

**THE INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE (IMMARBE)**  
**ACHIEVEMENTS FROM AUGUST 2001 TO DECEMBER 2008**

**1. IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY OF VESSELS REGISTERED**

1.1 As at 31.12.01, our fleet consisted of 2,944 vessels totaling 3,514,538 GT. Belize was considered one of the 4 worst performing registries in the world at that time. As the result of the introduction of Phase 1 of our Quality Initiatives in August 2001 and during 2002, we deregistered 1,584 non-compliant vessels i.e. approx. 50% of the then fleet. These were owned by those who, by their actions or very often inactions, had evinced an unwillingness to comply with national and international regulations. This was manifested by overdue surveys, poor detention records, often involving the same type of deficiency, an unwillingness to respond to our Administration to offer up their vessels for inspection, the non-payment of taxes, illegal trading etc. Some of the deregistered vessels have been scrapped but others have gone to other Registries e.g. Cambodia, Bolivia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Tonga, South Korea, Albania etc. Many of the vessels were below 500 GT and include fishing vessels which were Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU).

1.2 As the result of our quality initiatives since 2001:

- as at 31.12.08 our fleet consisted of 772 vessels totaling 1,584,741 GT.
- the average age of our fleet has dropped from 28 years to 19 years in 2008.
- there is a discernible growth in the average size of vessels and particularly in the number of those over 7500 GT., the latter having grown by 119% during the last 5 years.
- our client base has increased in Russia and other countries which were in the former Soviet Union as well as in China.
- we are now attracting Owners of small to medium sized fleets whose vessels are classed by members of IACS. This is reflected in the improved PSC Detention Statistics.
- we expect the trend towards larger vessels to continue. The additional measures which we have introduced in January 2008 for the improvement of PSC Detention Records will result, inter alia, in further deregistrations which we anticipate will be offset by an influx of better quality tonnage.
- During the last four years, we have rejected 117 applications for registration by Owners of vessels which were considered substandard. Obviously, this figure does not include those vessels whose Owners would have applied were it not for our much publicized quality criteria.

**2. IMPROVEMENT IN PORT STATE CONTROL DETENTION RECORDS**

From Attachment 1, you will observe that during the period from 2001 to 2008 there has been an overall dramatic reduction in detentions as a percentage of inspections in all MOUs on PSC - down from 26.18% to 8.15%.

- **United States Coast Guard**  
Our vessels have not incurred any detention in the USA during 2003–2008 (Attachment 2). The U.S. Coast Guard 3 year rolling Detention Ratio has dropped from 23.18% in 2001 to 0.00% in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. Belize/IMMARBE is one of only fourteen out of 166 Flag States/Ship Registries in the world holding United States' Quality Shipping for the 21st Century (QUALSHIP 21) Program qualification in 2008 and the only one in Central America.
- **Paris MOU on Port State Control**  
Attachment 3 shows our "Port State Control Performance in the Paris MOU from 2001 to 2007". You will observe that our 3 year rolling average Detention Rate fell from 24.02% in 2001 to 6.60% in 2008. In 2007 and 2008, we introduced additional measures to improve our performance in this MOU which have resulted in this significant improvement in our Detention Rate in 2008 which is the lowest since IMMARBE's fleet commenced operations in the Paris MOU.
- **Tokyo MOU on Port State Control**  
Attachment 4 shows our "Port State Control Performance in the Tokyo MOU from 2001 to 2008". Our Detention Rate fell from 27.49% in 2001 to 11.14% in 2008. Further quality initiatives are currently being contemplated.
- In an effort to accelerate the improvement in our performance in the Paris and Tokyo MOUs in 2006 - 8, we have taken certain additional decisive actions by:
  - **Deregistering non-compliant vessels:** During 2006 - 2008, we deregistered 17 vessels which were trading in the Paris MOU and 31 vessels which were trading in the Tokyo MOU which had a poor detention record and whose Owners failed to take the necessary preventive actions/improvements in maintenance etc required by our Administration.
  - **Intensifying our Flag State Inspections:** We are continuing to increase the number of Flag State Inspectors from 62 in 2001 to 173 in 2008, thus giving us better world coverage. However, we still need to increase the number of Inspectors and the location thereof e.g. in smaller ports which have been identified as being frequently visited by certain vessels. Also, we have identified particular vessel types, individual vessels and their operators, which we will target. **This initiative has resulted in more deregistrations in 2008.** Furthermore, the monitoring of the performance of our Flag State Inspectors has intensified. Any PSC detainable deficiencies found within 3 months after a Flag State Inspection may constitute possible grounds for dismissal of a Flag State Inspector. Also, we have distributed to them our analysis of detentions in 2006 and 2007 which highlights those types of deficiencies which incurred the highest number of detentions and requested them to pay particular attention to those areas.
  - **Writing to each of our Recognized Organizations with regard to vessels which they individually survey on our behalf.** We have drawn their particular attention to vessels which have incurred detentions, our analysis of the types of deficiencies which have been the cause of the majority of detentions in our fleet and instructing pro-active actions in the prevention of such detentions.

- **Writing to all ISM operators giving guidelines for the preparation and handling of PSC Inspections** as well as requesting proactive actions for the prevention of detentions by reference to our analysis of previous deficiencies.
- **Auditing Recognized Organizations:** We have audited all our active non-IACS Recognized Organizations as well as one member of IACS.
- **Vessel Tracking:** All our fishing vessels are fitted with VMS. In 2007, we have subscribed to AIS-Live which enables us to track the movements of our existing cargo vessels/potential registrations and their future port of call so that we can, inter alia, arrange inspections etc.
- As a consequence of the abovementioned measures, our overall detentions in all MOUs continued to drop during 2008.

IMMARBE has made considerable improvements in its PSC detention records since 2001 and is committed to attaining the White Lists of all MOUs on Port State Control in 2009. In Attachment 5 you will observe our submission dated 8th April 2008 to the 16th Session of the IMO's Sub-Committee on Flag State Implementation which was commended by the Chairman and its Members.

### 3. IMPROVEMENT IN CASUALTY STATISTICS

The number of our serious casualties in 2008 has dropped to 0.39% of our fleet - Attachment 6. This is well below the world average for 2008 which, according to Lloyd's Register Fairplay is 1.81%. **Furthermore, there have been no oil pollution incidents resulting from any such casualties during the last 7 years.**

### 4. IMPROVEMENT IN THE PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

As the result of our rigidly enforced quality criteria for registration, the monitoring/inspection of our vessels as well as the extensive deterrents/ powers available to IMMARBEE under the Registration of Merchant Ships (Disciplinary Regulations) and the High Seas Fishing Act, from 2005 up to date, **there have been no incidents of trafficking in drugs, contraband, illegal weapons or humans in our fleet which averaged 908 registered vessels during this period.** Furthermore, Belize has two Boarding Agreements with the USA, one in respect of vessels which are suspected of being engaged in the transportation of narcotics and the other which was signed in 2005, in respect of vessels which are suspected of being engaged in the transportation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials. They establish points of contact and procedures for the boarding and searching of ships bearing the flag of the USA or that of Belize in international waters. **These Agreements are a further reflection of Belize's policy of cooperation in the prevention, detection and suppression of illegal activities in the interests of safety and the protection of the environment.**

### 5. IMPLEMENTATION OF A QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AUDITS

- On 17th October 2008, we passed our annual external Surveillance Audit by ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (USA) in accordance with the Quality System Standard ISO 9001 - 2000. The scope of our certification encompasses Ship Registration, Endorsement Certification of Seafarers, Statutory Certification and Fishing Vessel Administration.

- Since 2003, IMMARBE has co-operated with the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) in the pilot initiative for the formulation and implementation of measures to improve its Flag State Performance.
- **We are continuing the audits of those Recognized Organizations which are authorized to survey vessels on our behalf.** These audits have resulted in the termination of our agreements with certain non-IACS Recognized Organizations as well as the imposition of restrictions in authorizations on others e.g. restrictions of authorization to survey vessels below 500 GT only, barges only and or vessels engaged in coastal voyages within the territorial waters of one country only etc.
- **All vessels operating in the USCG and Paris MOU areas are now classed by members of IACS and the number of vessels classed by non-members of IACS which are operating in the Tokyo MOU area has been reduced to 67.** This is stark contrast with the situation in August 2001 when the vast majority of all vessels operating in all MOUs on PSC were certified by non-members of IACS.
- IMMARBE has always supported the introduction of the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme. We had submitted recommendations to the IMO in connection with the implementation of this Scheme as well as through its participation in the IMO Correspondence Group established for that purpose. **On 7th August 2007, Belize officially notified the Secretary-General of the IMO that it volunteers for this Audit. This is expected to take place during 2009.** Our preparation for this audit is proving a useful exercise.

6. **COMPLIANCE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON STANDARDS OF TRAINING, CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING FOR SEAFARERS, 1978 (STCW)**

Belize was placed on the IMO White List in November 2001. Also, the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee has confirmed that in accordance with Regulation 1/8 of the STCW 1978 Convention, it has received the required independent evaluation which demonstrates that Belize is giving full and complete effect to the aforementioned Convention.

7. **EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SHIP & PORT SECURITY (ISPS) CODE**

At a symposium on International Maritime Developments in the Caribbean held in Barbados on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2004, our Registry was praised for its effective implementation of the ISPS Code.

8. **EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF FISHING VESSEL COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT**

- **International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)**  
During ICCAT's 18<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting which was held in Dublin on 17<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>st</sup> November 2003, the Commission reviewed the regulatory measures introduced by our High Seas Fishing Act 2003, the strict monitoring, control and enforcement measures implemented by Immarbe during the past 2 years which included the deregistration of some 513 non-compliant fishing vessels, as well as the quality of the

Catch & Effort reporting. As the result of this review, ICCAT granted Belize Cooperating non-Contracting Party status and lifted all existing sanctions against Belize in respect of Atlantic Bluefin Tuna, Bigeye Tuna and Swordfish with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004. Also, the EU lifted its fishing sanctions against Belize in April 2004. We acceded to the ICCAT Convention in July 2005 thereby becoming a Contracting Party of ICCAT. We have secured quotas from ICCAT for tuna and tuna-like species which we allocate to our 14 Large Scale Tuna Longline Vessels (LSTLVs) which are currently operating in this Convention area.

- **Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)**
  - At its 10<sup>th</sup> Session which was held in Goa on 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2006, this Commission was satisfied that IMMARBE's 11 Large Scale Tuna Longline Vessels (LSTLVs) are properly regulated, monitored and controlled, thus conforming with the accepted international Conventions/Agreements and norms as well as their own Regulations. Consequently, IMMARBE's fishing vessels were placed on their Official Register of Vessels authorized to fish in their Convention area and Belize was granted Co-operating non-Contracting Party Status of this Commission.
  - At the 11<sup>th</sup> Session which was held in Mauritius on 13<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> May 2007, Belize was admitted as a Full Member/Contracting Party of IOTC. Also, its Director General, Mr. Angelo Mouzouropoulos was unanimously elected Vice-Chairman of IOTC's Compliance Committee – itself an acknowledgement of the successful implementation of conservation and management measures on IMMARBE's High Seas Fishing Fleet.
- **The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)**

At the 74<sup>th</sup> Meeting held in Busan, Korea on 26<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006, IATTC reviewed our application, the fishing vessels as well as our regulatory and reporting systems and decided to grant Belize Cooperating non-Contracting Party status.

At its 75<sup>th</sup> Meeting which was held in Cancun on 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> June 2006, this Commission reviewed IMMARBE's regulatory systems with a positive result. Consequently, IMMARBE's Co-operating non-Contracting Party Status of this Commission was renewed. At the same time, it had acceded to the IATTC "Convention for the Strengthening of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission Established by the 1949 Convention between the United States of America and the Republic of Costa Rica (Antigua Convention)". Belize will become a Contracting Party latest by when the IATTC "Antigua Convention" comes into force which is expected to be in 2009. IMMARBE has 32 LSTVs operating in this Convention area.
- **Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)**

On 7<sup>th</sup> December 2007, at the Fourth Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) which was held in Guam, Belize was the only one of 4 applicants to meet the criteria and be granted Cooperating status of WCPFC which consists of 26 member States. This status was renewed at its Fifth Regular Session which was held in Busan in December 2008. Belize have now applied to be invited to become a Contracting Party of WCPFC. Currently IMMARBE has 6 Large Scale Tuna Longline Vessels (LSTLVs) which are authorized to fish in their Convention area and are licensed by the Fisheries Department of

Belize. Five of these have ultra-low temperature capability (-60C, sashimi grade). These and any new registrations of both fishing vessels as well as refrigerated fish carriers engaged in transshipment will benefit from participation in this resource.

- **North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)**

At the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of NEAFC which was held in London on 13<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> November 2006, Belize was admitted as a Cooperating non-Contracting Party. This status was renewed in November 2007 and 2008.

- We are currently participating in the negotiations for the formation of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO) which will regulate pelagic species e.g. mackerel.

- **Adherence/accession to Fishing Conventions/Agreements**

On 8<sup>th</sup> July 2005, Belize issued instruments of adherence/acceptance of:

- The 1993 FAO “Compliance Agreement”
- The 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement
- The International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

Also, in accordance with Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Article VI of the FAO “Compliance Agreement”, we have sent to the FAO our detailed list of all fishing vessels operating worldwide which we are updating on a monthly basis.

- **IMMARBE is now the Open Registry with the largest number of memberships of RFMOs in the world.** This is not only attractive to Owners of fishing vessels but also to Owners of reefer carriers which are engaged in the transshipment and transportation of marine resources.

## 9. INTRODUCTION OF IMMARBE'S CODES OF STANDARDS FOR YACHTS ON 1ST JUNE 2008

IMMARBE has produced these Codes in order to address perceived gaps in the international regulatory regime which prescribes safety standards for yachts. At present, the standards are not adequately defined for yachts, as pleasure vessels, and the various categories distinguished by use, size and operational range. Consequently, with the assistance of contributors from this industry, IMMARBE has developed the following Codes for yachts in commercial and private use:

- The Code of Standards for Yachts of 24 m or above and 500 GT or more - The Super Yacht Code.
- The Code of Standards for Yachts of 24 m or above and less than 500 GT - The Large Yacht Code.
- The Code of Standards for yachts of less than 24m - The Small Yacht Code.

The launching of these Codes took place at the Posidonia Exhibition in Athens 2nd - 6th June 2008. They offer many advantages to owners of yachts which are in commercial or private use. Currently, IMMARBE has 75 yachts and we are in negotiations with the Owners of a 4700 GT Super Yacht. For more details, visit our website [www.immarbe.com/yachts.html](http://www.immarbe.com/yachts.html).

## 10. FINANCIAL - "QUALITY PAYS"

The decrease in the number of vessels as the result of the quality policy implemented since August 2001 has not led to a corresponding reduction in net profits. **On the contrary, when compared with the average net income for the financial years 1997/8 to 2001/2, the average annual net income for the financial years 2002/3 - 2007/8 reflects a 43% increase in net income!!** This has been achieved mainly by:

- Increases in existing fees and taxes as well the introduction of new fees and surcharges reflecting the increased services/assistance given to Owners and the regulatory supervision of their vessels.
- The specialization in fishing vessels and the introduction of several new fees such as Fishing Vessel Quota Administration Fees etc as well as Transshipment Administration Fees which now account for approx. 20% of IMMARBE's income.
- Improved administrative and financial controls.

We are of the view that this is a considerable achievement when one bears in mind that this improvement in profitability was achieved during a period when IMMARBE was in transition away from being one of the 4 worst performing ship registries in the world.

## 11. IMPROVEMENT IN THE REPUTATION OF OUR REGISTRY

- The Flag State Audit published by the Seafarers International Research centre, Cardiff University in 2003 as the result of its study of the regulatory capacity of 37 flag States, including national flags, open and second registers rated Belize's capacity as "modest" in line with registers such as Bahamas, Liberia, Malta, Marshall Islands and Panama.
- **In the 2007 Update of the Shipping Industry Flag State Performance Table, Belize is now one of the Flag States with the least number of negative performance indicators.** In the first Table which they had issued back in December 2003, Belize was referred to as one of the Flag States with the highest number (12 or more) negative performance indicators. This enormous improvement was referred to in an article in TradeWinds dated 7th December 2007 - Attachment 7.
- As Director General of IMMARBE, the undersigned was invited to deliver speeches on "improving the performance of a Flag State" and related topics at:
  - Conferences on "Port State Control" which were held in London, 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> December 2001 & 29<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2003.
  - At the "Mare Forum" Conference which was held in Athens, 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> September 2002.
  - At the International Fisheries Compliance Conference which was held Brussels, 29<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004.
  - At the World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden, on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

In November 2006, the FAO requested us to write a thesis on the reform of our fishing activities on the High Seas for use as a template to assist other developing

nations. Furthermore, the undersigned was invited by the FAO to participate as a member of the following expert consultations:

- In Rome from 25th to 28th February 2008 to assist in the development of a comprehensive Global Record of Fishing Vessels.
- In Vancouver from 25th - 28th March 2008 on Flag State Responsibilities and IUU fishing.
- There has been a considerable improvement in the reputation of our Registry within the shipping community – at IMO, the MOUs on Port State Control, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) where we are being noted for our constructive co-operation in the eradication of substandard shipping and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Our submission to the IMO with regard to the Voluntary Model Audit Scheme is but one example.

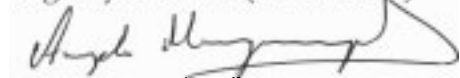
Generally, this improvement flows from the enforcement of our:

- new Quality Policy Statement  
“To provide an efficient, cost effective quality ship registration service and to enforce national laws and international Conventions which have been ratified by Belize in the interests of safety at sea and the protection of the environment.”
- new Mission Statement  
“Striving for excellence in ship registration so as to attain international acclaim as a leading quality Open Registry.”

Although we have made considerable improvements in our performance as a Flag State, we still have some way to go before we attain the objective set in our Mission Statement. Under our current policy, our main objectives for 2009 are:

- Complete the comprehensive review of our Maritime legislation. This has been a long-standing recommendation and is due to be finalized shortly.
- To continue the improvement in our PSC Detention Records so that we can attain the White Lists of all MOUs on PSC by the end of 2009.  
Increase the number of registrations of vessels of all types which are over 7,500 GT and below 15 years old which are owned and operated by quality companies.
- Increase the number of registrations of fishing vessels and refrigerated carriers which are engaged in the transportation of marine resources. .
- Develop the marketing of our newly introduced Codes of Standards for Yachts.

For and on behalf of the International Merchant Marine  
Registry of Belize (IMMARBE)



Angelo Mouzourópoulos  
Director General