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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Ministry of Labour Launches New National Child Labour Policy and Strategy**

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The Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government today launched the new Belize National Child Labour Policy and Strategy 2022-2025.

Child labour is a complex issue and requires strong partnerships, social dialogue and collaboration. The policy seeks to reduce its incidence by eliminating the worst forms by 2025.

The new policy makes several new commitments especially as it relates to removing all ambiguities in the Labour Act as to what constitutes child labour, harmonizing the definition of a child across legislations, establishing clear inter-agency communication and data sharing protocols in child labour cases, and fostering within the private sector the development of socially responsible code of ethics that protects children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

The Cabinet gave its approval for the development of the policy in April 2021 and, since then, the Child Labour Committee of the Labour Department has been working with several partners to craft the new policy. After a series of consultations and workshops with stakeholders across Belize, the policy was developed and funded by the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF and the Government of Belize.

The ILO also provided immeasurable technical support throughout the development process of the National Child Labour Policy and Strategy. The ministry extends sincere appreciation to every member of the team including Mr. Owen Hender, Primary Consultant. Special commendation is also extended to the staff of the Labour Department and the members of

the National Child Labour Committee who worked tirelessly to develop the policy.

Present at today's ceremony were Hon. Oscar Requena, Minister of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government; Hon. Ramiro Ramirez, Minister of State in the ministry; Mr. Valentino Shal, Chief Executive Officer in the ministry; Mr. Dennis Zulu, Director, International Labour Organisation – Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean; Ms. Enkhnasan Nasan-Ulzii , Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF-Belize; and Mr. Andy Westby, Chairman, Belize Sugar Cane Farmers' Association.

A digital copy of the policy can be found online at <https://www.ruraltransformation.gov.bz/the-ministry/labour/resources/labour-laws/>

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