

**STRENGTHENING OF SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY (SPS) CAPACITY  
TO INCREASE COMPETITIVENESS OF BELIZEAN PRODUCTS  
IN THE EXPORT MARKETS**

Statement by Belize at the meeting of 28-29 October 2009

The following communication, received on 30 October 2009, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Belize.

- 
1. The Government of Belize approached the Inter-American Development Bank in January of this year to seek assistance to increase the competitiveness of its agricultural products in the international market. Although a few plant and animal products are presently exported, Belize is interested in expanding its export base. In order to do so, the decision is to focus on two main areas: research and development and further strengthening of national sanitary and phytosanitary capacity.
  2. In making preparations to draft the loan proposal, the Belize Agricultural Health Authority held a series of strategic planning sessions with its stakeholders in the months of May and June 2009 in the areas of plant and animal health and food safety. The process resulted in stakeholders, along with the Authority, identifying the key areas that this project would be focusing on in order to achieve the desired objectives. Important documents that also contributed to the project formulation process included the results of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization, the findings of the Evaluation of the Veterinary Services conducted by the World Organization for Animal Health; and annual reports generated by the Authority, among others.
  3. It is expected that the first disbursement for this Project will be in December of this current year.
-