



*Check Against Delivery*

**Opening Remarks**

**Mr. Claude B.F. Haylock**

**Director General and Registrar of Merchant Shipping**

**Opening Meeting of the IMO Member State Audit Scheme  
(IMSAS) Audit**

**10<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**Honourable Representatives of the International Maritime  
Organization Audit Team,  
Distinguished Colleagues and Partners from Belize's Maritime  
Agencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning.

On behalf of the Government of Belize and the Belize Maritime Administration, it is my distinct honour and privilege to extend a warm welcome to everyone gathered here this morning as we formally open this IMO Member State Audit Scheme in Belize.

Today marks not merely the commencement of an audit but a reaffirmation of Belize's commitment to uphold the highest international standards of maritime governance. We gather as one maritime community, representing a network of agencies entrusted with safeguarding and advancing Belize's maritime interests as a flag, coastal, and port State.

We approach this engagement not as a test to be passed, but a strategic partnership—one grounded in mutual learning, transparency, and continuous improvement. The IMO Member State Audit Scheme, underpinned by the III Code, provides each Member State with an invaluable opportunity to assess how effectively we have implemented and enforced the

body of the IMO instruments that form the cornerstone of the global maritime safety, security, and environmental protection.

In that regard, we welcome the IMO Audit Team not merely as assessors, but as partners in a shared mission—the collective strengthening of the global maritime system through effective implementation of conventions on safety of life at sea, pollution prevention, training and certification (STCW), load lines, tonnage and collision regulations, among others.

Belize takes these responsibilities with the utmost seriousness. Over the years, we have made steady progress in modernising our legal and institutional frameworks, enhancing coordination among maritime agencies, and reinforcing our oversight capabilities. Our model—anchored in a network of specialised agencies working in close alignment—has allowed Belize to maintain both focus and flexibility across its various flag, coastal, and port State functions. This approach is by no means unique within the international community, but it reflects Belize’s deliberate choice to structure its maritime administration in a manner that best serves its national context, operational realities, and developmental priorities.

We recognise, of course, that the maritime sector is constantly evolving—shaped by new technologies, environmental challenges, and complex global dynamics. Continuous improvement, therefore, is not optional; it is an enduring obligation we owe to the international community and to our seafarers, shipowners, and coastal citizens alike.

This is why we have approached this audit with openness and readiness. Our agencies have worked diligently to prepare, and our teams stand fully committed to ensuring that your review is comprehensive and well-supported. We have embraced this process as a moment of collective reflection—one that will help us consolidate what we are doing well and identify where we can further strengthen our national maritime system.

We are confident that your expert insights and observations will help chart a clear course for Belize—a roadmap that builds upon our strengths, while guiding our next steps toward enhanced effectiveness and compliance. Most importantly, this process reinforces Belize’s standing as a respected

maritime State—one that values safety, security, and environmental stewardship as fundamental pillars of good governance.

To the IMO audit team, we extend our deepest appreciation for your presence here in Belize. We pledge the full cooperation of all our maritime agencies throughout this audit and wish you a productive and rewarding engagement, as well as an enjoyable stay in this “Jewel of ours”.

Thank you.