



**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTRY OF
FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INVESTMENT, CIVIL AVIATION &
IMMIGRATION**

Belmopan, Belize, Central America

Telephone: 501-822-2345, 2346

Facsimile: 501-822-0071

Email: secretarypm@opm.gov.bz

PRESS RELEASE

Sugar Industry Commission of Inquiry Holds Inaugural Meeting

Belmopan, June 3, 2024.

On March 19, Prime Minister John Briceño signed a statutory instrument establishing a Commission of Inquiry into the sugar cane industry and, on May 29, commissioners held their first meeting. The Commission is expected to examine the sugar cane industry's whole value chain and present recommendations to the Government of Belize.

This inaugural meeting was held virtually and had the participation of Mr Wayne Piper, Chairman, and the five commissioners, namely Mr. Robert Mariette and Mr. Vinod Ramharai from Mauritius, Mr. Jeffery Joseph from Belize, Mr. Andy Church from South Africa, and Mr. Simon Gibbons from the United Kingdom. Also in attendance were Ms. Lorena Posada, Secretary to the Commission; Mr. Hugh O'Brien, Lead Coordinator for the Government of Belize; Mr. Marcos Osorio, Chairman of the Sugar Industry Control Board (SICB); and Mr. Kirty Neermul, Technical Coordinator for the Mauritius team.

A general plan for the first phase of work, along with associated logistics, was discussed and agreed upon. That first phase is expected to include visits to the mills at BSI and Santander and farm and field trips to sugar production sites in the north and west of Belize. To facilitate these visits and their in-country work, the commissioners will begin to arrive in Belize during the first week of June, and the SICB will provide logistical support.

The commissioners also agreed that their meetings would not be held publicly but that the press would be kept informed of developments through Mr. Hugh O'Brien, Lead Coordinator for the Commission of Inquiry. The commissioners also agreed that the Chairman would occasionally avail himself of interviews.

The commissioners look forward to completing the requisite report(s) by the deadline of November 30, 2024.

Ends