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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Belize's Ambassador Young Assumes Chairmanship of the Permanent Council of the OAS**

*Belmopan, October 4, 2024.*

Belize assumed the Chairmanship of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) at the OAS headquarters in Washington DC, United States of America.

During a formal ceremony on October 4, 2024, Ambassador Victor Fernandes, Permanent Representative of Barbados, passed the ceremonial gavel to H.E. Ambassador Lynn Young, Permanent Representative of Belize, as he assumed this distinguished role.

Belize assumes the chairmanship of this pivotal body at a crucial time for the hemisphere. Ambassador Young's appointment underscores Belize's unwavering commitment to regional cooperation, democracy, and development as fundamental principles of the OAS.

In his remarks upon accepting the Chairmanship, Ambassador Young conveyed his profound sense of responsibility in guiding the work of the Permanent Council and reaffirmed Belize's dedication to the OAS's core mission. He emphasized that "Belize remains deeply committed to the core principles that define the OAS: democracy, human rights, multidimensional security, and integral development."

Ambassador Young's chairmanship comes at a time when the region is confronting numerous challenges, including the ongoing political and humanitarian crises in Haiti and Venezuela, as well as the socio-economic hardships. In addressing these crises, Ambassador Young stated, "Chief among

them is the deepening crisis in Haiti. The political instability, economic collapse, and humanitarian disaster unfolding in Haiti require our urgent focus. Belize stands in solidarity with the Haitian people and supports efforts to stabilize the country, restore democratic institutions, and provide essential humanitarian relief.”

Ambassador Young further outlined Belize’s priority to address socio-economic challenges within the region, with a particular emphasis on eradicating poverty and promoting inclusive economic growth. He stated, “The OAS has a critical role to play in supporting member states as they navigate these challenges. We must focus on strategies that empower the most vulnerable, enhance access to education and healthcare, promote decent work, and foster resilient economies.”

In addition to these priorities, Ambassador Young underscored the necessity of strengthening the OAS itself, highlighting the need to ensure the Organization’s financial sustainability. “To achieve these goals, the OAS itself must be strengthened. If we are to effectively address the pressing issues in Haiti, Venezuela, and across the region, we must enhance the OAS’s financial sustainability and operational capacity,” he emphasized.

Ambassador Young concluded his address by calling for solidarity and collective action, stating, “The challenges we face are interconnected and complex, but we also have unparalleled opportunities to work together to create a more peaceful, prosperous, and equitable future for all.”

**Ends**