

E-Newsletter

MARITIME MATTERS

INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE

Belize Advances Maritime Collaboration

In a landmark collaboration between the Italian Shipping Academy, International Maritime Safety Security Environment Academy (IMSSEA), Belize Port Authority and IMMARBE, two maritime training courses were officially launched in June, marking IMSSEA's first-ever presence in Central America. The initiative, which will run through the summer, aims to strengthen maritime expertise and capacity-building in the region, with a focus on Flag State Implementation and Port State Control.

The opening session, held at the Belize Port Authority on June 25th, saw a warm welcome from Port Commissioner Mr. Kaylon Young, who commended the efforts of both institutions.

The courses, which runs from June 24 to August 1, 2025, include:

- **Flag State Implementation Course**
(June 24 – July 4, 2025)
- **Port State Control Course**
(July 22 – August 1, 2025)

The program is designed to equip maritime professionals with extensive expertise in maritime regulations, safety protocols and operational best practices, fulfilling a critical demand for advanced maritime education in developing nations. Against a backdrop of escalating maritime traffic in the region, strengthening Flag and Port State governance framework has become imperative to ensure robust maritime safety, security and environmental stewardship.

The training initiative brings together renowned maritime professionals who are experts in their respective fields:

- **Flag State Implementation Course:**
 - **Capt. Federico Ribechini**, Oil & Gas Vessel Auditor and Inspector
 - **Capt. Ali Haidar**, Maritime Safety & Security Expert and IMSAS Lead Auditor
- **Port State Control Course:**
 - **Prof. Vlado Francic**, Head of Nautical Sciences, University of Rijeka
 - **Capt. Stefano Carnevali**, Italian Coast Guard
 - **Capt. Claudio Corradi**, Italian Coast Guard

For IMSSEA, this initiative represents a step in extending its global maritime training presence. With Central America emerging as a vital hub for international shipping, this partnership aims to enhance the region's maritime sector by sharing knowledge and skills that directly impact port operations, vessel inspections, and safety protocols.

Most importantly, the joint initiative directly benefits Belizean maritime professionals by enhancing their technical knowledge, increasing awareness of international standards, and building capacity to support the continued growth of Belize's maritime sector.

These types of collaborations contribute to a more knowledgeable, empowered workforce, positioning Belize as a serious and competent player in the global maritime industry.

Celebrating Our Seafarers: A Commitment to Dignity and Respect at Sea

On June 19, 2025, the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE), the Belize Port Authority (BPA), and Big Creek Group of Companies proudly came together with the Belize Coast Guard and WiMAC Belize Chapter representatives to honour the dedication and resilience of Belizean seafarers at a special Luncheon Award Ceremony.

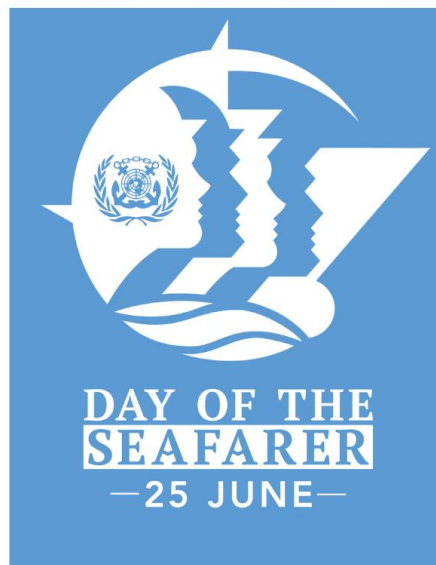
Held in a spirit of appreciation and unity, the event celebrated the outstanding contributions of those who keep our maritime industry thriving. More than just a recognition of service, this year's event echoed a deeper message through its powerful theme: **"My Harassment-Free Ship."**

The theme serves as a timely reminder that every vessel should be more than just a place of work, it should be a sanctuary of dignity, respect, and professionalism.

As industry leaders and stakeholders, we stand together in our ongoing commitment to cultivate a maritime culture where zero tolerance for harassment is not merely policy, it is a lived value. Award recipients were not only celebrated for their professional achievements, but also for their embodiment of the values that make our industry stronger: integrity, perseverance, and a shared responsibility to ensure all seafarers feel safe and respected aboard every voyage.

The Luncheon was a meaningful step in reaffirming Belize's role as a leader in advocating for the rights and well-being of maritime workers, while also inspiring a new generation to carry forward the principles of safety and inclusion on every deck and dock.

Together, we continue to navigate toward a future where every ship is truly a harassment-free ship.



My Harassment-Free Ship



Recognizing Our Seafarers: A Commitment to Dignity and Respect at Sea



Team Spirit Awardee
Rogelio Chinchilla
Captain



Innovation at Sea Awardee
Marcel Cabral
Captain



Safety First Awardee
Elvis Linarez Sr.
Marine Pilot

Recognition was awarded to individuals who have gone above and beyond in their duties at sea showing leadership, professionalism, and a tireless commitment to safety and teamwork aboard vessels operating locally and internationally.

As the event concluded, the message was clear: **Belize's maritime industry thrives because of the dedication of its people** and recognizing their efforts is not just an honour, but a responsibility.

Congratulations to all the 2025 awardees, may this recognition serve as a lasting reminder of your contributions to the sea and to the nation.

A special highlight of the luncheon was the presentation of Certificates of Appreciation to every seafarer present and Certificates of Recognition to those who had been nominated through the official Seafarer Nomination Form. These certificates served as a token of respect and recognition for their dedication, professionalism, and sacrifices. Each name called represented not just an individual, but a story of resilience, courage, and commitment to duty.

The initiative emphasized the importance of uplifting and acknowledging the people behind the industry—those who often go unseen, yet whose work is vital to both the global economy and our national development.

Events like these reaffirm our commitment to celebrating seafarers not only on one designated day, but continuously—as key partners in the safe, secure, and sustainable future of the maritime world.

To all our seafarers: we see you, we thank you, and we stand with you.

Recognizing Excellence

Celebrating top performing Deputy Registrars

IMMARBE is proud to once again shine a spotlight on excellence by recognising the top-performing Deputy Registrars. These three exemplary DRs have demonstrated exceptional dedication, professionalism and impact, making significant contributions to the continued success of our Registry.

Our progress is built on the commitment of our employees and affiliates who consistently exceed expectations. Our top performers are truly setting the standard for 2025.

As we continue to grow, IMMARBE remains dedicated to fostering a culture that values and celebrates excellence. While we celebrate these standout performers, we also acknowledge the collective strength and dedication of our entire network of Deputy Registrars, whose collaborative efforts drive our shared accomplishments.

Congratulations to our top-performing DRs for their exceptional spirit, continued drive and valuable contributions to IMMARBE's mission!



Mr. Diego Corrado
Designated Office
SINGAPORE



Mr. Erik DE Koning
Designated Office
ROTTERDAM



Ms. Ong Ah Kim
Designated Office
SINGAPORE

Recent Developments in Belize's Maritime Sector

Training Recap: How We're Expanding Our Expertise

On June 10 and 11, 2025, David Guerra, Quality Assurance & Compliance Manager, Yeseña Rancharan, Registration Officer II and Lieutenant Colonel Lionel Olivera, Belize Defence Force attended Strengthening Sanctions Enforcement and Information Sharing Capabilities of Maritime and Compliance Officials in Latin America.

The training's objective, to combat DPRK maritime sanctions evasion, highlighted how North Korea exploits deceptive shipping strategies such as AIS spoofing, vessel identity laundering, ship-to-ship transfers, and falsified documentation, often under "flags of convenience" to conceal illicit coal and oil trades in violation of UN Security Council resolutions

The course equipped participants to detect these tactics, leverage national legal systems and open-source tools for enforcement, strengthen due diligence across supply chains, and foster coordinated inter-agency and regional information-sharing networks.

By building awareness and collaboration, the initiative aims to bolster Caribbean maritime resilience and close loopholes enabling the DPRK's continued sanctions breaches.

Our Green Maritime Commitments

At the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice, France, Belize, led by Prime Minister Honourable John Briceño, showcased strong leadership by advocating for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and advancing sustainable ocean management. Belize spearheaded the launch of the Caribbean **"Actioning Blue: 30X30 Vision for the Ocean"** initiative to protect 30% of marine ecosystems by 2030 and presented the Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) to secure long-term funding for marine conservation and coastal resilience. The country endorsed key global pledges on ocean health and climate-resilient reefs, while engaging in high-level talks to strengthen international cooperation on climate change and sustainable development. Belize's active role underscored its commitment to ocean sustainability, regional solidarity, and innovative financing solutions for marine protection.

You can read the full press release from the Government's Press Office [here](#).



Flag State Update: Recent Regulatory and Procedural Changes

Recent publication, [MMN 25 006 Requirements for Handling Port State Control Inspections and Detentions](#) was posted on IMMARBE's website. It outlines the updated procedures for handling Port State Control (PSC) inspections and detentions of Belize-flagged vessels. Ship owners and operators are required to promptly report any PSC inspections or detentions to IMMARBE to ensure timely follow-up. Vessels found to have deficiencies during inspections must take immediate corrective actions to maintain compliance with international maritime standards. Failure to address such issues may result in penalties, including the suspension or revocation of the vessel's registration. Additionally, repeated detentions or unresolved deficiencies can lead to stricter enforcement measures, including possible blacklisting. This notice reaffirms IMMARBE's commitment to safety, environmental protection, and regulatory compliance for all vessels flying the Belize flag. For more detailed information, please visit www.immarbe.com and subscribe to always have access to the latest information.

IMMARBE's [MMN-25-005 Attribution of PSC Detentions to Recognized Organizations](#) establishes that Port State Control (PSC) detentions will be formally attributed to a Recognized Organization (RO) under two specific scenarios:

1. **Failure to conduct scheduled Occasional Surveys:** If the RO does not complete a required survey within the Occasional Survey Program's 24-month period, any resulting PSC detention is attributed to the RO.
2. **Detention within 90 days of RO attendance:** If a vessel is detained by PSC within 90 days of the RO's last inspection or attendance, responsibility is assigned to the RO.

This measure reinforces accountability: ROs must diligently carry out surveys and ensure vessels are compliant. Should they fail to do so or if immediate issues arise post-inspection, they will be held responsible for detentions potentially facing disciplinary measures.

For more detailed information, please visit www.immarbe.com to view these recent publications. Subscribe to always have access to the latest information, today!

WiMAC Belize Chapter hosts Women in Maritime Symposium in Celebration of International Women in Maritime Day

WiMAC's first inaugural symposium in celebration of International Women in Maritime Day was held at the Belize Port Authority on May 16, 2025. This symposium included four thematic panels focused on key opportunities for professionals in the maritime sector. Topics covered during the sessions included global and local prospects in maritime, commitment to Maritime Safety and Enforcement, Women in Marine Conservation, and the personal narratives and professional journeys of women working in the industry.

Each panel featured speakers from government, the private sector, non-government organizations (NGOs) and regional organizations. Discussions addressed challenges faced by women in the industry and emphasized the need for stronger support systems, inclusive policies, and increased awareness of career opportunities.

A total of ten women were recognized during the awards segment of the event. Awards were presented in ten categories, highlighting excellence in various areas of the maritime field, including conservation, operational service, innovation, leadership, advocacy, security and enforcement.

Our very own Valarie Lanza, Deputy Managing Director and Kenisha Allen, Administrator, were awarded Outstanding Maritime Leader and SEAster of the year, respectively. Their achievement highlights the dedication and talent of our women in the maritime sector.

The symposium was attended by maritime professionals, public and private sector representatives and invited guests. It concluded with a networking session that allowed participants to connect and discuss potential avenues for continued collaboration and mentorship.

The WiMAC Belize Chapter was established to support and advance the role of women in the maritime industry throughout the Caribbean. The symposium forms part of the chapter's ongoing initiatives to build awareness and create platforms for professional development.



Regulatory Insights

Key Takeaways: Belize Attendance to IMO Committee Meetings

As a member state, Belize has been steadily enhancing its engagement and representation at IMO committee, sub-committee and working group sessions.

In June, Mr. Paul Gersok and Mr. Eduardo Simon represented Belize at the Maritime Safety Committee 110th session.

It concluded on June 27 with advancements in maritime safety, innovation, and sustainability.

Held at IMO headquarters in London, the session brought together global stakeholders to adopt key amendments to mandatory instruments. Updates included improved pilot transfer arrangements, lifejacket standards, and approval of new fire safety and lifeboat testing protocols; set to take effect from January 2028.

Notably, the Committee finalized the draft International Code of Safety for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) Code, laying the foundation for safe integration of autonomous vessels. Work also advanced on guidelines on Maritime Cyber Risk Management and safety regulatory framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships using new technologies and alternative fuels.

The session underscored global collaboration as essential for adapting to rapid changes in maritime operations and ensuring safe, sustainable seas.

Belize Pushes for Fair Maritime Emissions

In the beginning of April, Belize Port Authority (BPA) and IMMARBE participated in two key climate meetings organized by the International Maritime Organization (IMO): the 19th Intersessional Working Group on GHG Emissions from Ships and the 83rd Marine Environment Protection Committee session. These meetings, held in London, focused on global maritime efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Belize's delegation, including representatives from BPA and IMMARBE, took a leadership role on behalf of Caribbean IMO Member States, amplifying the region's voice in climate negotiations. Their involvement was supported by the Caribbean Shipping Lanes Project and the UN Foundation.

The discussions centred on the IMO's Revised GHG Strategy aiming for net-zero emissions by 2050 and included proposals such as a Global Fuel Intensity Standard and carbon pricing mechanisms like levies or emissions trading schemes.

Belize emphasized the importance of representing Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in global maritime climate policies. The country reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable maritime governance and continues to push for fair, inclusive climate action in the shipping industry.

Meet our Staff

Get to Know our Team

Ms. Yeseña Rancharan
Registration Officer II



Before joining IMMARBE, the maritime sector was unfamiliar territory, never a field I had considered for a career. But since stepping into this space, I've been drawn to its complexity, structure, and global significance. What once seemed distant has become a professional passion.

While maritime remains a traditionally male-dominated industry, I've been inspired by the increasing visibility and impact of women, particularly Belizean women across all areas, from shipping and logistic operations, enforcement to registry functions.

Attending the Women in Maritime Symposium was especially impactful. It affirmed that there is space for women at every level of this industry and reinforced my commitment to promoting greater female representation in the field.

Working within the registry has also sparked a deep interest in maritime law an area I knew little about before. Today, I see it as a clear path to contribute meaningfully not only to IMMARBE but to the wider maritime sector in Belize and beyond.

Ms. Zoraima Reyes
Technical Support Officer (Vessel Monitoring)



As a newcomer to the maritime industry, I have yet to experience all that this dynamic field has to offer. However, even in these early stages, I am already inspired by the incredible rewards and fulfilment a career in this sector can provide.

The maritime industry uniquely combines adventure, stability, and opportunities for professional growth, making it an exciting and rewarding career choice.

There are countless reasons I decided pursue a career in this field, but certain aspects stand out as particularly motivating. This industry offers more than just a job; it offers a lifelong journey of learning and discovery. As I continue to immerse myself in this field, my appreciation for its impact and opportunities only grows.



Mrs. Charlette Stuart
Seafarer Officer

When I left school, my sole ambition was to secure employment, earn a living and be a dependable colleague, with little thought given to long-term aspirations beyond achieving independence. However, as time passed, I yearned for more than just a job; I sought a career that would challenge and shape me.

In 2000, I embarked on my journey at IMMARBE as a receptionist. Initially, the significance of the maritime industry eluded me, but my curiosity soon ignited a passion for learning. I immersed myself in understanding the global impact of maritime trade, pursued training in customer service, records management and ultimately ship registration. This newfound knowledge fuelled my growing interest, leading me to transition into the Seafarers Department.

Today, I proudly serve as Seafarer Officer, where my responsibilities include ensuring that all seafarers aboard Belize flagged vessels are appropriately certified and fully competent for life at sea. After 25 years, I reflect with pride on my journey. What began as a simple job have blossomed into a deeply fulfilling and meaningful career in maritime administration, a testament of the power of curiosity and the pursuit of growth.



Ms. Ameera Marin
Fleet Operations Officer

My journey in the maritime sector began in April 2019 when I joined the Belize Port Authority as a Port State Control Officer. I was later appointed Officer in Charge of the Big Creek and Placencia offices, overseeing vessel inspections, domestic ship documentation, local water taxis, and cruise operations at Harvest Caye. It was there that I discovered my passion for the maritime field.

Seeking broader experience, I joined the Port of Belize Limited, where I supervised cargo operations and coordinated with shipping lines. Though my time there was short, it deepened my understanding of port logistics.

In September 2022, I transitioned to IMMARBE's Technical Department—a shift from fieldwork to a desk-based role. Now responsible for flag state inspections of Belize-flagged vessels, I've gained valuable skills in regulatory oversight and industry compliance.

I've been fortunate to represent Belize in international training programs in Japan and Italy and to collaborate with organizations like the IMO and Tokyo MoU. I've also served on planning committees for key events such as World Maritime Day and the International Day for Women in Maritime.

Now a member of the WiMAC Belize Chapter, I look forward to continuing to grow and contribute to this dynamic and vital industry.

Meet our Staff

Notable additions to our workforce

Positioning IMMARBE for Growth, Excellence and Enhanced Services

As we continue to advance our strategic objectives for 2025, we are pleased to announce the ongoing expansion of several departments.

These developments reflect our continued commitment to strengthening internal capacity, enhancing our services and meeting the evolving responsibilities of being a Flag State.

Several professionals have been onboarded, and departments have been restructured to better reflect our current priorities.

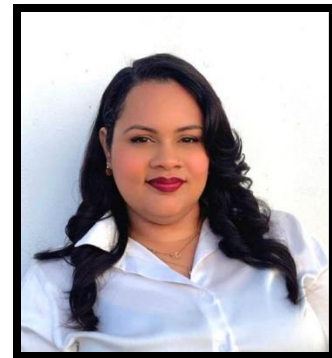
These expansions aren't about increasing headcount, it's an investment in innovation, collaboration and long-term sustainability.

We look forward to showcasing the important contributions our new employees will be making as part of our evolving journey in 2025 and beyond.

Please join us in welcoming them to the team. You'll get to "meet them" in the upcoming issues of Maritime Matters.



Mr. Kevon John
Technical Officer (PSC)
Technical & Seafarer Department



Ms. Janelle Requena
Administrative Assistant
Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit



Ms. Darlin Gaitan
Technical Officer
(FSI & Certification)
Technical & Seafarer Department



Mr. Gian Cajun
Registration Officer III
Registration Department

Day of the Seafarer

Search word puzzle

By Haldane Stephenson

S U H H K O P Q A O K R P T V I Y N M G B V Q H O D S G E B
W X G E R R G G C I U E W A R T N U B P R V L U K E C I N B
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DIGNITY

LISTEN

SEAFARER

TOLERANCE

EQUALITY

RESPECT

SUPPORT

ZERO

INCLUSION

SAFETY

TEAMWORK

