



PR#258

PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan. April 22, 2021. 4:15 p.m.

The Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 20th April 2021.

- Cabinet was informed that Hon. Henry Charles Usher, Minister of the Public Service, Constitutional and Political Reform, wrote to the Joint Unions requesting their views on his preliminary proposals for the fixing of salaries of public officers in accordance with the Constitution. The Unions responded to the Minister's letter indicating their position against a salary cut as proposed in the Minister's letter or otherwise. The Minister of the Public Service, Constitutional and Political Reform informed Cabinet that he would fix the salaries of public officers having regard to the deteriorated state of public finances and the views and suggestions raised by the Joint Unions.

Complementing the decision of the Minister of the Public Service, Constitutional and Political Reform, Cabinet decided that it would take such steps as necessary to grant a land credit in favour of the affected public officers equivalent to 50% of the salary adjustment, which credit may be exercisable on the acquisition of land from government.

Cabinet remains committed to the points set out in its letter of 30th March 2021.

- Cabinet requested that the Minister of Public Utilities, Energy and Logistics review the lease agreement signed by Edmond Castro, the former minister responsible for ports, and Recological Systems Limited for 25 years. This contract was signed on 9th November 2020, two days before the 11th November 2020 General Elections and after the House of Representatives was dissolved.

- Cabinet authorized the delivery of 50,000 tons of sugarcane from Orange Walk and Corozal sugarcane farmers to be milled by the Santander Sugar Group. With this decision, farmers will be able to generate income from sugar cane, which would have otherwise been left standing in the fields.
- Cabinet approved the appointment of a high-level Citrus Working Group to be appointed by the Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise tasked with preparing concrete recommendations to chart the way forward for the Belize Citrus Industry. The Citrus Working Group will include representatives from the two grower associations, Citrus Growers Association and Belize Citrus Mutual, Citrus Products of Belize Limited, Development Finance Corporation, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration.
- Cabinet gave its approval for the resumption of non-contact sports and for training only for those involved in contact sports as well as to allow for recreational sports. In addition, Cabinet will review the protocols in relation to sporting activities in the coming months with a view to allow for spectator sports.
- Finally, Cabinet gave its approval for further amendments to the Land Utilization Act, Chapter 188, which will be presented at the Sitting of the House of Representatives.

Ends