



PR#315-22

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Second Road Safety Project Hosts Defensive Driving and First Responders Training**

*Belmopan. October 21, 2022. 5:30 p.m.*

Today, public officers and the staff of the municipal bodies completed a three-day defensive driving and first responders training through the Second Road Safety Project Execution Unit in the Ministry of Economic Development.

The training was facilitated by the Belize Institute of Management and delivered by Mr. Paul Schmidt, retired Acting Operations Officer for the Department of Transport; Mr. Tirso Galvez, retired Chief Transport Officer for the Department of Transport and team leader for the enforcement component of the First Road Safety Project in Belize; and Mr. Javier Canul, an experienced Emergency Medical Technician and First Responders Trainer.

Road traffic incidents (RTIs) have emerged as a public health issue due to the alarming number of injuries and deaths caused. RTIs result in considerable economic losses not only to individuals but to their families and the country as a whole. These losses are the outcome of the cost of treatment, a decrease in human capital in the workforce for those killed or disabled, and for family members who need to take time off from work or school to care for the injured.

As a result, the objective of this training is to create awareness of road safety. Some aspects of road safety include knowing the laws of the road, how to maneuver and control a motor vehicle under various road conditions, time-space management, basic principles of driving, and the effects of drinking and driving, among other areas. To complement the defensive driving

component of the training, participants were taught basic first responders techniques that can be used to assist victims of RTIs.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Osmond Martinez, CEO in the Ministry of Economic Development, thanked all participants and challenged them to put their new skills to practice and transfer the knowledge to others.

CEO Martinez also encouraged the entire nation, particularly road users, to take account of the road not only for themselves but for other drivers and pedestrians. He highlighted that from January to September 2022, there were 234 road traffic incidents, with 63 fatalities and 94 serious injuries. He stressed that these numbers are alarming. With that, CEO Martinez reminded the public that a vehicle is equivalent to a weapon as it has the ability to injure and kill, but stated that it is believed that bad driving practices and habits on Belize's roads can be curbed with continuous education and training.

## **Ends**

For more information, please contact:

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