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PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan, 17th August 2023.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met on 15th August 2023.

- Cabinet considered and gave its approval for the adjustment of pay scales to streamline salaries for social workers within the Ministry of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs. This will finally address the anomalies that presently exist among social workers hired in the Ministry of Human Development and those under other ministries.
- As a part of its ongoing discussion on additional ways to reduce the rising cost of basic food items and the matter of cost of living, especially its effects on the most vulnerable, Cabinet invited Mr. Lennox Nicholson, Controller of Supplies for the Supplies Control Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise, to report on efforts to address the issue of price-gouging nationwide.

Cabinet agreed to look into a mechanism for opening cooperative stores to provide basic food items at reduced costs to the more vulnerable members of society. To this end Cabinet appointed Hon. Jose Mai, Hon. Orlando Habet, Hon. Dolores Balderamos Garcia and Hon. Henry Charles Usher to meet and return to Cabinet, within a month, to present a concept paper on this important matter.

- Cabinet approved the appointment of commissioners for a Commission of Inquiry to commence by the end of August to look into the future modernization of the Sugar Cane Industry. Government also committed to keep the Belize Sugar Industry Control Board and its arms operational with the necessary funding.
- The Attorney General briefed Cabinet on the ruling of The High Court in a claim brought by Belize Sugar Industry (BSI) and another party, challenging parts of the Sugar Industry Act, in which the court ruled that parts of the act were unconstitutional. The Attorney General apprised Cabinet that after reviewing the matter, there are good prospects on appeal.

Cabinet was further apprised that representatives of BSI have written the Attorney General indicating their commitment to working with the cane farmers' associations and to continue dialogue on industry issues.

Given this, the Cabinet sub-committee, established earlier this year and headed by Hon. Kareem Musa, was instructed to commence dialogue with BSI and the other stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of the industry.

- Cabinet gave its approval for the Blue Economy to finance, through the Inter-American Development Bank, the promotion of sustainable growth-enabling investments. Such investments would enhance the competitiveness of productive sectors and sub-sectors in the blue economy and support the diversification of the economy through the strengthening of fisheries management by expanding to non-traditional fisheries commodities.
- Cabinet discussed and gave its support for new regulations to be created for a licensing framework for the electricity sector to expand and restructure the licensing scheme.
- Finally, Cabinet reminds Belizeans to remain alert and prepared as we enter the more active portion of the Hurricane Season.

Ends

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