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PRESS RELEASE

Statement on Cabinet's Position on Sugar Industry

Belmopan, March 7, 2023

On January 10, 2023, representatives from the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA) outlined in a presentation to Cabinet the association's position with regard its commercial agreement with BSI/ASR. Today, representatives from BSI/ASR had the opportunity to present to Cabinet the company's stance.

Cabinet is resolute that it will not nationalize the sugar industry and will instead try to get the parties on a collaborative path for the better interest of the industry. Having heard from both sides of the issue, the cane farmers and the millers, Cabinet has set up a ministerial sub-committee to meet with BSI and BSCFA to chart a way forward for both sides to resolve their differences.

The sub-committee will be chaired by Hon. Kareem Musa, whose urgent remit is to guide discussions between both parties so that an enduring commercial agreement can be concluded.

Cabinet recognizes the role of sugar as the lifeblood of the northern economy, its proceeds as a critical source of foreign exchange and, most importantly, the blood, sweat and tears of the individual cane farmers, whose sacrifice and persistence must be justly rewarded.

Furthermore, Cabinet appreciates the vital role of the miller and the marketer of Belize's sugar, as well as the conditions necessary for strategic foreign direct investments to be fostered and to grow.

Within the Constitution and the law, Cabinet will continue to engage with the parties, facilitating fair compromises and offering the government's support by whatever means are available.

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