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## 14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SPRFMO COMMISSION

*Panama City, Panama, 2 to 6 March 2026*

### COMM14 – Report

#### ANNEX 9b Statement by Belize Regarding Jack Mackerel

Madam Chair,

Belize wishes to reiterate its longstanding position regarding the allocation of Jack Mackerel under the framework of the SPRFMO Convention.

As previously expressed in meetings of this Commission since 2023, Belize maintains that its allocation of Jack Mackerel should reflect its historical participation in the fishery, consistent with the criteria established under Article 21 of the SPRFMO Convention. This Article clearly directs the Commission to take into account, historic catch, fishing capacity, compliance with conservation and management measures, and the development aspirations of developing States when taking decisions regarding allocation of total allowable catch.

Belize's participation in the Jack Mackerel fishery is not hypothetical nor recent – it pre-dates the establishment of the Organization; which is the reason why it was allocated 1,145 metric tons, representing 0.2864% of the Jack Mackerel TAC in 2013. While its participation was briefly interrupted, this does not negate our historical participation in the fishery nor its contributions to the establishment of this very Organization.

Distinguished delegates, I would like to remind you that equity and inclusivity remains one of the pillars of the SPRFMO Convention and of international law. The allocation criteria outlined in Article 21 of Convention must meaningfully reflect historic participation and the legitimate development aspirations of developing States. Without such recognition, the credibility and inclusiveness of the allocation system may be called into question.

In the spirit of flexibility and cooperation, Belize has supported consensus decisions in previous years, even where the outcomes did not fully reflect our expectations. We have done so in order to preserve the unity of this Commission and to promote stability in the management of the fishery. However, our agreement should not be interpreted as acceptance of the current allocation as equitable or final.

Accordingly, Belize reserves its right to continue seeking a fair and balanced allocation of Jack Mackerel quotas in future deliberations. We respectfully urge Members to give due consideration to Belize's historical rights, demonstrated compliance, fishing capacity, and development aspirations at the next meeting of this Commission.

Belize remains committed to working constructively with all Members toward a solution that strengthens both the sustainable management and equitable distribution of the Jack Mackerel fisheries resource.

Thank you, Chair