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PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Labour Re-Initiates HIV/AIDS Policy in the Workplace Initiative

Belmopan. February 9, 2023.

The Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with the National AIDS Commission (NAC), has reinitiated the HIV/AIDS Policy in the Workplace Initiative. As part of that engagement, the Labour Department and the NAC held a certified training seminar in Belize City on February 1st, 2nd, and 8th, 2023, for 12 Belizean companies and organizations. The program will be extended nationwide in the coming year.

During the closing ceremony held today, the Ministry of Labour and NAC signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with each participating company and organization. This signals a commitment to address HIV/AIDS as a workplace issue through the development and implementation of workplace policies and programs. The MOU seeks to ensure that businesses and organizations support the HIV/AIDS workplace initiatives and programs of the Government of Belize, the NAC, and the International Labour Organization (ILO). It will establish capacity development training, refresher training for all employees, a workplace testing initiative, and the development of an HIV and AIDS Workplace Policy. Furthermore, it calls for organizations to provide HIV/AIDS counseling and information, commemorate World AIDS Day, as well as attend and participate in HIV/AIDS in the workplace conferences and forums.

The ILO issued a code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the workplace in 2001. This code is critical and covers key principles that the Ministry of Labour uses as a guide along with Belize's National AIDS Policy.

The ministry applauds each organization that participated and signed the MOU, as this will create a better working environment for everyone, regardless of HIV status. Through capacity building and effective HIV/AIDS

workplace policies, the ministry will continue to engage companies and organizations across the country in an effort to reduce HIV transmissions, HIV-related stigma, and discrimination.

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