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PRESS RELEASE

Belize Delivers Oral Arguments at the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion Hearings on Climate Change

Belmopan, December 4, 2024.

The Government of Belize, through the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change, presented oral arguments at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the ongoing Advisory Opinion proceedings on the obligations of states regarding climate change. The hearings, which represent a historic moment for global climate accountability, seek to clarify the legal responsibilities of states to mitigate climate impacts and protect vulnerable populations.

Dr. Kenrick Williams, Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change, highlighted the existential threat posed by climate change to Small Island Developing States (SIDS). In his address, he stated, "This Advisory Opinion represents a historic opportunity for the international community to clarify the obligations of States in addressing this global crisis. For Belize, the stakes could not be higher."

CEO Dr. Williams emphasized the profound challenges faced by Belize, including rising sea levels, warming oceans, and more frequent and severe storms. He described the devastation in Monkey River, a community experiencing severe coastal erosion and economic losses, to represent the climate crisis affecting SIDS globally. Despite these adversities, Belize has demonstrated resilience by safeguarding over 40% of its territory, transitioning to renewable energy, and pioneering innovative financing mechanisms such as the Blue Bonds for marine conservation.

The ICJ is deliberating critical questions about state obligations to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, prevent environmental harm, and support adaptation measures. Belize, as one of the contributors to the proceedings, called on the court to provide definitive guidance that strengthens accountability and international cooperation under frameworks like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement.

These proceedings mark a critical point in the global fight against climate change. Belize calls on all nations to embrace this opportunity to strengthen accountability mechanisms and close gaps in international climate action. As a leading advocate for justice and equity, Belize urges the global community to act decisively, ensuring that the ICJ's advisory opinion translates into meaningful action. Belize reaffirms its unwavering commitment to championing the resilience of vulnerable nations and advancing a sustainable future for all.

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