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PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan, 8th October 2023.

- The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met on 6th October 2023.
- Cabinet welcomed the update from the Minister of Education, Culture, Science & Technology on the ConnectEd program to provide wifi in schools and the distribution of over 5,000 digital devices donated by Taiwan for schools in all districts across the nation. The ConnectEd program, which empowers over 66,000 students and 3,807 faculty, is one aspect of the Belize Education Sector Plan 2021-2023, which identifies technology as one of its pillars for transformation and is keeping with the #PlanBelize Agenda for making education work for Belize.
- Cabinet gave its approval for amendments to the Ombudsman Act to strengthen the office of the Ombudsman to receive and address human rights complaints. The office will be required to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights while simultaneously turning international human rights obligations into meaningful action at the national level.
- Cabinet gave its approval for Belize to sign the Santiago Declaration to establish a regional council on the implementation of recommendations on ethics of artificial intelligence (AI) to promote the design, development, deployment and acquisition of AI systems that respect human rights and dignity, gender equality and fundamental freedoms.
- The Government of Belize will support a resolution that will be introduced at the 11th Ministerial Meeting of Ministers of Caribbean States responsible for Intellectual Property for Caribbean countries to strengthen cooperation and the use of intellectual property.

- Cabinet received an update on the current situation in Haiti and agreed to deploy members of the Belize Defence Force as a part of the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSSM) subject to satisfactory arrangements being put in place. Cabinet decided that the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of National Defence and Border Security should remain fully engaged with international partners on the developments in Haiti and the deployment of the MSSM.
- Cabinet gave its approval for amendments to be introduced at the next sitting of the House of Representatives to the Economic Citizenship (Abolition of Rights) Bill to prohibit any person from relying on “an economic citizenship relationship” to obtain Belizean nationality. Cabinet also approved tabling the Belizean Nationality (Amendment) Bill in the House. The Bill would add a residency requirement for minors born to parents who are not Belizeans but who subsequently became Belizeans through marriage and wish to pass the nationality to their children.
- Cabinet approved amendments to the Fiscal Incentives Act to update the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) in Belize to make it more consistent with the World Bank MSME definition.
- Finally, Cabinet gave its approval for the introduction of a Bill to amend the Referendum Act, Cap 10, to make provision that a mandatory referendum must be held prior to any proposed amendment or repeal of the Petroleum Operations (Maritime Zone) Moratorium Act, 2017.

Ends