



PR#048-22

## PRESS RELEASE

### Cabinet Brief

*Belmopan. 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022. 9:00 a.m.*

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

- The Cabinet welcomed the opportunity to exchange views with Dr. Hyginus Leon, president of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and his delegation. The discussion revolved around the work of the bank in Belize and efforts to enhance the partnership between Belize and the CDB in the development agenda of Belize and the Caribbean region.
- Hon. Eamon Courtenay, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade & Immigration, reported on the successful reopening of the land borders and seaports on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022 for fully vaccinated persons only. Minister Courtenay indicated that since the opening of the borders and seaports total movements of persons arriving and departing Belize was well over 5,000.
- Hon. Michel Chebat, Minister of Public Utilities, briefed Cabinet on the settlement arrived at with the Christian Workers Union on behalf of the stevedores. Cabinet welcomed the process employed in dealing with the stevedores which was markedly different than the violence with which they were treated under the former administration and corrected a wrong which was committed against the stevedores at the time of the privatization.
- Cabinet was updated on the status of vaccinations and the number of vaccines available in Belize as of 7<sup>th</sup> February. Currently, there are more than 262,474 vaccines on hand. As of 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022, 213,352 persons or 49.59 percent of the total population had received at least one dose of the vaccine and 204,952 or 47.64 percent of the total population has been fully vaccinated. Also, 30,546 Belizeans aged 12 to 17 years old have received at least one dose of the vaccine and 25,194 two doses. Additionally, over 33,867 booster shots have been issued to date. Boosters are now available to persons (including 12- to 17-year-olds), who have been fully vaccinated for three months or more.
- Cabinet mandated that COVID-19 rapid tests be given free of cost by the Ministry of Health & Wellness to Belizean students traveling for purpose of study in Mexico and Guatemala. Students will be required to show a valid student identification card as proof of enrolment in an educational institution.

- Cabinet approved Belize's signature and the subsequent ratification of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Agreement on the Return or Sharing of Recovered Assets intended to provide operational guidance and enhance international and regional cooperation for the return or sharing of recovered assets. As well, Belize's signature of the Declaration of Intent to Provisionally Apply the Agreement on the Return or Sharing of Recovered Assets.
- Cabinet commended the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade & Immigration on the work of the Foreign Ministry on raising the profile of Belize internationally and endorsed the plan of action for Belize's Chairmanship of CARICOM for the first half of 2022, including the opportunity for Belize to lead on critical and emergent issues facing CARICOM member states. Cabinet also approved the plans for the hosting of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Intersessional Meeting of CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting in San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 and for the CARICOM and SICA Leaders' Summit immediately after on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022.
- Finally, Cabinet continues to encourage the public to wear masks in public, maintain physical distance, wash hands regularly, and for those not fully vaccinated, to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Vaccines save lives.

**Ends**