



The Government of Belize and the Delegation of the European Union to Belize



--- Joint Press Release ---

BELIZE'S HIGHSEAS FISHERIES GET A BOOST

Belmopan. December 16, 2014. The European Council yesterday adopted a decision to remove Belize from the list of 'non-cooperating third countries' in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. This decision was taken pursuant to a recommendation by the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG-MARE) to remove Belize from this list in consideration of the concrete measures taken by Belize to rectify the deficiencies pointed out by the European Commission earlier this year.

This decision by the EU Council shall enter into force on December 18, 2014, the day after its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*. This is the first case where a country is removed from the list of non-cooperating third countries through cooperation and on-going dialogue with the Commission; and it demonstrates that the EU system of bi-lateral cooperation and collaboration to assist third countries in fully implementing the IUU Regulation is indeed effective and bearing fruit. Since the pre-identification of Belize by the EU, the Commission has provided guidance to Belize in developing its legal framework and implementing the necessary measures to rectify the deficiencies that existed before. Working in partnership with the Commission, Belize has

demonstrated a strong commitment to fighting IUU fishing and has significantly improved its ability to tackle this problem. The implementation of these new management and control mechanisms will greatly assist the work of the Belize Administration and will serve to ensure that IUU fishing has no place in Belize's high seas fisheries. It is an unequivocal demonstration to the world that Belize takes its obligations under international law seriously; as the same laws also provide for Belize's sovereign and inalienable right to fish on the high seas.

IUU fishing poses a significant threat to the sustainable exploitation of global marine resources and jeopardizes the food security of all nations. As such, the responsibility to fight IUU fishing can only be achieved through the multilateral effort of all nations; and the leaders of responsible fishing nations including Belize must therefore be applauded as they endeavor to eradicate the scourge of IUU fishing.

The Prime Minister of Belize, Hon Dean Barrow, has welcomed the decision of the European Council of Ministers to delist Belize and has pledged to continue the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE
AND THE EUROPEAN UNION