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PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Sustainable Development Launches Integrated Management of Production Landscapes Project

Belmopan, June 28, 2023.

The Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management officially launched the project entitled Integrated Management of Production Landscapes to Deliver Multiple Global Environmental Benefits on June 26. The project is being implemented with financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The project aims to mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable land and water management into production landscapes in Belize. This will be achieved through three interrelated outcomes that will enable an environment that comprises policies, financial mechanisms, and institutional capacities to deliver multiple Global Environmental Benefits.

This project will provide a total investment of US\$5 million, which will be provided by the GEF and UNDP over five years with additional co-financing of US\$19 million from the Government of Belize and its partners. This investment is intended to reverse the fragmentation of forest ecosystems including the clearance of riparian vegetation, biodiversity loss, and land degradation within production landscapes in the watershed. The project specifically seeks to establish approximately 4,500 hectares of landscape management tools that promote connectivity between key biodiversity areas.

In his keynote remarks, Hon. Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management, highlighted the importance of shared responsibility as partners to ensure that this project is successful and delivers on its objectives for the people of Belize. The efforts being made now will contribute to the long-term success of our nation. He emphasized that “Belize will continue to be a global leader and serve as a model in sustainable development.”

Considering the prevalent issues for biodiversity conservation, sustainable land and water use, and how these issues will be exacerbated by the onset of climate change, the importance of this project cannot be overstated. The systematization of best practices and lessons learned in biodiversity conservation and sustainable land/water management that will be implemented under this project will support information sharing for replication in other production landscapes and watersheds in the country.

Mr. Ian King, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Belize stated, “This project, as is designed, is innovative being one of the first within the national GEF portfolio, which applied a conservation for development approach to production systems.” The conservation-for-development model focuses on economies of value rather than scale, effectively managing the people/ environment interface.

The GEF serves as a financing mechanism for various multilateral environmental conventions which sets ambitious targets aimed at addressing environmental degradation. Building on the GEF’s accumulated experiences and achievements, GEF-6 projects and programs have a strong focus on the drivers to better tackle the root causes of environmental degradation, which is critical to mitigate and eventually reverse adverse environmental trends.

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