



Briefing n°38: Fighting against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU): Successes from ACP countries

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SUCSESSES IN FIGHTING IUU FISHING: THE CASE OF BELIZE

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Executive Summary

The Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit was officially established on November 8, 2013 with the enactment of the High Seas Fishing Act, 2013. This modern legislation provided a basic regulatory framework, which paved the way for additional enabling regulations to provide for efficient and effective monitoring, control and surveillance of the high seas fishing fleet.

Since its inception, the BHSFU has been able to promulgate the adoption of national regulations governing Licensing, Sanctioning, and Monitoring Control and Surveillance of the High Seas Fishing fleet. Additionally, a National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing has been adopted along with a National Observer Programme, a National Inspection Programme and a National Fleet Policy aligned with its national capacity. Belize has upgraded its vessel monitoring system to include hourly position reporting and electronic catch reporting and has established its own ultramodern Fisheries Monitoring Center. The institutional capacity of the BHSFU has been increased to expand our monitoring and compliance capability.

Belize is a member of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC); and has taken a national position to withdraw its participation and membership from the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). This policy decision, along with a decision to keep only active vessels on our register of authorized vessels, have seen a significant reduction in the size of the fishing fleet. Nonetheless, the efficient and effective management and control of the fleet is paramount to any consideration for future expansion; a mechanism which will maintain the integrity of the fleet. As such, the BHSFU collaborates closely with the national ships registry, the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE), in guiding the selective registration of fishing vessels so as to ensure that vessels are properly screened for any IUU history before they are registered.

Belize takes seriously its obligations to fulfill those requirements stipulated under international law so as to safeguard those sovereign and inalienable rights afforded to us under these same conventions. It recognizes the need for close collaboration and cooperation with other states and international organizations to fight against the scourge of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing that threatens sustainable fisheries and jeopardizes global food security. Belize remains steadfast in its commitment to aid in this global consorted effort, and to continuously enhance its capacity as a responsible fishing Nation to achieve its objective.