop for the Caribbean and Central America

Belmopan. September 23, 2021. 5:10 p.m.

The Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation and the Belize Fisheries Department, in partnership with the Directorate General of Foreign Trade, are participating in the United Nations Regional Experience Sharing Workshop for the Caribbean and Central America. The workshop is being held on September 23-24, 2021 and is themed "looking back and forging ahead."

This two-day workshop is geared towards discussions and the sharing of experiences of the OETS Project and its developed strategy and action plan for Belize, Barbados and Costa Rica. In Belize, the project focused on two sectors. The marine fisheries sector addresses the sustainable use and conservation of marine resources, capacity development, improving market access, domestic consumption and links to tourism and international markets; while the seafood processing component examines the labour characteristics at processing centers, improving market access: access to niche markets and domestic use. The project identified the significant potential for product development, value adding and the formalization of the domestic finfish market to improve the availability of more fish and fishery products to our population and foreign markets.

In his remarks, Hon. Andre Perez, Minister of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation, highlighted the Government of Belize's commitment to increasing Belize's GDP through a thriving Blue Economy Development pathway that is harmonized, innovative and socially just, supported by a robust, science-based management regime of our aquatic resources and space to improve the livelihood of all Belizeans. He further expressed that the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation is currently in the process of formulating its five-year strategy and plan for Belize's Blue Economy. This strategy for the

marine finfish and seafood manufacturing sectors will undoubtedly result in the realization of two important building blocks in the overarching National Blue Economy Strategy, which is expected to place Belize in a position to benefit from a planned and structured approach to its ocean-based economic sector.

Barbados, Belize and Costa Rica were privileged to have benefitted from the “Supporting developing countries in analyzing and implementing evidence-based and policy coherent oceans economy and trade strategies (OETS)”, which principally seeks to improve the economic potential of specific and carefully chosen ocean-based sectors in each country. This project commenced in January 2018 and has been implemented by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in cooperation with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) with the dedicated support of National Focal Points in each country.

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