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PRESS RELEASE

Minister Martinez Visits Marie Sharp's Fine Foods Ltd. to Bolster Global Trade

Belmopan, February 6, 2025.

Hon. Dr. Osmond Martinez, Minister of State for Foreign Trade in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and BELTRAIDE, conducted a site visit to Marie Sharp's Fine Foods Ltd. in the Stann Creek Valley. This visit underscores the Belizean government's commitment to supporting local businesses, addressing their operational challenges, and facilitating their expansion into international markets.

The primary objective of the visit was to gain firsthand insight into the opportunities and challenges confronting the company, which has grown significantly. It is exporting premium products to numerous countries, including the United Kingdom, Japan, Dubai, and the United States. The company is now seeking further market penetration in South Korea, Canada, and Mexico. However, it faces several challenges related to production, logistics, and trade, such as elevated import costs, logistical constraints, and competition for high-quality raw materials.

Company representatives requested government support to mitigate these challenges, particularly in trade facilitation, streamlining processes, and enhancing supply chain management.

A key point of discussion was the substantial positive social impact of Marie Sharp's Fine Foods Ltd. The company has played a vital role in improving the livelihoods of local pepper farmers, lifting many out of poverty through interest-free financing that enables them to expand their operations.

Minister Martinez reaffirmed the government's commitment to cultivating a supportive environment for businesses like Marie Sharp's Fine Foods Ltd., emphasizing that bolstering agricultural productivity and supporting local enterprises are crucial for achieving Belize's national trade objectives of export diversification and economic growth. He acknowledged the company's concerns, particularly regarding trade and import challenges. This visit is part of a broader initiative to strengthen Belize's position as a leading exporter of high-quality agricultural products.

The company is also exploring a strategic partnership with Panama to develop a distribution hub for its products in the Caribbean and South America. The government is dedicated to fostering such strategic trade partnerships.

This visit represents a significant step in strengthening the collaborative relationship between the Belizean government and local businesses, ensuring they have the necessary support to thrive in the global marketplace.

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