



PR#056-23

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Cabinet Brief**

*Belmopan, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023.*

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

- Cabinet discussed at length the global issue of inflation which has increased supply costs and, subsequently, the cost of goods and services locally. Despite government subsidies to the productive and transportation sectors, an increase in the minimum wage, and an employment boom, the cost of living continues to affect all Belizeans. A decision was taken to immediately convene a Cabinet sub-committee chaired by Hon. Jose Abelardo Mai, Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise, to (1) explore a short-term framework to alleviate the impacts on those most affected and (2) to explore any and all angles, including legal, to put an end to price gouging.
- Cabinet welcomed the offer from the Joint Unions to assemble a team that will actively assist with monitoring processes in stores to detect instances of price gouging. This is another demonstration of the government's commitment to working hand-in-hand with the unions for the good of our nation and all our people.
- Cabinet gave its support to a joint undertaking between the Ministry of Health & Wellness and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, and Technology, to promote healthy foods in schools in Belize. This is in response to the escalating health issues brought about by the availability of unhealthy food options for schoolchildren and adolescents. This may result in the gradual banning of unhealthy foods and sugar-sweetened beverages in our schools.

- Cabinet gave its approval for a package of amendments to legislation to be introduced at the next sitting of the House of Representatives in connection with the modernization of tax administration with respect to laws regarding anti-money laundering, combatting the financing of terrorism, and proliferation financing in Belize.
- Cabinet gave its approval for government to enter into two loan agreements with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). The first is for BZ\$10 million to support the rehabilitation of 43.5 miles of rural roads in furtherance of the Resilient Rural Belize Program. The second loan agreement is for BZ\$2.4 million to meet additional costs for the Belize Social Investment Fund to cover costs associated with four outstanding community projects, namely, Corazon Creek Technical High School building, Cristo Rey R.C. Pre-Primary and Primary School Construction Sub-Project, the continuation of the Libertad/Concepcion Rural Water System, and the Dorothy Menzies Child Care Center buildings.
- Finally, Cabinet wishes all Belizeans a safe and happy National Heroes and Benefactors Day.

**Ends**