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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Government to Open Western Border for Cargo Clearance on Saturdays**

*Belmopan, July 19, 2023.*

The Government of Belize announces the opening of the Benque Viejo Border for cargo clearance on Saturdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Belize time) effective July 22, 2023. This decision stems from discussions with Belize's National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) aimed at implementing the 2014 agreement between Belize and Guatemala to extend operating hours at the border.

The NTFC, inclusive of members such as the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, welcomes the government's support for this initiative designed to enhance trade facilitation between the two countries.

A key aspect of this development is the commitment from government border agencies to not impose additional fees for clearing goods during the new Saturday time slot. This commitment reflects the government's dedication to supporting and facilitating trade for the private sector, ensuring a seamless and cost-effective process for businesses engaged in cross-border commerce and effectively reducing barriers to trade.

To avoid delays, especially with the new operating hours, the government reminds the private sector that all exemption letters and licenses must be obtained prior to the arrival of goods at the border.

To commemorate this historic occasion, a ceremony will be held at the Benque Viejo Border on Saturday, July 22 at 10:00 a.m. Representatives from the business community and media outlets are invited to celebrate this milestone in Belize's trade relations.

The Government of Belize reaffirms its commitment to advancing economic cooperation, fostering friendly relations with neighboring countries, and promoting a thriving and prosperous business environment.

#### **Ends**

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