



## **The Belize Model for Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries: a partnership success story**

**5 June 2017**

**1500-1630**

**Conference Room B, United Nations Headquarters**

Fisheries are complex sociological, ecological and economic systems, and unsustainable fisheries around the world threaten the livelihood of coastal communities and the marine ecosystems upon which they depend. Belize's fisheries provide livelihoods for 15,000 people, generate nearly 5% of GDP, and are a crucial source of food security. To ensure their sustainability, Belize uses an ecosystems-based approach to fisheries management through the identification of areas of underperformance in the ecological, social, economic, and political dimensions of fisheries. In this way, Belize is able to develop strategies to overcome these challenges and protect fisheries systems.

An important component for effectiveness of the ecosystem-based management is ensuring that small-scale producers have access to good science to make decisions for sustainability. Belize, in partnership with national and international non-governmental organizations, has developed innovative multidisciplinary tools and methodologies, customized for the challenges of small-scale fisheries, to assist communities, managers, fishermen, and scientists make decisions that lead to sustainable outcomes for people, resources, and ecosystems.

The Belize experience with sustainable small scale fisheries demonstrates the advantages of ecosystems-based fisheries management as an important strategy for achieving Target 7 of Goal 14 and the related means of implementation at 14.b as well as the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

This side event is intended to contribute to the overarching theme of the Oceans Conference: Our oceans, our future: partnering for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

It will illustrate:

1. How a combination of marine tenure, harvest control, protected areas, and empowerment of fishermen for managing fisheries supports the sustainable development goals especially goal 14 through thriving communities, healthy ecosystems, food security, and climate resiliency.

2. How partnerships and extensive consultations with stakeholders, especially the population most dependent on fisheries resources for their livelihoods and food, including the large number of women that work in the processing sector, form the core of Belize's methodology.
3. Innovations in social, ecological, and economics science customized for small-scale fisheries that rely on limited data to make decisions for sustainable management.
4. Lessons learned from Belize's success in scaling up these approaches from individual pilot projects to its entire territorial waters.



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### *Programme*

#### **1500-1505 Introduction**

*H.E. Ms. Lois M. Young, Ambassador, Permanent Representative  
Permanent Mission of Belize to the United Nations*

#### **1505-1515 Keynote: Belize's Innovations in Fisheries Management - Valuing People and Protecting Nature for Sustainable Development**

*Honorable Minister Omar Figueroa  
Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change*

- Belize's sustainable development strategy and the role of fisheries in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- Voluntary Commitments, and how they were generated through a participatory inclusive process with fishers
- Partnerships and collaboration as Belize's pillar of effective management
- Belize's implementation of the Food and Agriculture Organization Small Scale Fisheries Guidelines, and Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
- Announcement of voluntary commitments

#### **1515-1525 Fishers and their Contribution to Strengthening Coastal Communities and Belize's Economic Growth**

*Ms. Paula Williams  
Representative of Belize's Fishing Community – Punta Negra Village*

- Fisher associations and managed access committees as vehicles for the empowerment of fishers and collaboration between stakeholders
- Core responsibilities for fishermen – reporting, committees, participation – and how they generate constructive involvement in fisheries management
- Belize's fishing cooperatives and how they enable poverty alleviation and economic development

**1525-1600 Panel Discussion: Using an Ecosystems-Approach to Fisheries Management for Sustainable Development Goals**

***Ms. Beverly Wade, Panel Chair and Moderator***  
*Fisheries Administrator, Belize Fisheries Department*

***Mr. Carlos Ramirez***  
*Representative of Belize's Fishing Community – Rio Grande Fishermen Cooperative*

***Ms. Celia Mahung***  
*Toledo Institute for Development and Environment*

***Mr. Larry Epstein***  
*Environmental Defense Fund*

***Ms. Nicole Auil-Gomez***  
*Wildlife Conservation Society*

***Ms. Julie Robinson***  
*The Nature Conservancy*

**Panel Introduction**

Define and provide an overview of the ecosystems approach to fisheries management in the Belize context. How Belize balances sustainability and human rights considerations in fisheries management.

**Moderated Interactive Q&A with Panel**

- What is Belize's approach to marine spatial planning? What are some results of this approach?
- What monitoring approaches does Belize use to ensure effective implementation of its approach?
- How does Belize use science to make management and policy decisions? How are Belizean and international scientists collaborating to innovate new approaches?
- What is the role of partnerships and participation across all stakeholders? How does Belize's ecosystems approach respect and value the role of women in the fishing sector?

- In what way is Belize leveraging financing, marketing, livelihoods diversification, and supply chains to positively reinforce good management?
- How does Belize use co-management and community-based management for fisheries governance?
- What innovations, governance, and technology does Belize use to ensure that the regulatory requirements of management and monitoring are being met?

**1600-1625      Question and Answers**

**1625-1630      Closing**

The Government of Belize acknowledges with deep gratitude the support of our organizing and collaborative partners:

- Belize Fisheries Department
- Environmental Defense Fund
- The Nature Conservancy
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- Oak Foundation
- Toledo Institute for Development and Environment
- Rio Grande Fishermen Cooperative
- Punta Negra Village
- Food and Agriculture Organization
- United Nations Development Programme - Belize