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PRESS RELEASE

Belize Chairs Twenty-Fourth Meeting of CARICOM Foreign Ministers

Belmopan. May 7, 2021. 5:00 p.m.

The Twenty-Fourth Meeting of the Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was held virtually on May 6-7, 2021 under the chairmanship of Hon. Eamon Courtenay, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration.

CARICOM foreign ministers agreed to intensify the frequency of their interaction as they reemphasized the importance of the Community's coordinated foreign policy response. The ministers also discussed ways of strengthening the region's bilateral relations with traditional and new partners, as well as with hemispheric and multilateral actors.

Additionally, foreign ministers considered several issues of paramount importance for the region inclusive of the challenges to public health and food systems, and the economic and social disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. The existential threat of climate change, the highly anticipated COP26, and the important issue of migration also formed part of the agenda.

During his intervention, Foreign Minister Courtenay called for the Community's continued resonance of unity in advocating for the fair, equitable and timely access to COVID-19 vaccines as the coronavirus pandemic continues globally. Minister Courtenay reaffirmed the importance of impressing upon development partners and international financial institutions for a more tailored approach to the needs of small and vulnerable economies for access to concessional financing and debt relief. Minister Courtenay also briefed his colleagues on the recent development in the Belize Guatemala process.

On the margins of the 24th COFCOR, Minister Courtenay moderated a call between CARICOM Foreign Ministers and Mr. Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor to the President of the United States of America. CARICOM Foreign Ministers and Mr. Sullivan discussed COVID-19 vaccines, economic recovery, climate change and regional security.

Ambassador Amalia Mai, CEO in the Ministry; H.E. Lawrence Sylvester, Ambassador of Belize to CARICOM; Ms. Ayesha Borland, director of international affairs; and Mrs. Amaris Leal, foreign service officer, also formed part of the Belize delegation.

Ends