



PR#583

## PRESS RELEASE

### Cabinet Brief

*Belmopan. 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021. 4:35 p.m.*

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

- Cabinet gave its approval for the Minister of Tourism & Diaspora Relations and the Minister of the Blue Economy & Civil Aviation to hold consultations with the relevant stakeholders about the possibility of designating separate fee structure to apply to departure fees for regional flights. The intention is to attract more regional flights through Belize.
- Cabinet approved six reports to be presented to the International Labour Organization. These reports are in compliance with Belize's obligation under Article 22 of the International Labour Convention to which Belize is a State Party. These reports were prepared after consultations with the relevant government departments, non-governmental organizations, and other agencies. They report on Belize's compliance with the conventions relating to Forced Labour, Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, Employment Bargaining, Collective Bargaining and the Minimum Wage. Some of these reports were due from as far back as 2010 and are in partial fulfillment of some 20 reports which were unreported under the previous administration.
- Cabinet gave its approval for the establishment of a measuring, reporting and verification program within the Forest Department to serve as the implementing and coordinating team for government's mandate relating to issues on carbon dioxide emissions reduction from deforestation and forest degradation, conservation, the sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forests carbon stock. This program is to take effect on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022.
- Cabinet gave its endorsement to proposed amendments to the Development Finance Cooperation (DFC) Act to enhance the efficient and effective delivery of DFC's financial products and services by DFC to the Belizean citizens.
- Cabinet was updated on the status of vaccinations and the number of vaccines available in Belize. Currently, there are more than 360,042 vaccines available. As of 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021, 210,154 persons or 48.8 percent had received at least one dose of the vaccine and 197,739 or 45.9 percent have been fully vaccinated.

- The Minister of Health & Wellness informed Cabinet that in strengthening the medical sector's ability to care for COVID-19 patients, and the possible detection of the Omicron variant in Belize, five new ventilators and patient monitors will be donated to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital.
- Cabinet also approved the reopening of land borders effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022. The health conditions applicable to such travel will be published shortly.
- Concerned over the number of road traffic accidents, including drunk driving incidents, Cabinet requested a step-up in highway patrols by the Department of Transport and an increased presence by the Traffic Branch of the Belize Police Department including checkpoints with testing apparatus to measure the alcohol levels in drivers. Motorists are informed to expect delays on the major roads and highways. This is necessary to reduce the number of road traffic accidents across our nation.
- Finally, as the holiday season draws near, Cabinet continues to encourage those not yet vaccinated to do so and reminds Belizeans who have been fully vaccinated for more than three months that booster shots are now available. The public is reminded to maintain physical distance, wash hands regularly, and wear a mask or face covering in public.

**Ends**