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PRESS RELEASE

Belize Hosts the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Workshop for Caribbean SIDS

Belmopan, October 7, 2024.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade will host the Regional Workshop on Promoting a Better Understanding of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement for Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) from October 7th to 10th in Placencia. This important workshop aims to enhance knowledge of the BBNJ Agreement, including the rights and obligations outlined within it, while providing Caribbean SIDS with the technical support needed for their accession to and implementation of the Agreement.

The BBNJ Agreement recognises the unique challenges faced by SIDS and ensures their specific circumstances are considered. It also promotes their active participation in the Agreement's decision-making processes, alongside other developing countries.

Earlier this year, Belize made history by becoming the first Caribbean nation to ratify this crucial ocean biodiversity agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. This ratification aligns with Belize's Medium Term Development Strategy, which focuses on marine conservation, halting biodiversity loss, and protecting our oceans. Belize's efforts, such as the moratorium on offshore oil exploration, the ban on gillnets, and the creation and expansion of protected marine areas, reflect its leadership role in ocean and marine preservation across the Caribbean.

The workshop, organised by the United Nations' Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, brings together participants from across the Caribbean. The Ministry extends gratitude to the Government of the United Kingdom whose support was crucial in this endeavour.

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