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PRESS RELEASE

Prime Minister Hosts Meeting with APAMO to Establish a Working Group

Belmopan, August 20, 2024.

On August 19, Hon. John Briceño, Prime Minister of Belize, hosted a meeting with the executive members of the Association of Protected Areas Management Organization (APAMO) with a goal of reaching a consensus on a collaborative path forward.

A pivotal outcome of the meeting was the agreement to establish a working group comprising of representatives from both the government and conservation non-governmental organizations. This collaborative body will spearhead the revision of the National Protected Areas Systems Act and the Protected Areas Conservation Trust Act, marking a significant step towards a progressive and inclusive approach that serves the interests of the conservation community, and the people of Belize overall.

The Working Group will comprise of representatives from:

- Office of the Prime Minister (Blue Bonds Unit - Project Finance Performance Unit)
- Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change
- Ministry of Blue Economy
- Ministry of Tourism
- APAMO
- Belize Marine Protected Areas Network
- Belize Network of NGOs (a member of a conservation NGO)

The primary objective of the Working Group is to refine proposed legislation with a focus on, among other areas:

- Enhancing Co-governance of the National Protected Areas Systems Act and the Protected Areas Conservation Trust Act.
- Strengthening Reporting and Accountability mechanisms, and
- Facilitating resource mobilization and leveraging for the National Protected Areas Systems Act and the Protected Areas Conservation Trust Act, and more.

Joining the Prime Minister were Hon. Orlando Habet and CEO Dr. Kenrick Williams of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change, along with CEO Kennedy Carrillo of the Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed his unwavering commitment and dedication to addressing the concerns and fulfilling the agreed-upon tasks that will result in further enhancing the relationship between the conservation community and the Government of Belize. In a mutual decision, both parties have set a clear timeline of three months for the working group to present amendments and accomplish essential tasks collaboratively. As well, Minister Habet will ensure regular updates are provided the Prime Minister, underscoring the dedication to transparency and progress in this vital conservation endeavour.

This collaborative effort signifies a proactive and concerted approach towards fostering sustainable conservation practices and promoting the well-being of Belize's natural heritage and communities.

Ends