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PRESS RELEASE

The National Meteorological Service of Belize Engages in the Readiness Phase of the Systematic Observations Financing Facility

Belmopan, June 23, 2023.

Belize, through the National Meteorological Service (NMS) within the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, has been selected as one of the first countries globally to benefit from the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO's) Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF).

SOFF is an initiative aimed at strengthening climate adaptation and resilient development through improved measurement of climate and weather parameters. This improvement will subsequently result in supporting better weather forecasts, more reliable early warning systems and climate information services to save lives and livelihoods and protect property. SOFF endeavors to attain these goals through sustained collection and sharing of high-quality surface-based weather and climate measurements in compliance with the internationally agreed Global Basic Observing Network, leading to improved weather and climate prediction products.

Belize is currently engaged in the SOFF Readiness Phase and is supported by the UK MET Office as peer advisor. In collaboration with its peer advisor, the NMS, is working on developing a funding proposal that is to be submitted to the SOFF Secretariat. This proposal will then be considered for the SOFF Investment Phase.

A team from the UK MET Office is currently in the country engaging with the NMS and relevant stakeholders to examine how these services and products could be enhanced further through SOFF and to explore the overall value of the NMS' contribution to the socio-economic development of Belize.

Overall, the SOFF initiative is expected to benefit Belize by ensuring that there is at least one weather station in the country that is taking measurements of weather conditions at the surface and the higher levels of the atmosphere and transmitting that information for use in the global weather and climate prediction models. These models are in turn used by all weather and climate forecasting offices across the world, including the NMS. Other potential benefits include building the human resource and institutional capacity of the NMS to maintain its network of weather stations and providing impact-based weather forecasting and early warnings to the public. This is highly critical as the country strives to meet the United Nations Early Warning for All goal by or before the target year 2027.

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