



PR#519

PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan. 20th October 2021. 6:00 p.m.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 19th October 2021.

- Cabinet was updated on the status of vaccinations and the number of vaccines available in Belize. As of 18th October 2021, 203,819 persons or 47.37 percent of the total population had received at least one dose of the vaccine and 165,542 or 37.4 percent had been fully vaccinated. Belize now ranks second among the Caribbean states in the percentage of the population fully vaccinated. Currently, there are more than 245,000 vaccines in stock, Pfizer – 29,508, AstraZeneca – 90,800 and Johnson & Johnson- 114,000.
- Cabinet gave its approval of recommendations from the Ministry of Health & Wellness to amend the Public Health Act to change the structure of the ministry to allow for a Director of Public Health and Wellness as well as a Director of Hospital Services. In addition, Cabinet approved the recommendation by the Minister of Health & Wellness to increase the size of Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital (KMH) Board to allow for a representative of the KMH Workers Union to join the KMH Board of Governors.
- Cabinet authorized the steps necessary to complete the cancellation of the \$1.1 billion-plus superbonds and to enter into the Blue Bond loan for the payment of the superbonds at a discounted 55 cents on the dollar. This includes the passing of the necessary National Assembly resolutions and the Blue Bond Loan Bill.
- Cabinet supported recommendations from the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs to introduce legislation for strengthening the juvenile justice system by removing status

offences by repealing the Certified Institutions Bill, to support amendments to the Juvenile Offenders Bill and to support amendments to the Families and Children Bill. Taken together, this will be a huge step towards compliance with the Convention of the Rights of the Child by moving Belize beyond a system that criminalizes children for status offences to a state that recognizes the vulnerabilities of children who commit status and criminal offences and affords the opportunity to receive the protection and services they require.

- Finally, Cabinet strongly urges the public to wear masks, maintain physical distance, wash hands regularly, and for those not fully vaccinated to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Vaccinations save lives.

Ends