



PR#052

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs Meets with Maya Leadership**

Belmopan. December 18, 2020. 4:30 p.m.

Shortly after the general elections in November, the new Briceño administration announced the creation of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs to be led by Hon. Dolores Balderamos Garcia.

The Indigenous peoples of Belize are comprised of the Kekchi, Mopan, Yucatec Maya and the Garifuna who all make up approximately 18% of the country's population.

As part of its outreach, Minister Dolores Balderamos Garcia and Minister of State Gilroy Usher met with representatives of the Toledo Alcaldes Association, the Maya Leaders Alliance, and the Julian Cho Society on December 17, 2020. The very cordial and fruitful meeting was held at the invitation of Minister Balderamos Garcia as a first step towards meeting the key partners in the Maya leadership and learning about the complex issues surrounding the Consent Order of the Caribbean Court of Justice on the Maya Land Rights Case. The parties discussed matters such as the role of the new Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, the aims of the Maya people in the context of the land rights implementation, and the status of implementation of the Consent Order. There was agreement on priority actions and next steps for moving forward in a collaborative manner, especially in light of the pending compliance court hearing set for January 21, 2021.

Also present were Tanya Santos Neal, CEO in the Ministry; Samantha Matute Tucker, Deputy Solicitor General; Mr. Nicasio Sanchez; Mr. Pablo Mis; Ms. Crisitina Coc; Dr. Filiberto Penados; and Leslie Mendez, Legal Counsel.

**Ends**