



PR#156-23

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Government Reiterates Position on Portico**

*Belmopan, July 3, 2023.*

On 16th June 2023, at the sitting of the House of Representatives, Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño informed the nation that the UDP Portico Definitive Agreement, authorized and executed by the previous UDP Administration in 2020, was not in the best interest of the people of Belize and would not be proceeded with.

This decision was reached after an informed discussion in Cabinet and after receiving legal advice from multiple attorneys of international repute.

At the same time, appreciating the credibility of the key strategic stakeholders, Royal Caribbean Group — one of the leading cruise lines in the world — and Boskalis, one of the leading dredging companies in the world, Cabinet further determined that the government should proceed to meet with these parties with a view to negotiate or develop a new arrangement in an open and transparent manner that would serve the best interest of the people of Belize.

On 23rd June 2023, the Royal Caribbean Group, highlighting the shortcomings of the existing cruise infrastructure in Belize, reiterated its commitment to significantly increase its contribution to Belize's tourism economy.

The government is encouraged by this continuing commitment as it seeks to enhance the economic opportunities for and the quality of life of the people of Belize by encouraging real meaningful investment that supports long-term sustainable human development.

Ultimately, Cabinet and the House of Representatives will consider and approve any new cruise port arrangement. This will highlight the difference between this administration and the one that signed the secret, disgraceful UDP Portico Definitive Agreement.

**Ends**