



PR#285-22

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Ministry of Economic Development Signs MOU with Canada-CARICOM Expert Deployment Mechanism**

*Belmopan. September 27, 2022. 5:10 p.m.*

Today, Dr. Osmond Martinez, Chief Executive Officer for the Ministry of Economic Development, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Mrs. Wendy Harris, President of the Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO). On September 6, 2022, Cabinet gave its approval for the Ministry of Economic Development to sign the MOU in connection with the Canada-CARICOM Expert Deployment Mechanism (CCEDM).

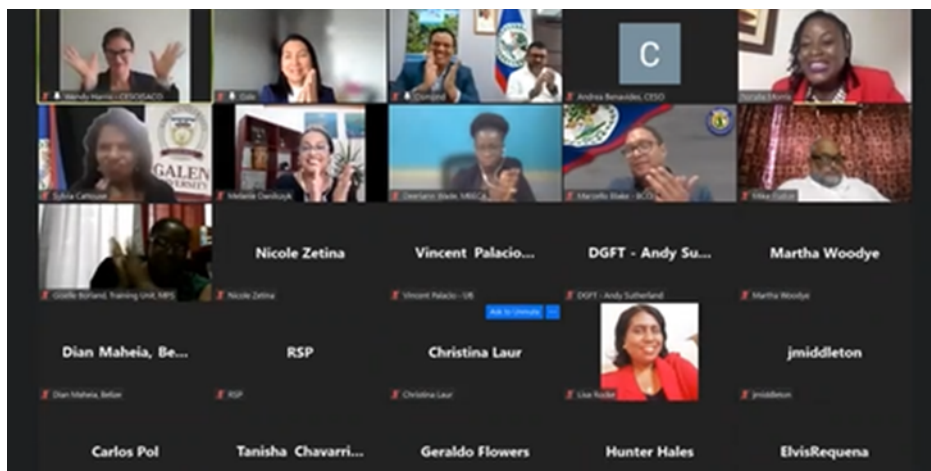
This mechanism will enable Belize to access up to 29 technical assistance programs free of cost from Canada for the next 2.5 years. Belize can utilize the programs to address priority needs by supporting institutional strengthening and economic growth through the transfer of skills and knowledge, and fostering locally driven, sustainable solutions that are equitable, inclusive, and environmentally responsible.

The CCEDM is a four-year demand-based program funded by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada (GAC) to address priority needs identified by national governments, while supporting countries in their efforts to strengthen and diversify local economies, build strong climate-resilient communities, and reduce gender and economic inequalities. With this partnership, Belize's government ministries, departments, agencies, academia, and private sector can acquire technical assistance in strengthening institutional/organizational strategies and building human resource capacities under the pillars of Strategic Planning and Policy, Operation Efficiency and Effectiveness, and Communications.

Through the CCEDM, at least 3,000 Belizeans (60% of which are women) will have the opportunity to apply for tailored advising through training, mentorship, assessments, and workshops. The results of this program will include the strengthening of institutions and individuals, paving the way for inclusive, equitable, innovative, and sustainable socio-economic development. For countries like Belize, building technical capacity is an invaluable investment. These efforts not only lend themselves to the advancement of national priorities, but also enhance the involvement and competitiveness of developing countries like Belize in the global arena.

In his remarks, CEO Martinez stated that the ministry and the Government of Belize are grateful for the tremendous support provided by CESO to the people of Belize. He added that this is an opportunity for Belize to meet the goals set forth in the Medium-Term Development Strategy of Plan Belize and, most importantly, it is an opportunity to cultivate an even stronger partnership between Canada and Belize.

Present for the signing were Mrs. Christine Faveri, Head of Cooperation at the High Commission of Canada to Belize; Mr. Jose Urbina, CEO for the Ministry of Youth, Sports and E-Governance; Mrs. Dian Maheia, CEO for the Ministry of Education; Mr. Andy Sutherland, Director General for Foreign Trade; Mrs. Gale Lee, Senior Director for International Services of CESO; Ms. Natalie Morris, Regional Representative of CESO; Mrs. Andrea Benavedes, Programme Manager for the CCEDM; and representatives from the Ministry of Economic Development, the Training Unit for the Public Service, Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, University of the West Indies Open Campus, Galen University, University of Belize, Resilient Rural Belize Project, Belize Integral Security Program, Belize Second Road Safety Project, and the Government of Belize Press Office.



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