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PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Investment Launches Second Phase of “Vanilla Training for Women and Girls in the West and South of Belize” Project in Belmopan City

Belmopan, February 27, 2025.

The Office of the Prime Minister and Ministry of Investment, through the Investment Policy and Compliance Unit (IPCU), in collaboration with the National Women’s Commission (NWC), the Taiwan Technical Mission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, the Belize Permaculture & Renewable Energy Ltd., and the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Transport, through the Western Region Youth Training Institute of The Department of Youth Services, officially launched the second phase of the project titled “Vanilla Training for Women and Girls in the West and South of Belize” in Belmopan City.

In this phase of the project, 30 women from the Cayo District were selected to receive training in growing and harvesting vanilla, with the goal of increasing their income-generating opportunities.

The project will:

- Provide hands-on training to women and young people on propagating and establishing vanilla vines in Belize, as well as introduce farmers to harvesting and post-harvest treatment of the crop.
- Establish the second public vanilla propagation nursery in Belize.
- Provide 10 vanilla cuttings to each of the 30 women, allowing them to cultivate the plants in their home gardens.

Vanilla is native to Belize and is used worldwide in beverages, desserts, baked goods, cosmetics, and industrial applications. It is ranked as the second most valuable spice in the world. With interest from several international companies in purchasing Belizean-grown vanilla, the government recognizes the economic opportunity that exists in the global market.

Present at the opening ceremony were Hon. Rodwell Ferguson, Minister of Youth, Sports and Transport; Valentino Shal, Chief Executive Officer in Ministry of Youth, Sports and Transport; Roberto Pan, Chief of Mission of the Taiwan Technical Mission; Lincoln Blake, Director of the IPCU in the Ministry of Investment; Eleanor Murillo, Executive Director of the National Women's Commission; Indira Loague, Director of the Department of Youth Services; and Indira Usher, Foreign Service Officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. The instructors for the course are Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Nesbitt of Belize Permaculture & Renewable Energy Ltd. **Ends**

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