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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary

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## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION

### COMMUNICATION FROM BELIZE

The following communication, received on 17 October 2014, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Belize.

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1. The delegation of Belize would like to thank the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) for their support in facilitating a twinning mechanism between the National Codex Committee of Belize and Costa Rica. We also thank the government of Costa Rica for their willingness to participate in such an activity. The objectives of the mechanism are to:

- a. strengthen the management capabilities of the contact point and Belize's National Codex Committee by sharing Costa Rica's experience with Belize;
- b. identify strategies and practices that will help improve the participation of Belize in Codex Alimentarius; and
- c. facilitate a process of strengthening the internal management of Codex Alimentarius aimed at sustainability, participation and science-based decision-making.

2. Initial steps in this process include a visit of two Belizean officials to Costa Rica for a period of one week followed by a Costa Rican official visit to Belize for assistance with conducting a National Codex Alimentarius workshop.

#### 1 STRENGTHENING OF THE FOOD SAFETY SYSTEM IN BELIZE

3. Belize would also like to thank the EU for the EDES Programme (EU-ACP Development of Food Safety Systems) which aims to strengthen food safety systems in the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

4. The Belize Agricultural Health Authority, competent authority for agricultural health and food safety, recently signed a memorandum of Understanding with COLEACP-EDES which defines a partnership framework between Belize and the EDES Programme to set up an action plan. This was as a result of an EDESA mission which was carried out in June 2014 to verify the status of the food safety system and identifying the most efficient way of providing support within the short period of time which remains of the Programme.

5. There are nine different results anticipated following the interventions listed in the memorandum, a few of which include the development of a national food safety policy, guidance documents for industry, training for meat inspectors and a training programme in quality assurance for laboratory personnel. These activities will initiate in November 2014 and should be completed by July 2015.

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