



PR#38-22

PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan. 3rd February 2022. 9:00 a.m.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 1st February 2022.

- Hon. Jose Abelardo Mai, Minister of Agriculture, Food Security & Enterprise, and Hon. Anthony Mahler, Minister of Tourism & Diaspora Relations, reported on their recent trip to Cancun, Mexico, where they led a delegation to the LATAM Business Summit held from 26th to 29th January 2022. The Business Summit, which was attended by several Latin American states, offered opportunities for bilateral meetings between government and the private sector on areas ranging from agriculture, agro-industry, tourism, the hotel and restaurant industries, transport, healthcare to construction and manufacturing, among others. Belize was one of only five countries to be highlighted at LATAM 2022, together with Colombia, Panama, the United States and Mexico. Through one-on-one meetings with investors and sector representatives, the delegation successfully achieved its goal in acquiring investment and other business leads, securing solid interest for contributing to private sector growth and economic development.
- Cabinet received a report on a meeting held on 26th January 2022 between the government's consulting team and the Joint Unions and expressed its full support for the ongoing consultation process. The next meeting is scheduled for 16th February 2022.
- Cabinet was updated on the status of vaccinations and the number of vaccines available in Belize as of 31st January. Currently, there are more than 321,000 vaccines on hand. As of 31st January 2022, 212,940 persons or 49.5 percent of the total population has received at least one dose of the vaccine and 204,165 or 47.5 percent of the total population

has been fully vaccinated. Additionally, over 31,681 booster shots have been issued to date. Also, 30,407 Belizeans aged 12 to 17 years old have received at least one dose of the vaccine and 25,017 two doses.

- Cabinet approved the opening of the land borders and seaports effective 7th February 2022 from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily for fully vaccinated persons only. In addition, the Ministry of Health & Wellness will require all persons entering and leaving through these border points to adhere to the health regulations.
- Cabinet gave its recommendation for the Minister of Finance to introduce a loan motion for US\$8 million from the Inter-American Development Bank for strengthening public expenditure management in Belize.
- Cabinet gave its approval for the Attorney General to present amendments to the Inferior Courts Act to allow the Magistrate Rules Committee to make rules for virtual trials.

Cabinet also gave approval to the Attorney General to have introduced the Protection of Witness Bill to provide for the granting of witness anonymity court orders to safeguard the identity of witnesses who are afraid to testify due to intimidation and threats.

- Cabinet gave its approval for the introduction of legislation to amend the Fisheries Resources Act to provide specific penalties for certain fisheries offences and to allow for the establishment of the Florida Stone Crab (*Menippe mercenaria*) Fisheries in Belize.
- Finally, in the wake of the rising number of COVID-19 infections and the presence of the highly contagious Omicron variant and the continued presence of the Delta variant, Cabinet continues to encourage the public to wear masks in public, maintain physical distance, wash hands regularly, and for those not fully vaccinated, to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Vaccines save lives.

Ends