

Reporter

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Bread subsidy to be distributed next week

By Michelle Sutherland

As early as next week the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise will be distributing the first portion of its promised subsidiary to several bakers across the country to assist them to alleviate operational expenses due to the high cost of wheat on the international market.

Late on Thursday evening, *The Reporter* spoke to Lennox Nicholson, the controller of supplies in the Ministry who indicated, "As we speak, the resources have been disbursed to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprises by the Ministry of Finance. So those resources are within our Ministry and we can start drawing down

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Tour and tender operators satisfied with Fuel Subsidy Program

Pg. 2

By Michelle Sutherland

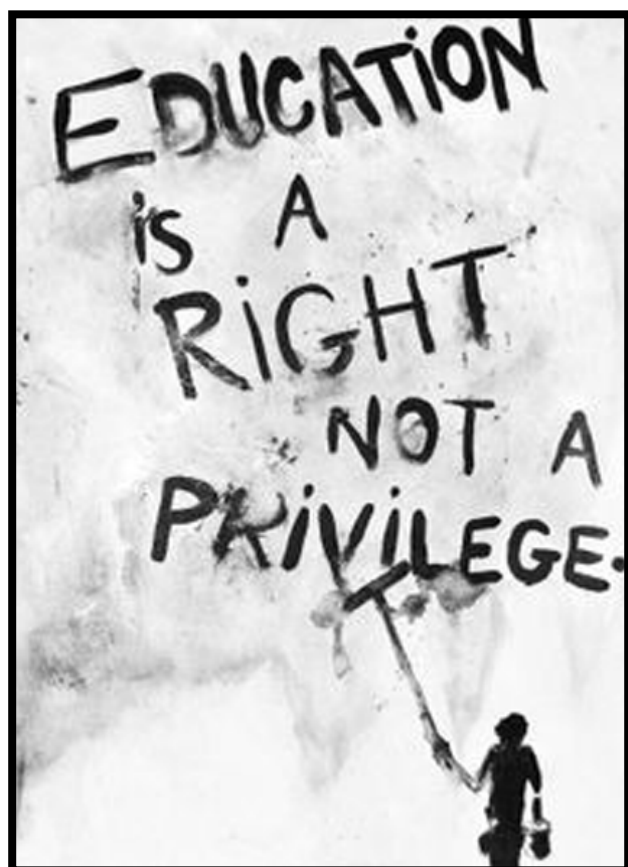
President of the Belize Local Association of Stakeholders in Tourism (BLAST) Nikolai Alvarado says that the six-month fuel subsidy program that was launched two months ago by the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) has so far proven to be a great help for industry stakeholders.

"It has been coming along really great; every first of the month...the program restarts. So, if you have used up your subsidy throughout the month, you get it back



Tour operator Nikolai Alvarado

MOE: 'School policy cannot trump students' right to education'



Regarding issues like haircuts cannot supersede a student's right to an education, the Ministry of Education reminded this week.

The ministry's statement followed an incident at Bishop Martin High School in Orange walk where students were sent home on account of not having school-policy-approved hairstyles. Particularly, more than two dozen students, mostly boys, were denied entry to the school

Pg. 3



After 26 weeks of unrelenting, savage fighting, it appears that the invading Russian forces have run out of steam in Ukraine, and are now fully engaged in defending the strategically important area of Kherson.

Kherson is the gateway to the critically important area of southeast Ukraine. Without Kherson, the Russians will not be able to move on the Port City of Odesa, which is still firmly in Ukraine's hands, and they will not be able to mount an adequate land defense of the Crimea, with its all-important warm-water port at Sevastopol.

Without Kherson the entire purpose of the Russian invasion will be thwarted, and Russia will not be able to defend Crimea, an Ukrainian province that Russia stole eight years ago.

Both sides know this, and it will take a monumental test of wills, of resources and manpower to determine how this contest will turn out.

Ukraine has poured some 800,000 men into the fray. It's do or die for these brave fighters who refuse to live under the Russian yoke.

All of Russia's might and prestige are at stake here too, because if Russia cannot finish this war to her liking, she will become a target for more and more humiliation and economic disaster will stare her people in the face. The United States and Europe will not go easy on Russia because of the way President Putin has tried to punish Europe by starving her of vital oil supplies.

The United States and in fact all of Europe, are supporting Ukraine with modern arms and supplies. The HIMARS, which are high mobility artillery rocket systems, have been especially useful in destroying Russian artillery and munitions storage sites, and have achieved spectacular results against Russian troops.

This week Russia announced a recruitment drive to raise 180,000 new troops for its depleted army.

It will require months of training to get these new recruits anywhere close to being ready for the onslaught that Ukraine has prepared for them.

In the most likely scenario, Russia will lose most if not all of eastern Ukraine, and all of Crimea. This is what is going to happen if Russia loses its grip on Kherson. The risk has never been greater for these two neighbors.

The mounting evidence suggests that Russia will be kicked out of Ukraine and out of Crimea as well.



Arise ye...

Dear Sir:

A complacent night is done... A brand-new dawn breaks forth upon our sons and daughter. From the East and from the West newborn babes discover this light...piercing but not blinding. This new tablet shines forth with old edgings. The letters of each word look brand new, as if just chiseled out for the old and the new BELIZE.

The PREAMBLE of the Old Constitution is what is chiseled on this new tablet – which only seems new but is older than the Maya Mountains which Our Almighty Father shaped out of the mud and sludge of the evolutionary blast from which everything became landmarks in our time.

Yes, we need laws and rules to mold us into the eternal appearance that we must have for everlasting eons of time when we inhabit that wonderous GARDEN from which HE and SHE were locked out by a rebellious understanding that rejected the truth of who they really were. Made of the slime of material, physical being, they rejected a superior, higher state of ecstasy that proceeds only from contemplating the ALMIGHTY GODHEAD.

Whatever our wise men whom we call philosophers have taught us about ourselves, they are enshrined in what we call WESTERN CIVILIZATION. These truths, or principles, which have guided or should have guided our

Tour and Tender Operators Satisfied With Fuel Subsidiary Program

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at the beginning of the month," Alvarado told The Reporter on Thursday.

While he said that the amount varies individually depending on the amount of fuel consumed per month as well as the number of passengers, Alvarado said that with the rising cost of fuel, any assistance rendered is welcomed and appreciated by stakeholders. This, according to Alvarado, is because tour operators need to come together and put in places standardized prices."

Alvarado also revealed that while the fuel subsidy might only be seen as slight assistance, the BTB currently has several other programs available for tour operators to tap into. One of those includes a duty exemption on goods, equipment, ATVs, and even vehicles into the country.

"The program the BTB and Ministry of Tourism has is on

equipments used in Tourism, so examples include vans, boats, engines, gears, etc."

"I could personally tell you that all this wasn't being done before, because two years ago I tried to apply for duty exemption for a vehicle and equipment," said Alvarado. "I was not approved because they told me that it was only for the bigger companies. Now with this new BTB administration, small people are really benefitting from it. I, for example, have just bought a new tour van with duty exemption, we formed a partnership, and we got ATVs with duty exemption, and snorkeling gears with duty exemption, so it is working and they are working. Like I said every help that is given to the local operators is very much appreciated."

But while the fuel subsidy has eased the burden on their pockets, Alvarado said that with the prices of fuel falling on the

behavior are:

- There is a God. **HE IS ALMIGHTY**
- Man is a creature who has proceeded from a family of creatures. He us from the family and must be for the family to attain harmony of being.
- Because man is an individual, capable of reasoning and choosing he must have the opportunity to decide how he should live among his fellow man.
- Because man lives in two dimensions of existence his education, culture and way of living must be governed by rules that suit both his soul and body.
- Because Man is a choosing, thinking being the place and environment where he lives must be governed by rules that respect his true nature.
- Review and respect and accept the above five laws or rules as the principles of our government and its laws.

However, while we completely accept the above principles, we the more than NINETY PERCENT of BELIZEANS desire to live in harmony and peace with every one of the other ten percent, because we love and respect that they are free individuals with inviolable conscience, there must be promulgated TWO more principles. They are DIVERSITY (7) and TOLERANCE (8). These are already presumed by the original SIX principles but are added for the sake of greater clarity and emphasis. ALL BELIZEANS must be conscious that they are free individuals.

Signed: Paul Rodriguez OBE

international market, he would like to see fuel prices, as well as the cost of living, also plunge in Belize.

Alvarado is now calling for a set price structure for tour operators and even tour guides to be put in place so that when fuel prices fluctuate on the international market, the price structure locally can be adjusted automatically. He is also asking all tour operators to get their businesses

registered and up to date with taxes, social security payments, and other relevant documentation and certificates so that they too can benefit from programs.

Close to 200 licensed tour and tender operators are currently benefitting from the BTB's fuel subsidy program that was rolled out in early July to alleviate operational expenses, due to the rising cost of fuel.

THE REPORTER

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Bread subsidy to be distributed next week

Cont'd from pg. 1

on those resources to make payments to the bakers. A form has also been sent out to the bakeries to submit to us their claims along with supporting documents, invoices, and things of that nature to facilitate the payments."

Nicholson confirmed that in this instance only eight bakeries, who have sent in their application and were properly vetted and approved, will be receiving payments for June and July. He said that one other bakery is pending but that the Ministry is in the process of querying additional information from the particular bakery before proceeding with payments.

While Nicholson indicated that the Ministry had conducted a comprehensive study of bakeries in the country, and 26 of them were found, not all of them had qualified for the subsidy, while several others have not applied for the assistance, which

currently stands at \$1.5 million.

"Going forward now I must tell you that there are a couple of enterprises that are noticeably absent from the list.

"We know that in at least a couple of these instances they do produce the 16-ounce slice of bread and would be eligible for the subsidy. We will be sending an officer to visit these folks to explain to them that the program is there and that some relief is available to them under the program. We will encourage them to submit their documentation so that we can provide the necessary assistance," indicated Nicholson.

He added that while it was initially agreed that the assistance would have been rolled out in June and July, some administrative matters needed to be attended to. That, according to Nicholson, included compiling a comprehensive list of enterprises in the bread industry

and then ensuring that they met the requirements for enrolling in the program, by conducting field visits. Those field visits also allowed the Ministry to explain to the bakeries that only 16-ounce slices of bread would be covered by the program. It also allowed the Ministry to gather the required data, such as the volume of the regulated products that they produce, the estimate, and the invoice to indicate how many sacks of flour they used every month to produce a 16-ounce slice of bread.

That data was then used to calculate how many funds needed to be disbursed and to work out a payment formula.

"For instance, it is 25 cents per pack. The flour that is used to produce 16-ounce slice bread is Bebe Agua, so when the submission comes into us, the key indicators that we look at is how many sacks of Bebe Agua flour the particular

enterprise use in a given month. Based on the submission that was made to us by the bakers there is a ratio of 120 packs of bread per sack. So if you multiply that by 25 cents then you would get an idea for every sack of Bebe Agua flour that they use how much money would be disbursed to them. Based on the agreed interaction with them we came up with another. The Formula says that out of a sack of flour they would

use an average of 70% of that to make 16 oz slice. So if a particular entity would use 1,000 sacks of flour per month we would only pay them for 700 bags. And using the rate of 25 cents per pack and one sack yielding 120 packs, it works out somewhere in the area of \$30 per sack," explained Nicholson.

We also asked him about the continuous decrease of wheat prices on the international market

and if he expects that price decrease to reflect locally. While Nicholson said yes, he claimed that a key factor in that scenario will be timing based on the trading pattern. He stressed that the price changes will not be reflected until that particular shipment lands in the country. When that occurs Nicholson said that the job of his office will be to ensure that those prices are reflected domestically.

MOE: 'School policy cannot trump students' right to education'

Cont'd from pg. 1

Tuesday, after being told that their hair was too long and in contravention of the school policy.

After being briefed on the situation, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, and Technology (MoECST) issued a statement saying that it was sincerely concerned about students being denied their education over such a policy, stressing that the act has violated two of the students' constitutional rights.

"The Constitution enshrines the principles of social justice and clearly states in its preamble that 'equal protection should be given to children regardless of their social status, and that a just system should be ensured to provide for education and health on the basis of equality.' Furthermore, the rights to freedom of expression, conscience, and the right to be protected from discrimination are afforded to all Belizeans by our Constitution," the Ministry said.

While the ministry conceded that schools do have the freedom to enact policies and general rules for codes of conduct, these rules must not infringe upon students' rights. The ministry also noted

that students need as much in-class time as possible, having been out of school for an extended period due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We call on all our partners to continue to work with the ministry to build a more equitable, accessible, and inclusive education system, through which all students are guaranteed the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills to build a better life for themselves and contribute to Belize's national development," the Ministry added.

Notably, the students reportedly returned to classes on Thursday, with their hair cut to suit the school policy. The situation has sparked public outrage and debate, with many condemning the school and categorizing the haircut and similar policies as "archaic" and "symbols of oppression". Advocates against the policies emphasize that it disproportionately affects male students, as well as students of certain ethnicities.

Alternatively, some have embraced the rules, stressing that the students and their parents were well aware of the rules and agreed to follow them when they sent the students to that school. Supporters

of the rules contend that the issue extends far beyond the issue of the length of the student's hair and into their ability to respect authority and become law-abiding citizens outside of academic settings.

The issue of hair discrimination in Belize is an active one, as incidents such as the one at Bishop Martin have been brought to the media by different schools every school year in recent years, such as the 2018 incident at Nazarene High School in Belize City.

Beyond academic settings, hair discrimination in the work place was underscored by the 2019 lawsuit of eight female police officers, who filed a lawsuit against the Belize Police Department for imposing disciplinary measures on them because they decided to grow dreadlocks.

The Commissioner of Police explained at that time that there was a practical element to the police policy on hair, as longer hairstyles could be used against a police officer trying to detain a resisting suspect.

In 2021, the Supreme Court would rule that such actions were against the officers' constitutional right of expression.



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Leave No One Behind - MoECST



(L-r) Min. Francis Fonseca, CEO Dian Maheia, Chief Education Officer Yolanda Gongora, Hon. Dr. Louis Zabaneh

By William Ysaguirre

“Leave no one behind” is the key pillar of the Ministry of Education’s program of inclusion to empower Belizean children with the job skills and the life skills to develop Belize’s economy in the 21st century.

Minister of Education, Culture, Science and Technology Hon. Francis Fonseca outlined how it will work, when he launched the BES plan 2.0 at the Best Western Belize Biltmore Plaza Hotel in Belize City on Monday morning, August 29.

The plan extends far outside the classroom, and the ministry is partnering with other ministries and other interested parties in the community to put the plan into action, Minister Fonseca explained. The health ministry is supporting the plan with its vaccination program and counseling to safeguard the students’ mental health.

Students need not worry about their personal safety, as the Police Department is plugged in to provide security for the schools. The Transport Department is tasked with ensuring that the students have adequate means to get to and from school.

The four-pronged plan is to reform the education system, to transform how students learn from how they are taught, to give priority to sectors which have been underserved, and to make the best and maximum use of our human resources, as Chief Executive Officer Dian Castillo Maheia explained by a video presentation.

Free tuition, free uniforms, free meals and computer access for students from low-income families are the main features of the Education Upliftment

Project, which is rolling out the plan to four government high schools in Belize City’s southside when schools opened last week: Gwen Lizarraga High, Sadie Vernon Tech, Excelsior High and Maud Williams, as Sadie Vernon principal Deborah Martin explained. The objective is to build better citizens for better families and a stronger, more skilled and productive work force. The project is in

Students cannot learn if they are under-nourished, so the “Healthy Start” Feeding program is an essential part of the plan, Chief Education Officer Yolanda Gongora explained. Children who come to school hungry have difficulty learning, because they can’t focus on anything beyond the emptiness in their tummies, and this can hurt enrollment. The ministry is working to guarantee that schoolchildren are adequately fed by expanding the schools feeding program with a parallel schools garden project. The initial pilot phase is being funded by the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Mexican Agency for Cooperation in Economic Development (AMEXCID) has targeted six primary schools, two each in the Corozal, Orange Walk and Belize districts. The Government of Taiwan has provided additional funds to help to extend the program to other schools throughout the country.

Another top priority is Special Education for children with special needs, as consultant Christy Almeida explained. An occupational therapist, a certified behavioral analyst and a speech and language pathologist are now working with the ministry to support these

children’s development.

Internet connectivity is no longer optional, it’s become an absolutely essential, Fonseca emphasized. The Ministry is also partnering with Digi in the “ConnectED” project to bridge the digital divide, to ensure that students can access the information superhighway of the Internet. Digi is installing the fiberoptic infrastructure to ensure that all schools in the country have broadband Internet access, so that students may have Wifi connectivity anywhere on campus. This means offering Internet connectivity in even the remotest areas.

Minister of State Hon. Dr. Louis Zabaneh outlined how the ministry has created the 501 Academy as an online portal, where teachers can access teaching materials and resources to help them prepare their lessons, and students can access lessons for Open Education via the internet. The aim is to excite the students in the classroom, to entertain their interest and encourage them to learn, which will lead to better student attendance, Zabaneh said.

The ministry is also working to help teachers transition to the new curriculum which was launched two weeks ago. CEO Yolanda Gongora explained that the ministry has teams of the best teachers from around the country working together to create lesson plans that other teachers can download and use as a template, and tweak to suit the needs of their students. The first set of lesson plans for the first month of school is already online, and the teams will be uploading new modules of lesson plans in the coming months.



MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

AND
HOUSING



GENERAL NOTICE PRE-QUALIFICATION OF CONTRACTORS

The Government of Belize (GOBZ) through the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing (MIDH) invites contractors who are interested in carrying out road and drainage restoration works in three districts in Belize, namely, Belize, Orange Walk and Corozal Districts affected by the tropical wave on August 17-18, 2022. Restoration works proposed in all three districts will vary but will include drainage improvement works with culvert installation; resurfacing of roads and paving of a few roads.

Interested contractors are encouraged to register and submit requested pre-qualification information which the MIDH will evaluate based on a set criterion. Based on the findings of the evaluation, contractors will be prequalified for the various types of road restoration works proposed to be funded with the Emergency Funds.

Contractors are informed that the proposed works are of an emergency nature and therefore the time period for submission of the requested information will not exceed more than seven (7) calendar days. It is expected that the pre-qualification exercise will provide for easier selection of reliable contractors based on satisfying minimum criteria of each of the identified categories and sub-categories.

Contractors will be categorized by size and experience and are hereby invited to register under one or more of the following categories as may be applicable:

DISCIPLINE

- I. **Civil Works / Road Construction** – capable of executing works associated with road construction and other major infrastructure developments such as land clearing, earthworks, drainage, flexible and rigid pavements, road markings and road furniture installation, and structural concrete.
- II. **Bridge Construction** – capable of bridge construction, pile construction and installation, reinforced concrete bridges, structural steel bridges, composite bridges.
- III. **Drainage Improvement Works** – capable of executing land clearing, supplying and installing concrete, multi-celled reinforced box culverts, or HDPE type culverts, earthworks, excavation of earthen drains, embankments and pond construction.
- IV. **Tradespersons** – single entities, such as Masons and Carpenters.
- V. **Specialist Contractors** – contractors with experience tailored to a specific skillset such as:
 - **Drilling and Blasting**
 - **Steel fabrication / Welding / Erection**
 - **Heavy Equipment Operator**
 - **Surveying (Topographical, Cadastral, Hydrographic, etc)**

SIZE

- I. **Medium size Contractors** – annual average construction turnover of BZD \$0.5 – \$2.5 million.
- II. **Small Contractors** – annual average construction turnover of BZD \$0.5 million or less.

Application forms and pre-qualification document are free of charge and can be obtained from the **Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing in Belmopan** or via email from the contact persons listed below.

Deadline for submission of pre-qualification data is **2.00 p.m. on Friday September 9th, 2022.**

1. **Attention: Mr. Victor Espat**
Chief Executive Officer
Ministry of Infrastructure Development & Housing
Power Lane
Belmopan
Cayo District

BELIZE, C. A

Tel: +501-822-2136

Email: ceo.secretary@mow.gov.bz

2. **Attention: Mr. Lennox Bradley**
Ministry of Infrastructure Development & Housing
Power Lane
Belmopan
Cayo District

BELIZE, C. A

Tel: +501-828-4973

Email: BradleyLE@midh.gov.bz



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The Audited Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2021 has been published in SSB's Annual Report 2021 available on the SSB website at www.socialsecurity.org.bz.

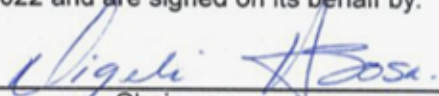
Statements of Profit as at December 31st 2021 and 2020

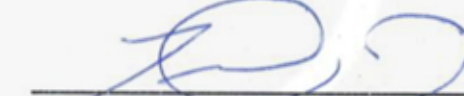
SOCIAL SECURITY BOARD

**STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2021 AND 2020 (IN BELIZE DOLLARS)**

<u>ASSETS</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
CURRENT ASSETS:			
Cash and cash equivalents	2g. 2h. 4.	\$ 106,032,616	\$ 73,474,121
Short term investments	2g. 2i. 5.	25,361,044	48,703,674
Investment income receivable	2g. 6.	15,862,587	14,843,264
Office supplies	2j. 2r.	794,941	687,870
Accounts receivable	2g. 2k. 7.	4,380,588	5,627,411
Prepayments	2l.	509,600	257,708
Loan principal receivable current portion	2g. 10.	5,284,708	4,171,708
Total current assets		158,226,084	147,765,756
NON-CURRENT ASSETS:			
Investment in associates	2m. 8.	203,514,299	197,839,328
Long term investments	2g. 9.	134,035,202	116,355,001
Loan principal receivable - net	2g. 10.	73,215,022	75,949,316
Held for sale	2r. 11.	10,990,603	10,990,603
Other assets	2r. 12.	991,200	1,014,000
Intangible assets - net	2n. 2r. 13.	951,285	1,000,371
Investment properties - net	2o. 2p. 2r. 14.	7,915,573	-
Fixed assets - net	2q. 2r. 15.	29,339,519	36,175,250
Total non-current assets		460,952,703	439,323,869
TOTAL ASSETS		\$ 619,178,787	\$ 587,089,625
LIABILITIES AND RESERVES			
LIABILITIES:			
CURRENT LIABILITIES:			
Accounts payable and accruals	2g. 16.	\$ 8,710,540	\$ 7,054,644
Severance payable current portion	2t. 17.	266,832	246,833
Total current liabilities		8,977,372	7,301,477
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES:			
Pension liability	2s. 18.	1,997,673	1,489,736
Severance liability	2t. 17.	3,254,608	2,967,002
Total long term liabilities		5,252,281	4,456,738
Total liabilities		14,229,653	11,758,215
RESERVES:			
Short term contingency reserve		22,620,463	20,578,954
Long term benefits reserve		456,444,909	439,263,405
Employment injury benefit reserve		106,110,328	98,966,332.00
Disablement and death benefits reserve	2u.	12,162,839	11,335,793
National health insurance fund		7,275,910	3,780,800
Natural disaster fund		2,301,076	2,051,076
Social development account		31,282	844,062
Pension reserve	2s. 18.	(1,997,673)	(1,489,012)
Total reserves		604,949,134	575,331,410
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND RESERVES		\$ 619,178,787	\$ 587,089,625

The financial statements on page 3 to 8 were approved and authorized for issue by the Board of Directors on June 30, 2022 and are signed on its behalf by:


Chairman


Director

For presentations and informational sessions on SSB functions such as Benefits, Employer, Employee or Self-Employed programs etc., kindly send a request to info@socialsecurity.org.bz.

Social Security Board: Safeguarding You, Your Family, Your Future!

Concerns for Carnival Following Public Shooting at Mass Camp

By Michelle Sutherland

The countdown to the return of the 2022 annual Carnival Road March, which is scheduled to be held this Saturday in Belize City has commenced, however, there are already concerns for the safety of the public as well as revelers following a public shooting that took place at Mass Camp, this past Tuesday night.

On Wednesday, during a virtual briefing with the Commissioner of Police Chester Williams he admitted that the shooting which resulted in injuries to a student, the detention of a suspect, and the recovery of a firearm was certainly a cause for concern.

Williams said that while he has already

seen comments on social media in which persons are expressing their concerns for safety and even going as far as to say that they will not attend the event he wanted to assure the public that the Belize Police Department will be on the ground in full force. According to Williams, multiple teams will be in a position in full readiness to ensure the safety of all persons on the ground who will either be participating in the road march or those that will be watching from the sidelines.

The Commissioner also addressed growing requests and complaints from the public that the Police Department should have extended the State of Emergency in the Lake Independence



Gun incident had raised concerns about Carnival safety.

neighborhood instead of allowing it to be lifted on Monday. These requests come on the heels of the most recent shooting which had transpired in the midst of revelers who had come together to show off their costumes. Williams, however, indicated

that the persons who were involved in that act of violence were not members of the Lake I neighborhood who were detained under the state of emergency.

In fact, he said that they were members of the Antelope Street Extension, which has been known to

be problematic in the past. This is an area where Williams said that he is also considering rolling out a State of Emergency if the violence does not subside.

As it related to the 30 gang members that were released from the Belize Central Prison on Monday, Commissioner

Williams said that prior to them being released back into the public, a meeting was held between them, the LIU, the BPD, and several other agencies to examine their state of readiness.

“We are optimistic that they are going to hold their corner, at least for now and I had said to the officer who had attended the meeting with them to convey my message to them that even though they are being released now if it is that they would want to start their foolishness again I will be more than happy to go back to the Minister and the Prime Minister and request that they be sent back to the prison. And if that were to happen then it would certainly be more than 30 days,” explained Williams.

As Belize approaches its 224th Anniversary of the Battle of St. George's Caye and 41 years of Independence, Benny's wishes all Belizeans a Safe and Happy

September Celebrations!

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CPL Nah and PC Caliz Cleared of Internal Charges for Ammunitions

By Michelle Sutherland

Corporal Elmer Nah and PC Manuel Caliz have both been found not guilty by a Police Tribunal and have been cleared of all internal charges in relation to several pieces of ammunition that were reportedly found in their possession during the November 2021 drug plane bust that occurred near Bladen Village, Toledo District.

On Wednesday, the Commissioner of Police Chester Williams held a virtual briefing with the media in which he confirmed the reports that the police adjudicator had indeed issued a “not guilty” verdict against both officers on Tuesday of this week. Williams further reiterated that because the

ammunition were reportedly found in a vehicle that both officers were in at the time, he was not expecting the outcome of the tribunal and was even “disappointed” in it.

“I was further briefed that that came because of a testimony that was given by another officer that he had signed for those ammunitions and that he had left them in the vehicle. But again looking at the circumstances that the officer who testified to the effect that he had left the ammunitions inside the vehicle, the vehicle in question that he had supposedly left the ammunitions inside is not the same vehicle that the two gentlemen were found in, and



PC Manuel Caliz

at the time had the ammunitions in it. So I still cannot understand on what basis the adjudicator decided that these two gentlemen were not guilty,” said Williams as he went

on to question how the ammunitions ended up in the officer’s vehicle.

Williams said that he has since requested that the files and the notes of evidence be sent to his office so that he can personally review them or have a legal team pour over them to see whether or not the adjudicator had erred in his decision to acquit both men. Given that the Commissioner of Police has the authority to either uphold the decision or overturn it, Williams promised that he will be doing all in his power to investigate the



Corporal Elmer Nah

ruling. That includes looking at the testimony that was given by the officer who had claimed responsibility for the ammunition and comparing it with his previous testimony. Whatever the outcome of that might be, Williams said that based on his testimony, that officer had claimed neglect on his part and so he will be looking into holding that officer accountable as well. In relation to Nah and Caliz, the Commissioner confirmed that they both remain on interdiction due to the criminal charges against them that are still before the courts.

Nah and Caliz not guilty verdict however highlights

a deeper issue within the Police Department’s internal disciplinary procedures that Williams said have been falling short recently.

He explained, “One of the issues we have been noticing is that we have been saying to our adjudicators over and over is that our disciplinary tribunal is not a court of law per se. It is a process by which we allow proof of natural justice to take its course. It is a fact-finding tribunal, and the strict rule of evidence is not applicable. Likewise, it is not like in a court of law where persons must be found guilty based on the principle of beyond a reasonable doubt. In our tribunal, we have our civil standard which is on a balance of probability. But oftentimes we are seeing our adjudicators applying our criminal standards as opposed to the civil standards and they are acquitting officers on that basis.”

Nah and Caliz was among several officers who stand accused of playing a part in the November 2021 drug plane landing near Bladen Village in the Toledo District. Both officers were reportedly detained in a vehicle that had several rounds of ammunition inside at the time.



IMPORTANT CLOSURE NOTICE

Dear Users of the Port of Belize Ltd.

The port needs to conduct essential maintenance on the trestle which links the pierhead to the land. This is required to preserve port operations for the next few years ahead. The repairs involve replacing three trestle girders, each one expected to take 8, 8 and 10 days to complete. During the period of the repairs, there will be no access to the pierhead and therefore vessel operations (discharge or load) cannot be conducted.

In our attempt to provide the earliest notice of the pierhead operation closures, we can advise that the following periods are presently the targeted dates for the repair works:

- July 28th to August 05th, 2022
- September 01st to 09th, 2022
- October 06th to 16th, 2022

We very much regret and apologize for the potential supply chain disruption and inconvenience that these closures might cause you.

The Container Yard and Warehouse will remain open during these periods.

Thanks

Andy Lane
Chief Executive Officer



Senate Approve Auditor General's Two-Year Contract

By Michelle Sutherland

Effective September 1st, 2022, Dorothy Bradley, will be installed as acting auditor general on a two-year contract after nine out of 13 senators voted in favor of her appointment despite being accused of victimization and questionable management stiles by employees under her command.

Bradley's appointment came following an extensive debate that took place in this week's sitting of the Senate which saw several senators divided on the topic. At the conclusion of the debate, Labour Representative Senator Elena Smith requested a division of votes on Bradley's appointment which resulted in nine votes in favor, resulting in the motion being passed in the Senate.

During the debate Smith disclosed that her office has also received calls as it relates to Bradley's



Dorothy Bradley reappointed as AG.

reappointment. According to her, several individuals had expressed their concerns about Bradley's professionalism, how she treats and interacts with employees, as well as several other issues that have emerged during her tenure as auditor general. "The NTUCB feels that if it is that we are putting this same person to head a department that has

not been properly functioning, then it means that the department will continue to not properly function."

NGO Representative Senator Janelle Chanona pointed out what she calls a disconnect between current employees at the audit department and Bradley. Chanona continued by saying that she would have preferred that a review or

scrutiny be done at the audit department to establish whether the accusations were true and if possible that an apology be made to Bradley.

"I am totally uncomfortable with the chasm that's been created between two sides on this. We cannot move forward in that light, and it does not make sense for us to proceed with something and then just say, well, you know what? We saw the writing on the wall before and we ignored it," expressed Chanona.

In the case of UDP representative, Senator Beverly Williams, she said

"Wheel and come again." She stated that it cannot be that all the employees are wrong and only Bradley is right. While she said that she understood the lack of succession planning and the fact that Bradley is not easily replaceable she said that she was concerned about the staff's welfare and their mental health.

While Senator Alvin Benguche, from the church, said he was also concerned about the lack of succession planning he was prepared to support the appointment. That call was also echoed by PUP

Representative Senator Collett Montejó who highlighted the fact that Bradley was hailed as an anti-corruption champion during her previous tenure as Auditor General.

Bradley retired from her post as Auditor General in December of last year. Since then the Briceño administration had claimed that no succession planning was in place and a replacement was hard to come by so they offered Bradley a two-year contract to take over back the post while a replacement could be found.

Karl H. Menzies closes doors of Barrack road store- transitions to BelizeON digital platform

Karl H. Menzies, an iconic company in Belize dating back to 1969, announced this week that it would officially close the doors of its Barrack Road store front, to transition its products to the BelizeON digital ecosystem, founded in 2019.

The Barrack Road store front opened and closed its doors for the last time on Wednesday, August 31, bringing one chapter in the company's rich history to a close and opening a new chapter, which sees it positioning itself to take advantage of the cultural shift towards a more digital Belize.

Owner and chairman of the company, Kay Menzies, said, at the announcement of the store's closures, that despite the name of the company no longer

being at the forefront, the company's experience and essence will be ever-present in this new phase.

"The BelizeON ecosystem is a first-of-its-kind enterprise for connecting businesses to consumers and to each other throughout the country of Belize. As the world migrates further into the digital space, this is a way for business of all kinds in Belize to join the disruption in a relatively pain-free way. My parents were innovative in their time, and this next chapter of Karl H Menzies is an excellent way of continuing their legacy," Menzies told *The Reporter*.

Karl H. Menzies has been a major player in the importation and distribution of both alcohol and paints, for over 50 years, and

with the transition to BelizeON, the company says it will be able to engage with customers more effectively.

Three years after its launch, BelizeON's digital ecosystem has grown to serve over 3600 customers with its main site e-commerce site, BelizeON.bz, hosting over 2,000 local and imported products from dozens of local businesses. BelizeON also founded the popular food delivery app Belize ON D'Way, which connects customers to their favourite restaurants, and has also launched the BelizeON Dropbox, door-to-door delivery service.

Following the close of the Barrack Road store, work commenced to transition the facility into a central hub for BelizeON Dropbox.





0-800-922-TIPS (8477)



WE PAY CASH FOR INFORMATION ON ANY UNSOLVED CRIMES

A Community Program Coordinated by the Rotary Club of Belize.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) invites applicants for the functions of National Consultant for Supply Chain Management

Duty station: Belize City

Qualifications: *Essential:*
A Bachelor's degree in Pharmacy or related health, social or management sciences from a recognized university

Desirable:
Postgraduate degree at a Master level in public health or related field.

Experience: *Essential:*
Five years of national working experience in the related field

Desirable:
Working experience in health services project management

Skills:

- Pharmacy or related professional with 5 years of experience in Supply Chain Management at national level and familiar with national public health system.
- Involved with the management of HIV, TB and/or Malaria programs commodities would be desirable
- Experience in managing medical stores, or alike companies for the supply of essential medicines and other health technologies would be desirable.
- Experience in the development and implementation of training programs, particularly related to access to medicines and supply chain.
- Experience in planning for the procurement of commodities for the HIV, TB, and Malaria programs.
- Ability to analyse factors, trends, and forecast scenarios based on current surveillance systems and possesses the capability to develop and plan innovative and appropriate solutions for their improvement.
- Strong research, problem-solving and organizational skills.
- Ability to work collaboratively (in person or virtually) with other team players
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills and sensitivity to political and cultural issues
- Ability to meet deadlines
- Strong professional oral and writing skills, including the development of reports, oral presentations, and technical/persuasive documents for consideration at the highest levels of the Organization.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively use a computer and utilize software programs such as Microsoft Office Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SharePoint, and Outlook. Other IT skills and knowledge of other software programs for Statistical Analysis, Data Exploratory Analysis and Project Management would be an asset.

Languages: Very good knowledge of English and working knowledge of Spanish

Deadline: Letter of application, Curriculum Vitae, and two current letters of recommendation should be sent to blzmail@paho.org or to P.O. Box 1834, Belize City no later than **September 9, 2022**

For further details visit our website <https://www.paho.org/en/vacancies> An interview will be held for this position and only candidates under serious consideration will be contacted.

PAHO/WHO has a smoke-free environment and does not recruit smokers or users of any form of tobacco.



NOTIFICATION OF CONTRACT AWARD
(Procurement of Goods or Works)



Financing Institution: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
Procurement Type: Civil Works
Sector: Infrastructure
Country of Project (or Beneficiary country): Belize
Project Name: Additional Financing for George Price Highway Rehabilitation Project
Loan/Credit/Grant No.: 4616/OC-BL
Contract/Bid No.: 168 of 2022/2023
Bid/Contract Description: Lot 2D - Raising of the Existing Pavement on the Western Approach of the Roaring Creek Bridge GPHW

During the *bidding/selection* process for the works indicated above, under the *bidding process/selection method (National Competitive Bidding)*, the firms listed below submitted bids. The bid price at opening, the evaluated bid price and their final ranking follow below:

Evaluated Bidder(s):

Name of the bidder and nationality: PEC Engineering & Construction/PEC Limited/Belizean
Bid price at bid opening: BZ \$1,696,877.72
Evaluated bid price: BZ \$1,696,877.72
Final Ranking: First Place

Evaluated Bidder(s):

Name of the bidder and nationality: Belize Roadway Construction/Belizean
Bid price at bid opening: BZ \$1,941,969.25
Evaluated bid price: BZ \$1,941,969.25
Final Ranking: Second Place

Evaluated Bidder(s):

Name of the bidder and nationality: A & N Construction/Belizean
Bid price at bid opening: BZ \$1,733,355.96
Evaluated bid price: BZ \$1,733,355.96
Final Ranking: Third Place

Evaluated Bidder(s):

Name of the bidder and nationality: De'Mar's Stone Company Ltd./Belizean
Bid price at bid opening: BZ \$1,973,801.69
Evaluated bid price: BZ \$1,973,801.69
Final Ranking: Fourth Place

Evaluated Bidder(s):

Name of the bidder and nationality: Jaime Price Piling & Construction/Belizean
Bid price at bid opening: BZ \$2,003,989.49
Evaluated bid price: BZ \$2,003,989.49
Final Ranking: Fifth Place

Rejected Bidder(s):

Name of the bidder and nationality: No rejected bidder
Bid price at bid opening: N/A
Reason(s) for rejection: N/A

Any Bidder is entitled to a debriefing to ascertain the grounds on which its bid was not selected by making a formal request at the address indicated below.

Awarded Bidder:

Name of the bidder and nationality: PEC Engineering & Construction/PEC Limited/Belizean
Contract Price: BZ \$1,696,877.72
Country of Awarded Bidder: Belize
Scope of the contract: Lot 2D - Raising of the Existing Pavement on the Western Approach of the Roaring Creek Bridge GPHW

Date contract signed: August 22nd, 2022

Address:

Program Management Unit
Attn: Mr. Rolando Chan, Program Coordinator
First Floor, Soils Lab Building
Power Lane, Belmopan
Tel: 822-0100/822-1942
E-mail: pmupcmow@gmail.com

"\$76 million in a single payment during a health crisis is an insult," says Tracy Panton



Hon. Tracy Panton

Government of Belize once more on the \$76 million payout to Belize International Services Limited (BISL), following nationwide protests by nurses this week.

On Monday, nurses all over the country walked out of their hospitals, demanding that the Government of Belize properly compensate them for overtime hours. Nurses at the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital additionally raised the issue of a lack of basic resources such as tape for wound dressing and pain killers to give to patients.

Panton told The Reporter that the motion tabled in the House of Representatives last week to make the \$76 million in a single payment is an insult to Belizeans. She went on to say that making such a payment during a situation so dire that health-care workers took it upon themselves to

protest, then the priorities of the Briceño administration has been called into question.

"If our public hospitals don't even have Tylenol, I think that our government's priorities are in the wrong place," Panton said.

"This is a company, according to the Prime Minister, that grossed US\$86 million in 7 years. That had \$9 million worth of expenses," Panton said. "This is not a company that is broke; that is in dire need of this payment in a singular settlement."

She said that, despite the Prime Minister's assurance that a team of "experts" negotiated the settlement at a discounted rate for Belize, the terms of payment were not in the country's favor and should have been negotiated in such a way as to make it less burdensome.

Panton also raised major concerns about the way the settle-

ment was reached, pointing out that the CCJ had ordered that the Supreme Court of Belize conduct the valuation for the settlement to be reached with BISL; however the Briceño administration chose to go against that instruction and bring in the team of experts.

"For the administration that promised to implement the gold standard of transparency and accountability and good governance, I think the minimum has to be that they make this settlement arrangement available to the Belizean people who are now tasked with paying the bill," Panton said.

Notably, the Ministry of Health and Wellness held an emergency meeting with the Nurses Association of Belize and made commitments to address the issues raised. Following negotiations, the nurses decided to discontinue further action.

Senate Presentation by Senator Kevin Herrera on BISL Settlement August 29th, 2022

There are bad agreements, there are horrible agreements then there are the BISL Agreements.

Background

On June 11, 1993 the Government of Belize and BISL signed a 10 year agreement for the management and development of the Belize International Merchant Registry (IMMARBE) and the International Business Companies Registry of Belize.

Note that the 1993 election was June 30th, 1993 and so given that it is mandatory that the elections are held within 3 months after the dissolution of Parliament, it had to be that this agreement was signed when Parliament was dissolved. Since Parliament was dissolved at the time, it would have been impossible for this agreement to have been ventilated in Parliament after the signature.

On March 5th, 2003 elections were held again and the PUP came back to power. On March 9th, 2003 a 10 year extension was signed for this agreement. That is 4 days after the election, Madam President.

On March 24th, 2005 the agreement was additionally extended by 7 more years. Note Madam President that it is likely that this agreement was signed because of the February and March protests that were happening at the time. This agreement was a secret. How do we know it was a secret agreement? Because on May 9th, 2013 when the 10 year extension had expired, BISL wrote to the Government informing them about the 7 year extension and sending them a copy of the agreement. In the words of Financial Secretary in a June 4th letter to BISL, he said, "We are appalled by this document which we had not seen before, as no copy could be found in our records."

The 7 year exten-



Senator Kevin Herrera

sion was signed by former Prime Minister Musa and Hon. Francis Fonseca as then Attorney General.

The Fallout

In that same June 4th letter, the Government informed BISL that it would terminate the contract because it was "wholly invalid" and contrary to applicable laws. BISL then sought and failed in both the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal to enforce its rights under the 7 year extension agreement. Both courts held that the agreement was illegal and invalid.

On August 6th, 2020 the Caribbean Court of Justice ruled in favor of BISL finding that Government of Belize breached the contract and reverted the matter to the supreme court of Belize to determine damages.

Madam President, these judgments and awards are the tangible proof of this long insidious alliance between the Ascroft Companies and the past administrations ranging from the early 90's until now.

The chickens have come to roost right on the backs of the citizens and taxpayers of this country and it's wrong. Those who benefited walked away unscathed while the innocent taxpayer has once again been betrayed and taken advantage of. We should really stop referring to these Ashcroft related investments as

investments and start calling them contin-

gent liabilities and set up corresponding sinking funds for the later payout.

Financial Deal

Madam President, let me briefly go over some of the numbers to show how lopsided and treacherous this deal was.

I have the government figures for the period 2013 to 2020. I used those as a basis to get an idea of how much this deal could have been worth to BISL.

The sharing of the Revenues was done in the following manner, 9% was for Expenses, 36% went to Government and 55% went to BISL. On the Rev-

enue side, this contract grossed \$737M. Of that \$737M, \$66M would have gone to pay expenses, \$265M would have gone to Government and \$406M would have gone to BISL. It gets worst, Madam President, this would have all been tax free, this \$406M.


The Settlement

Now the settlement. We are asked to settle with BISL in the amount of BZ \$76M in order to avoid going through further legal proceedings. This is the ask in front of us today. Madam President, by settling this matter now it is true that we will avoid a


potentially worst situation down the road. By settling this matter now, BISL would be getting BZ\$30M less than they would have if they had remained in the contractual management of the registries. That is true. So, given the bad situation we are in, I guess it is the best outcome.

Government after the settlement, will be left with \$96M BZE. These are for the 7 years Madam President. Madam President, what we are not being told, that had we not gotten into this 7 year extension,

Cont'd on pg. 11



CENTRAL BANK of BELIZE



CAREER OPPORTUNITY

EXAMINER III

The Central Bank invites qualified individuals to join its Supervision Department.

The Examiner III will conduct both off-site surveillance and on-site examinations of banks and financial institutions licensed under the Domestic Banks and Financial Institutions Act (DBFIA), International Banking Act (IBA), and credit unions registered under the Credit Unions Act (CUA).

- Off-Site Surveillance**
 - Ensure that risk assessment is conducted on institutions.
 - Assess license applications for banks, other financial institutions, and credit unions.
 - Prepare monthly information papers and make recommendations to address emerging issues.
 - Coordinate and assess economic and financial data for the processing of large credit applications.
 - Compile quarterly financial performance indicators for banks and credit unions.
 - Keep abreast of economic developments and trends.
 - Respond to enquiries from customers, banks, and credit unions.
 - Monitor compliance with the DBFIA, IBA, CUA, and Money Laundering and Terrorism (Prevention) Act (MLTPA).
- On-Site Examination**
 - Assist in conducting on-site examinations on banks and credit unions, which includes the assessment of risk management, corporate governance, and internal controls.
 - Prepare reports on the financial condition, management, and operations of institutions examined.
 - Ensure compliance with the DBFIA, IBA, and CUA.

The applicants should possess the following:

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- A minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting, Banking, Economics, or Finance from a recognized university. Three (3) years relevant work experience would be an asset.

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

- Excellent report writing skills; Proficient in the use of the Microsoft Office Suite and web-based computer applications; Ability to analyze qualitative and quantitative financial data; Ability to deal effectively with personnel, officials of financial institutions being examined, regulatory authorities, and the public; Understanding of accounting procedures and financial analysis; Knowledge of the Central Bank Act, DBFIA, IBA, CUA, MLTPA, and their subsidiary laws would be an asset.

COMPETENCIES

- Strong Oral & Writing Skills; Analytical Thinking; Diagnostic Information Gathering; Results Oriented; Thoroughness; Attention to Details; Interpersonal Effectiveness.

Submit the following documents by **Wednesday, 7 September 2022**:

- CBB Employment Application Form (Available online)
- Curriculum Vitae
- Three (3) current references (one must be from a previous employer)
- Certified copies of university transcripts, degrees, and any other personal certificates

Applications should be addressed to:

Manager, Human Resources Department
Central Bank of Belize
P O Box 852 or Gabourel Lane
Belize City, BELIZE

Ref: Examiner III- Supervision Department
Email: hr@centralbank.org.bz or online at www.centralbank.org.bz
(All applications will be held in strict confidence.)



Call For Proposals GEF SGP Operational Phase 7

The Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Belize is inviting eligible local civil society organizations to submit innovative project proposals.

Introduction:

As a corporate programme of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) implemented by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and executed by United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has been active in Belize since 1993, providing over US\$8.34 million and has leveraged US\$10 million for investments to more than 296 projects nationally. GEF-7 STAR resources will support a portfolio of innovative projects utilizing an integrated programming approach.

GEF SGP's investments are aligned with those of the GEF to fund innovative, inclusive, and impactful projects that address global environmental and sustainable development issues, while addressing the GEF Focal Areas of: Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Prevention of Land Degradation, Protection of International Waters, Reduction of the Impact of Chemicals.

Strategic Initiatives and Activities for funding include:

Project proposals must address one of the following Strategic Initiatives:

- Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species**
 - Improve management effectiveness of terrestrial and marine protected areas and enhance stewardship between civil society organizations and the regulatory agencies.
 - Improve community-led biodiversity friendly practices and approaches, including promoting blue economy (e.g., mariculture, sustainable low-carbon fishing practices, nature-based tourism).
 - Enhance community led actions for protection of threatened species and biodiversity stewardship.
 - Operationalization of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment essential for survival of all.
- Sustainable agriculture, fisheries, and food security**
 - Resilience and adaptation - COVID19 blue and green recovery for MSMEs.
 - Increase competitiveness, innovation, efficiency and effectiveness of overall local food production and value chain.
 - Increase diversification and livelihood improvement and recovery for indigenous and local communities.
 - Increase youth and women involvement in agroecology and empowering the next generation of farmers using innovative family farming approaches.
 - Remove deforestation from supply chain and expand restoration of degraded lands.

Projects should focus on promoting equity, sustainability, and resilience to climate change. Specifically, addressing at minimum one of the following:

- Management and stewardship of national protected areas system and community conserved areas.
- Youth and Women led initiatives fostering inclusive economic development and empowerment.
- Strategic support for implementation of a portfolio of innovative blended financing of blue economy initiatives.
- Supplemental livelihood and income generation opportunities utilizing natural resources sustainably.
- Indigenous, traditional, cultural, and green/blue economic activities.
- Capacity building in the areas of MSME development, CSO governance and institutional development, proposal writing, digital innovation, business management, marketing and record keeping; and
- Knowledge management, community engagement and participation in sustainable development initiatives.

Is the Civil Society Organization registered and in good standing in Belize?

- National or local non-governmental organization (NGO),
- Community-based organization (CBO),
- Women's Group,
- Youth Group,
- Indigenous umbrella or grassroots organization or
- Local cooperative or association?

How can proponent organizations apply for a Grant?

Eligible local organizations should prepare a proposal using the standard GEF SGP proposal format. Proponent organization must ensure their proposed project ideas are aligned to the GEF SGP Operational Phase 7 Country Programme Strategy. Proposals should have a letter of endorsement from the applicable regulatory agency, partner organization or community. Proponent organizations are required to meet the 1:1 in-kind or cash co-financing requirements for co-investments in projects.

Planning Grants of up to US\$5,000.00 can be awarded to eligible organizations that do not have the capacity to contract a consultant to prepare a proposal through a participatory planning process. The planning grant application, proposal format and OP7 Country Strategy can be accessed [via this link](#) or requested by sending an email to gefsgp@btl.net.

Small grants, ranging from US\$5,000.00 to US\$50,000.00, can be awarded to eligible local civil society organizations. A complete organizational assessment form must be submitted along with the proposal. Only proponent organizations whose proposal passes the technical screening criteria will be invited to present and defend their proposed project to the National Steering Committee. A maximum of US\$50,000.00 can be awarded to a Grantee Partner per Operational Phase of the GEF SGP.

The closing date for submission of complete proposals is 30th September 2022 at 17:00 hours. Proposals should be submitted electronically to gefsgp@btl.net.

The National Coordinator
GEF Small Grants Programme
Email: gefsgp@btl.net
Telephone: 822 2462 / 610-8735
Website: www.sgp.undp.org

Senate Presentation by Senator Kevin Herrera on BSL Settlement August 29th, 2022

Cont'd from pg. 10

the Belizean people would have gotten \$172M over the last 7 years, not the \$96M.

One last thing on the settlement, Madam President, the government complained about the high cost of the \$5M referendum. It is adamant that it will recuperate the \$15M it lost from excise taxes on fuel and for that reason it has not allowed the local prices of certain fuels to fall correspondingly to that of world market prices. It can't afford more robust social programs and it has to continuously borrow for budgetary support and yet in the blink of an eye, it can find \$76M to pay BSL.

Conclusion

Madam President, in this tragedy perhaps there is room to learn so these things never happen the way they did again. I would like to propose that we amend the constitution to include a provision in which Government officials will be held personally liable for losses suffered in transactions that don't comply to the applicable laws that require certain degrees of disclosure. It was too easy for Mr. Musa and Mr. Fonseca to walk away from this mess. We have to do better than that. The Senate should really consider bringing some of these people to the Senate to answer some questions.

Madam President,

look at our roads, our hospitals, our schools. Look at the poverty that exists. There is so much need in this country and yet our leaders contracted to give a billionaire \$406M that could have easily be done by the government. Ask yourself how we and future generations will benefit from that. The poor will not be allowed to ride the yathe or the private plane. What they are asked to do is to pay for those and more out of their meagre earnings.

Nobody has been held to account for this travesty, except for the already burden-ridden taxpayer, and by the way they are the only ones who had nothing to do with this.

Nurses countrywide walk out of hospitals in protest

Monday morning and took to the streets in their respective communities, demanding that they be adequately compensated for their time. The nurses have raised special issue with the "short hour" deductions begging subtracted from their overtime, and for which they were told by their various administrations are deductions made for the hours they were on lunch break.

Nurses from the Northern Regional (NRH), Southern Regional (SRH), and Western Regional Hospitals (WRH), along with those from the Corozal Community Hospital left their posts

Monday morning and took to the streets in their respective communities, demanding that they be adequately compensated for their time.

The nurses have raised special issue with the "short hour" deductions begging subtracted from their overtime, and for which they were told by their various administrations are deductions made for the hours they were on lunch break.

"How can you make

deductions for a lunch hour, when we do not have a lunch hour?" one nurse from the SRH asked.

The nurses emphasized that they were on the front lines when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, endangering their lives and putting in far more work than was originally asked of them, and as such should not be cheated out of their compensation.

Since the first walkout at the SRH on Saturday, the Belize Medical and Dental Association (BMDA) and the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital Workers Union have issued statements of solidarity and support for the nurses who have made the decision to protest.



RF&G LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY LTD.

Date: August 29, 2022

Veronica Smith for Rasheed Flowers of #7 Junessville Area, Belize City, Belize District, Belize C.A. having made written declaration that Policy 5000011118 under RF&G Life Insurance Company Ltd has been lost and having made request to the Company for a duplicate of the Policy, notice is hereby given that unless objection is raised within one month of the date herein, the requested duplicate policy will be issued.



GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE



INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC EXPENDITURE MANAGEMENT IN BELIZE (BL-L1038)

Terms of Reference Project Coordinator

• BACKGROUND

1.2 The Government of Belize is committed to implementing a comprehensive fiscal consolidation plan, with a strategy centered on three areas: (i) expenditure reduction; (ii) increased revenues; and (iii) debt restructuring. Such a strategy is outlined in the Budget Speech for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021/2022, based on the Plan Belize Manifesto and aligned with the recommendations of the latest IMF Article IV, with the aim of reaching a sustainable debt ratio (70% of GDP) by 2030. It includes measures to reduce expenditures, strengthen public financial management reforms, boost revenues, reduce debt, and implement explicit fiscal rules and medium-term fiscal frameworks once the crisis abates. In line with this strategy, the government has made several adjustments in its Budget to cut expenses. However, challenges remain, mainly regarding a sustained implementation of the fiscal plan in the context of uncertain global recovery from the pandemic.

1.3 As part of the Program to accomplish the objectives of the fiscal strategy, the Government of Belize has entered into a US\$8.0 Million Loan Agreement (BL-L1038) with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to implement a five-year project entitled "Strengthening Public Expenditure Management in Belize". The general objective of the Project is to promote the fiscal sustainability of Belize specifically to increase the efficiency of public resources by strengthening public financial management.

1.4 The Project is comprised of one component with four subcomponents that will achieve the objective. It will focus on the areas of financial management (including budget and internal audit), procurement, technological infrastructure and capacity building.

1.5 The Ministry of Finance (MOF) has been designated as the Executing Agency responsible for the implementation of the Project. For this purpose, a Project Executing Unit (PEU) is established in the MOF with concrete technical, administrative, financial, control and planning, monitoring and evaluation responsibilities for the IDB-funded initiative.

1.6 In this regard, a vacancy exists for the post of Project Coordinator under a contractual arrangement with the MOF, and as part of the BL-L1038 initiative.

• OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 The objective of the position of Project Coordinator is to provide the necessary strategic, governance, organizational and administrative leadership for Project implementation and, thereby, ensuring the effective allocation of resources, providing the financial and technical direction of the Project towards the attainment of the goals and targets, leading the physical and financial progress reporting, and serving as the main focal point of the Project with the PEU, the MOF and other public and private institutions.

2.2 The Project Coordinator is responsible for leading and guiding all matters pertaining to the effective, efficient, and transparent implementation of the Project, through the technical, administrative and financial management of the PEU, in accordance with the procedures and stipulations contained in the Program Operational Manual (POM) and in compliance with the Loan Contract.

• RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

3.1 The main responsibilities of the Project Coordinator include, among others:

- a. Implementing the intra- and inter-institutional coordination mechanisms with the PEU, the MOF and other public and private organizations related to and/or beneficiaries of the Project.
- b. Promoting and disseminating the Project among beneficiaries, public entities, and other stakeholders.
- c. In close coordination with the pertinent technical and administrative personnel of the PEU and the MOF, guiding the strategic and operation planning activities of the Project.
- d. Monitoring the activities of the Project in compliance with its global strategic objectives and those of its individual technical components, as well as the targets established in the Project.
- e. Implementing the Programs' risk management mechanisms taking into consideration the assessment and evolution of the risk factors, the factors of probability and impact, and risk mitigation measures.
- f. Guiding the preparation of the periodic physical and financial progress reports to be submitted to MOF, MED, and the Bank.
- g. Presenting to the Bank the required data, reports and other documentation of the Project as a whole and its individual components, as established in the Loan Contract.

3.2 Specific activities include:

- a. Lead the overall planning and reporting framework and activities of the Project, including the preparation and update of key planning, in direct coordination with the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and other members of the PEU.
- b. Monitor and ensure the Project's adherence to reporting requirements to the MOF, PSC, and the Bank.
- c. Lead and coordinate timely implementation of all aspects of the Project based on the Project planning documents including the PEP, AOP, PP, supporting technical documents, and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.
- d. Ensure timely execution of all administrative, procurement, financial and technical procedures of the Project in compliance with the POM. In addition, ensure the strict adherence to administrative, Project management, and Bank and national financial rules and regulations, among others.
- e. Ensure the necessary coordination between technical staff of the MOF to provide the technical specifications and content for the preparation of terms of reference and technical specification as the basis for procurement actions and activities.
- f. Provide for the timely monitoring and management of Project risks and lead the implementation of the mitigation measures as necessary.
- g. Ensure the necessary coordination and control of all Project procurement activities and logistics with the Procurement Specialist and pertinent staff members of the MOF.
- h. Support the information dissemination activities and advocate for the Project among key internal and external stakeholders, while maintaining the necessary and transparent lines of communication.
- i. Ensure the establishment of the necessary and effective lines of internal communication with key stakeholders of the MOF (tax administration, systems administration, financial management, general administration, and other) to ensure the dedicated participation of such personnel in Project implementation and in direct coordination with the PEU.
- j. Ensure the presence of an accurate Project filing system covering financial, procurement, technical and all activities of the Project, and following the internal control requirements established in the POM.
- k. Provide timely and accurate reports to the Program Manager, Financial Secretary, PSC and other agencies on the developments, progress, and challenges of the Project.
- l. Ensure the timely implementation of the monitoring and evaluation activities including the contracting of the mid-term and final evaluations.
- m. Lead, in coordination with the Financial Specialist, the preparation of the disbursement requests, including Requests for Advance of Funds along with the expenditure justifications, as necessary to ensure that the Project has adequate liquidity for smooth execution.
- n. Lead the contracting of the independent external auditors of the Project in coordination with the Financial Specialist, the Procurement Specialist and the PEU, and following IDB procedures for this matter. Additionally, ensure that adequate arrangements are made to facilitate the conduct of audits (internal and external) and that recommendations arising from them are appropriately reviewed and acted upon.
- o. Lead the contracting of the consultancies for the execution of the mid-term and final evaluations.
- p. Ensure the presence of the necessary control environment along with the capacities necessary for the application of a management by objectives framework.

- q. Provide for the necessary human resources management capabilities for PEU personnel administration.
- r. Communicate with Project stakeholders (MOF, PEU, other) to ensure awareness of any new developments in Project status, strategy, progress, deadlines, challenges, decisions and other aspects that may affect Project implementation and the attainment of its development objectives.
- s. Direct the preparation for, and hosting of, key Program events such as:
 - Periodic portfolio review meetings between the Bank and the government
 - Supervision missions and program monitoring meetings (led by the Bank)
 - Inspection visits by the Bank to supervise the financial management and procurement operations including conducting of ex-post reviews
 - Mid-term evaluation
 - Final evaluation
 - Joint review missions by the Bank and other funding and/or supervising and implementation agencies as required
- t. Other.

3.3 The Project Coordinator shall undertake his/her work in direct coordination and with the supervision of the MOF, and in accordance with the Loan Contract and the POM.

• DELIVERABLES

4.1 The Project Coordinator will be responsible for preparing/updating the following reports which are considered recurrent deliverables or responsibilities:

- a. Updates to PEP, AOP, PP, risk matrix, and other
- b. Quarterly physical and financial progress/status reports.
- c. Updates to POM
- d. Updates to status of procurement processes (Procurement Early Warning Tool)
- f. Staff performance appraisals. Specific reports requested by the, MOF or the PSC.
- g. Allocation/provision of funds reports.
- h. Fixed asset allocation reports.
- i. External audit reports (prepared under consultancy engagements)
- j. Mid-term and final evaluations (prepared under consultancy engagements).
- k. Other.

• QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

5.1 **Education:** Bachelor of Science Degree in Finance, Economics, Business Administration, Business Management, Engineering, Project Management or related fields.

5.2 **General Experience:** At least 10 years' general working experience since obtaining the first academic degree.

5.3 **Specific Work Experience:**

- i. At least five years of proven work experience in project management including technical coordination, administration, monitoring and evaluation.
- ii. Previous work with investment projects funded by international development agencies is a plus.

5.4 **Skills:** Possess expertise in modern software tools for project planning, monitoring and management purposes. Proficient in the use of Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Outlook, Power Point). Excellent oral and written command of the English language. Strong organizational and time management skills and ability to multi-task with ability to adapt to changing needs and priorities. Solid leadership and delegation skills and, most importantly, the ability to provide technical direction and coordinate functional activities of multiple actors. Team player. Strong work ethics.

• REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

6.1 The Project Coordinator of the PEU will report to the Financial Secretary or his Representative. He/she shall work in close coordination with the staff of the MOF and especially the members of the PEU.

• COMPENSATION

7.1 The Project Coordinator will be paid a monthly salary to be established during the contracting process.

VIII. CONTRACT TERM:

8.1 The contract will be for a period of one year in the beginning, with the possibility of an extension for two years in the first instance and, thereafter, yearly until the end of the project, based on satisfactory performance.

IX. LOCATION OF WORK:

9.1 Ministry of Finance, Belmopan

X. APPLICATIONS

10.1 CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Consultants will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the Inter-American Development Bank: **Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants financed by the Inter-American Development Bank GN-2350-15 section 5** – individual consultants and is open to all eligible candidates as defined in the IDB policies. The individual consultant will be selected in accordance with the selection of Individual Consultant based on Comparison of Qualifications method set out in the Contracting of Consultant Policies.

10.2 APPLICATION PROCEDURES:

Expression of Interest package should contain:

- (i) Cover letter briefly explaining interest, experience, and competence of the consultant
- (ii) Comprehensive resume with the Individual Consultant's experience in the assignment of similar nature. Description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments. *Please provide dates, name of employing organization, titles of positions held, types of activities performed and location of the assignment.*
- (iii) Copy of degrees/certificates
- (iv) List of at least two references
- (v) Proof of nationality: copy of documentation of nationality

Qualified Individual Consultant must submit their Expression of Interest package via e-mail to raquel.guerra@mof.gov.bz no later than 4:00 p.m., Friday September 16th, 2022, marked **SPEM- Project Coordinator** in the subject header. In addition, applicants may also submit a hardcopy at the following address:

Financial Secretary
Ministry of Finance
Sir Edney Cain Building
Belmopan

For clarifications kindly contact:

Senior Economist
Ministry of Finance
Sir Edney Cain Building
Belmopan
E-mail: raquel.guerra@mof.gov.bz
Phone: 828-4100/828-4112



GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE



INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC EXPENDITURE MANAGEMENT IN BELIZE (BL-L1038)

Terms of Reference

Procurement Specialist Assistant

• **BACKGROUND**

1.1 The Government of Belize is committed to implementing a comprehensive fiscal consolidation plan, with a strategy centered on three areas: (i) expenditure reduction; (ii) increased revenues; and (iii) debt restructuring. Such a strategy is outlined in the Budget Speech for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021/2022, based on the Plan Belize Manifesto and aligned with the recommendations of the latest IMF Article IV, with the aim of reaching a sustainable debt ratio (70% of GDP) by 2030. It includes measures to reduce expenditures, strengthen public financial management reforms, boost revenues, reduce debt, and implement explicit fiscal rules and medium-term fiscal frameworks once the crisis abates. In line with this strategy, the government has made several adjustments in its Budget to cut expenses. However, challenges remain, mainly regarding a sustained implementation of the fiscal plan in the context of uncertain global recovery from the pandemic.

1.2 As part of the Program to accomplish the objectives of the fiscal strategy, the Government of Belize has entered into a **US\$8.0 Million Loan Agreement (BL-L1038)** with the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)** to implement a five-year project entitled “**Strengthening Public Expenditure Management in Belize**”. The general objective of the Project is to promote the fiscal sustainability of Belize specifically to increase the efficiency of public resources by strengthening public financial management.

1.3 The Project is comprised of one component with four subcomponents that will achieve the objective. It will focus on the areas of financial management (including budget and internal audit), procurement, technological infrastructure and capacity building.

1.4 The Ministry of Finance (MOF) has been designated as the Executing Agency responsible for the implementation of the Project. For this purpose, a Project Executing Unit (PEU) is established in the MOF with concrete technical, administrative, financial, control and planning, monitoring and evaluation responsibilities for the IDB-funded initiative.

1.5 In this regard, a vacancy exists for the post of **Procurement Specialist Assistant** for the PEU under a contractual arrangement with the MOF, and as part of the BL-L1038 Project.

• **OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF WORK**

2.1 The objective of the position of Procurement Specialist Assistant is to support the Procurement Specialist in the execution of the procurement activities of the PEU in accordance with the provisions of the Project and the Bank's procurement rules and procedures and the MOF procurement guidelines, when applicable. In particular, the Procurement Specialist Assistant shall assist in the overall and day to day activities for the procurement of goods, services and works, subject to IDB policies and requirements and in accordance with the Project Operational Manual (POM) and GOB procedures, as it relates to the BL-L1038 Project.

• **RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES**

3.1 The main responsibilities of the Procurement Specialist Assistant include, among others:

- a. Review all documentation relating to the Project; and, be informed on the Program Operation Manual (POM), the Loan Contract, the Procurement Plan (PP), the Annual Operational Plan (AOP), the Project Execution Plan (PEP), and the initial Disbursement Projection Table.
- b. Review the Policies for the Procurement of Goods and Works Financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (GN-2349-15) and the Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants Financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (GN 2350- 15).
- c. Review the procurement policies and procurement best practices and procedures of the GOB.
- d. Responsible for uploading procurement notices under the Project on the CARICOM Procurement Portal.
- e. Participate in the preparation of the AOP and in the preparation and update of the Procurement Plan.
- f. Support the preparation of necessary bidding or selection documents and review the Terms of Reference (ToR) and specifications prepared by Technical Staff.
- g. Assist in the organizing and execution of all bid openings and evaluation processes, prepare evaluation reports and corresponding draft contracts.
- h. Ensure contracting of consultants, suppliers and contractors is in accordance with IDB procurement policies and GOB policies, laws and regulations.
- i. Support the Procurement Specialist to ensure that prospective contractors, suppliers and consultants are duly constituted and are addressing ongoing concerns.
- j. Assist in the preparation of contracts for signature by relevant parties.
- k. Monitor the validity of contracts during their execution, securing the legal status of each agreement:
 - (i) Ensure the submission and safeguard of all bid validity documents (i.e. bonds, guarantees, insurances, etc.) during and after tendering and execution of the contracts.
 - (ii) Ensure the timely receipt, extension and release of all bonds, guarantees, insurances, etc.
 - (iii) Coordinate with the Financial Specialist to ensure that authorized payments to contractors are according to the terms of the contract.
 - (iv) Notify management of the PEU and other staff of duration and expiration of the bid validity periods, contract durations within the overall final disbursement date.
 - (v) Address contractors complains and issues, preparing contract amendments and ensuring proper closeout of all contracts, including evaluation of contractors' performance.
 - (vi) Maintain accurate auditable records of all procurement process
- l. Assist the BL-L1038 Project Coordinator in the preparation and submission of monthly activities reports and prepare quarterly procurement reports following a pre-approved Bank, detailing the procurement of goods, services and works, along with the corresponding disbursements, and a description of problems found and how they were dealt with.
- m. Maintain an up-to-date registry of consultants hired and goods and service purchased under the Project.
- n. Keep the records updated regarding executed contracts through contract completion, liaising with technical personnel of the MOF and PEU and the Financial Specialist of the PEU to ensure payments/disbursements are made according to contract and the preparation of monthly and annual disbursement projections and payments are accurate.

- o. Maintain appropriate files of procurement functions and provide information as needed by the Procurement Specialist, the Executing Agency and the Bank.
- p. Participate in the update of the POM ensuring the procurement section of the POM is aligned with the procurement guidelines of the Bank and those of the GOB.
- q. Execute other tasks and special assignments as required by the Procurement Specialist to enable transparent, efficient and timely implementation of procurement activities and program deliverables including responding to audit queries and responding to requests from the GOB.
- r. Liaise with GOB officials (MOF, PEU and other) on procurement matters aimed at ensuring and effective discharge of the Project's procurement/contracting activities.
- s. Attend the training provided to the PEU staff.
- t. Other

• **DELIVERABLES**

4.1 The Procurement Specialist Assistant will support the preparation and updating the following reports which are considered recurrent deliverables or responsibilities:

- a. Annual PPs.
- b. Quarterly procurement reports.
- c. Updates to POM.
- d. Procurement documents (bids, requests for proposals, invitations, etc.)
- e. Minutes of procurement meetings.
- f. Other.

• **QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE**

5.1 **Education:** Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting, Finance, Economics, Business Administration, Auditing, Law, Public Administration, or other related fields. Specialized certification in procurement and supply chain management or contract management is considered a plus.

5.2 **Work Experience:** At least three years of general experience since obtaining the academic degree, and at least 1 year of proven work experience in supporting general financial management and the preparation of bidding documents, preparation of contracts, and contract management, for the procurement of goods, works, services, and consultancies in the public and/or private sector. Experience in applying procurement policies and procedures of the IDB or similar organizations would be considered an asset.

• **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

6.1 The Procurement Specialist Assistant reports to the BL-L1038 Project Coordinator of the PEU. He/she shall work in close coordination with the staff of the MOF and especially the members of the PEU.

• **COMPENSATION**

7.1 The Procurement Specialist Assistant will be paid a monthly salary to be established during the contracting process.

VIII. CONTRACT TERM:

8.1 The contract will be for a period of one year in the beginning, with the possibility of an extension for two years in the first instance and, thereafter, yearly until the end of the project, based on satisfactory performance

XI. LOCATION OF WORK:

9.1 **Ministry of Finance, Belmopan**

• **APPLICATIONS**

10.1 **CRITERIA FOR SELECTION**

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- (iii) Copy of degrees/certificates
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**Financial Secretary
Ministry of Finance
Sir Edney Cain Building
Belmopan**

For clarifications kindly contact:

**Senior Economist
Ministry of Finance
Sir Edney Cain Building
Belmopan**

**E-mail: raquel.guerra@mof.gov.bz
Phone: 828-4100/828-4112**



Can walking lower blood pressure?

Can walking lower blood pressure? We've long known walking has many health and wellbeing benefits, including strengthening our bones and muscles and helping us to maintain a healthy weight and lose body fat. It turns out the walking perks don't stop there.

Regular physical activity is associated with lower blood pressure and therefore reduced cardiovascular risk. Walking to control your blood pressure, whether in the great outdoors or on one of the best walking treadmills, is easily accessible to most and is no different.

Dr. Mahmoud Al Rifai, a member of the American College of Cardiology who has been involved in multiple studies of cardiovascular risk, tells us: "We frequently advise our patients to engage in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, and that can include walking." And it's not hard to see why.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hypertension (the more formal term for high or raised blood pressure) affects 47% of people in the US. Furthermore the CDC estimates that only one in four adults with hypertension have their condition under control. Clearly, finding a reliable and consistent way to keep your blood pressure within healthy limits is more important than ever.

Below, you'll find everything you need to know about walking and its potential role in lowering blood pressure, including how it helps and exactly how much walking you need to do to see positive results.

Dr. Rebecca Breslow is a physician, researcher, and writer. A graduate of Yale University, she did her medical training at Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Boston Children's Hospital. She was a practicing physician in academic medicine for 17 years, during which time she authored numerous publications for academic and lay audiences. Currently, she focuses on freelance medical writing and editing to help make medical, health, and wellness information accessible to a broad audience.

CAN WALKING LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE?

Studies suggest that it can. One systematic review, published in the Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects, examined trials conducted on walking and its impact on hypertension. The authors concluded: "There was evidence for the beneficial effects of walking on lowering either systolic or diastolic blood pressure, or both."

Another review, published in the journal of Preventive Medicine, found evidence to suggest that individuals who take up a programme of 'regular brisk walking' improve several known risk factors for cardiovascular disease – including high blood pressure.

The CDC defines systolic blood pressure, the upper number in a blood pressure measurement, as 'the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats'. The lower number in a blood pressure measurement, the diastolic blood pressure, 'measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart rests between beats'.

A normal blood pressure level is less than 120/80 millimeters of mercury (mmHg).

HOW DOES WALKING HELP TO LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE?

According to Dr. Al Rifai, walking decreases the

'tone of the blood vessels'. He explains: "Blood vessels are surrounded by what's called smooth muscle cells. And these are muscle cells that can contract and relax. And what determines how contracted or relaxed they are, is the amount of sympathetic tone."

If you increase the tone, you raise blood pressure. If you decrease it, you lower blood pressure. "Walking



is thought to decrease the tone of blood vessels," Dr Al Rifai adds.

HOW MUCH WALKING DO YOU NEED TO DO TO LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE?

According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, adults should do 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous cardiovascular exercise each week. This might seem like a high number but you can hit this target by exercising for 30 minutes, four-to-five days a week.

Weight lifting, swimming and running lower blood pressure, and walking can have the same effect. In a review of 73 trials published in the Cochrane Library researchers concluded: "Our findings suggest that moderate-intensity walking, three to five times per week, of 20 to 40 minutes duration, and 150 minutes per week for approximately three months could have an effect on lowering blood pressure."

Another study published in Hypertension Research found good evidence that walking 10,000 steps a day lowered systolic blood pressure in middle-aged male subjects. If you're looking for an easy way to make sure you're getting your required steps in each day, check out our guide to the best fitness trackers.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO TO LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE?

Dr Al Rifai says that the first step to lowering blood pressure is through therapeutic lifestyle interventions. He says: "Being physically active is very important. You can do physical activities, like doing yard work or going up the stairs, and dedicated exercise like jogging, swimming, weightlifting." Just make sure you have one of the best water bottles with you so that you can stay hydrated during your workout.

Dr. Al Rifai tells us you can also reduce blood pressure by reducing salt intake. A study published in the journal of Electrolytes and Blood Pressure found: "A reduction in dietary salt from the current [global average] intake of 9-12 g/day to the recommended level of less than 5-6 g/day will have major beneficial effects on cardiovascular health."

Finally, you can reduce blood pressure by losing weight. Dr Al Rifai says: "Weight loss in itself can lead to dramatic reduction in blood pressure." There is evidence to prove it: in one study published in Hypertension, researchers found that a 1kg loss of body weight was associated with an approximate 1-mm Hg drop in blood pressure.

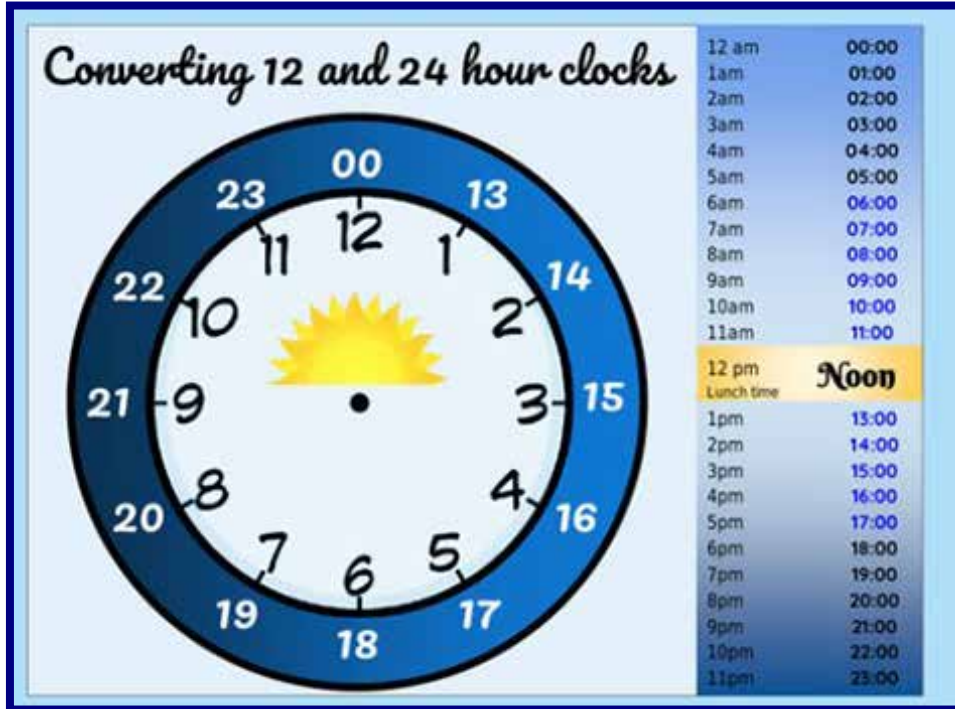


FUN FACTS!

The 24 hour clock!

The 24-hour clock is a way of telling the time in which the day runs from midnight to midnight and is divided into 24 hours, numbered from 0 to 24. It does not use a.m. or p.m. This system is also referred to (only in the US and the English speaking parts of Canada) as military time or (only in the United Kingdom and now very rarely) as continental time. In some parts of the world, it is called railway time. Also, the international standard notation of time (ISO 8601) is based on this format.

A time in the 24-hour clock is written in the form hours:minutes (for example, 01:23), or hours, minutes, seconds (01:23:45). Numbers under 10 usually have a zero in front (called a leading zero); e.g. 09:07. Under the 24-hour clock system, the day begins at midnight, 00:00, and the last minute of the day begins at 23:59 and ends at 24:00, which is identical to 00:00 of the following day.



12:00 can only be mid-day. Midnight is called 24:00 and is used to mean the end of the day and 00:00 is used to mean the beginning of the day. For example, you would say "Tuesday at 24:00" and "Wednesday at 00:00" to mean exactly the same time.

However, the US military prefers not to say 24:00 - they do not like to have two names for the same thing, so they always say "23:59", which is one minute before midnight.

24-hour clock time

is used in computers, military, public safety, and transport. In many Asian, European and Latin American countries people use it to write the time. Many European people use it in speaking.

Many models of digital wristwatches and clocks are available that display the time of day using the 24-hour clock.

In railway timetables 24:00 means the end of the day. For example, a train due to arrive at a station during the last minute of a day arrives

at 24:00; but trains which depart during the first minute of the day go at 00:00.

To write shop opening hours until midnight use, for example, "00:00-24:00", "07:00-24:00".

Advantages over the 12-hour clock system:

Fewer confusions between morning and evening; e.g. 7 o'clock in the evening is called 19:00.

People do not have to figure out if noon is 00h00.m. or 12h00.m.

It is easier to calculate duration.



Huge Crocs!

Saltwater crocodiles are the largest crocodiles on Earth.



Sharper than steel!



DID YOU KNOW?

Ancient Obsidian Blades used by Aztecs are 500 times sharper than Steel.

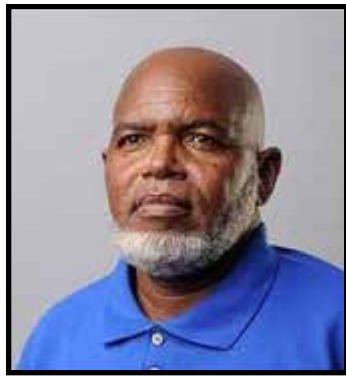
COLOR ME

Have a wonderful day!



GRASSROOTS

Tribute to my uncle, Clifford Alexander Baptist (1934 -2022)



By Hon. Gilroy Usher

“Life is short. There is not time to leave important words unsaid.”- Paulo Coelho

Clifford Alexander Baptist aka Fish, Baca, or Pescado was born August 2nd, 1934 to Mr. Hubert Baptist and his wife Mrs. Clavia Baptist in the village of Bermudian Landing in the Belize District. He was the only child of that union.

Clifford attended St. Isabella R.C. School in the village with his four siblings Cleveland, Raymond, and Norma Lord and Eva Baptist. Cleveland, Raymond, and Norma were the first three children of his mother from an earlier relationship. Eva Baptist was the first child of his father from a previous relationship.

From his teenage years Clifford was always well-dressed and with a special attraction for ladies. It was therefore no surprise that soon after he graduated from high school, Clifford captured the heart of Miss Edna Garbutt, a beautiful young lady from the village Blackman Eddie in the Cayo District. After a brief courtship the couple got married in Bermudian Landing. That union produced four children Joyce, Elsworth, Kirk, and Rigel Baptist. The family was had an adopted son, Ronnie “Bolo” Baptist.

Clifford Baptist had five other children. Those children are Luke and Godfrey Baptist from Lemonal, Errol Baptist of Double Head Cabbage, and Harry and Jude Baptist in the USA.

In traveling as a boy with my uncle from Bermudian Landing to Belize City, the truck picked up a beautiful lady. Clifford quickly struck a conversation with the passenger. He eventually said to the lady, “I would like to be the water boy or handyman at your house.” At that point I said to myself “My uncle. My uncle.”

After finishing high school Clifford took interest in carpentry and later became known as a reliable builder in his community. As a member of the Baptist Church that was being developed by American missionary Pastor Parson, Clifford was given the contract to build the Baptist Church and later the Baptist Missionary house followed by the Baptist School in the village. Those three buildings were his landmark achievement as a building contractor.

When he was not engaged in construction work, Clifford worked as a farmer with his sibling to support his family.

Clifford got his first opportunity to travel to the United States in 1968 with the Baptist missionaries. He however remained in the United States only briefly and returned to Belize.

On his return to the country Clifford used the knowledge he gained abroad to uplift himself and his family as a grocer, a hunter, building contractor, logger of mahogany, and later as a commercial farmer with rice, beans, pigs, and cattle.

Clifford Baptist was an ambitious person. He was always dedicated to pursuing his dreams including providing his family with the best possible life despite many challenges and setbacks along the way.

Clifford showed his commitment to his dreams repeatedly.

After a good season as a logger he built his own house in the village and opened a grocery store. A few years later he suffered a huge financial loss, when many of his logs were lost at sea due to a huge unexpected flood. Clifford used the unfortunate incident as a learning experience to rebound with logging. Later he suffered another huge financial loss when an unexpected flood destroyed acres of his beans and rice. He

Clifford Baptist was a disciplinarian and a person who believed in the value of hard work and a good education. He made every to raise his children with those values.



Clifford Baptist

rebounded from those losses, ventured into the rearing of pigs, and later built a large pasture in his home village.

In 1977 at age 43 Clifford Baptist migrated to the United States. A few year later he was joined in America by his children Elsworth, Joyce, and Kirk Baptist.

Clifford Baptist was a disciplinarian and a person who believed in the value of hard work and a good education.

He made every to raise his children with those values.

Clifford did not tolerate misbehavior from children; he taught his children as well as his nephews and nieces to work hard and smart to uplift themselves, and he provide his children with all their necessary school supplies.

As a boy around 10 years my uncle Clifford gave me a good whipping with all good intention for stealing a

did the talking and the mistake was not repeated again.

In their primary school days Clifford's children were upset when he whipped them with a belt to get them to focus on their schoolwork. Today however those children are thankful that their father did not allow them to neglect their education and become primary school or high school dropouts.

Clifford Baptist was a community activist. As the Chairman of Bermudian Landing, he organized a number of sporting events, dances, cleanup campaigns, and meetings with the villagers and Fred Hunter the then Area Representative to uplift the community.

One of the greatest horse races at the racetrack in Double Head Cabbage featured Tight Fit for Clifford Baptist vs. a horse for Mr. Pratt from St Paul's Bank.

In the buildup to the six furlong race Mr. Pratt said that his horse would defeat Tight Fit so badly that it would be called Sleek Fit afterwards.

The day of the race huge bets were on the line; the track was rather silent as the two horses galloped neck and neck for the first three furlongs; then the crowd burst with joy as Tight Fit for Clifford Baptist gradually increased its lead over its rival by half length, then a length to win the race by at least three lengths.

For years many villagers remember the great fundraising and the extraordinary fun Belizeans from near and far had, when as Chairman of his village Clifford Baptist took the gamble and invited Bameki Bandula the hottest band in Belize in those days for a village dance.

A lover of his country, Clifford had strong political views.

He supported the Opposition National Independence Party (NIP) for many years, and later campaign for accountant and independent candidate Leslie Day, who was unsuccessful in his bid to unseat Fred Hunter, the veteran Area Representative for Belize Rural North.

Clifford was also a caring person. Like his parents for many years he offered lodging at his home to families from the village of Lemonal, who had to spend the night in Bermudian Landing to take the morning truck to Belize City, as their eight mile village road was totally trafficable by vehicles.

Clifford was gainfully employed in the United States until he met the retirement age. He continued living in the USA until the Lord took him home on August 13, 2022 at the age of 88.

Clifford Baptist was a loving father, husband, grandfather, great grandfather, uncle, nephew, friend, and community activist. He will be sadly missed

Sleep in peace my uncle Clifford until we all meet again.

Clifford Alexander Baptist (August 2nd, 1934–August 13th, 2022)

May he rest in Peace and Rise in Glory

N.B. Clifford Alexander Baptist will be laid to rest in Brooklyn N.Y. on Saturday August 27, 2022 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The event will be live streamed of Facebook.

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper's stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.

FIFA President Infantino visits Belize

By William Ysaguirre

Gianni Infantino, the president of the Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA) visited Belize for the first time this week on his goodwill tour of Central America and the Caribbean. Infantino joined President Sergio Chuc of the Football Federation of Belize in a media briefing at FFB Institute in Belmopan on Wednesday afternoon, August 31.

His visit coincided with a week-long football festival for primary school children at the FFB Stadium, as part of the launch of the FIFA “Football in Schools” project which FIFA is funding for Belize with \$100,000. The children welcomed Infantino and his delegation, waving Belize flags.

Belize was the 14th country, among the 211 member countries of FIFA



FIFA President Gianni Infantino receives jersey as gift.

to participate in the project. Over 10,000 school children at 100 primary schools around the country will learn the game of football this academic year through the program. It’s a

4-year program of football development which will expand gradually, for football to become a part of the physical education curriculum at all schools. It is the fulfillment

of a partnership agreement which the Ministries of Education and Sports signed with the FFB in June 2021.

Infantino expressed his satisfaction at what the FFB has

accomplished with the FIFA funding for football development. In 2020, FIFA’s annual support for the FFB was US \$1 million for football development, particularly women’s football. With the onset of COVID-19, FIFA provided a further USD\$1.5 million for anti-COVID measures such as testing, face masks, sanitizers, hand-washing stations, etc. In May 2020, FIFA also provided \$1.25 million for the renovation of the steel bleachers at the FFB stadium, which have been replaced by concrete stands to seat 5,000 persons, with access ramps for the handicapped. The pitch of the stadium was renovated from natural grass to a synthetic pitch, another USD\$1 million investment. Infantino verified that FIFA’s annual support

to the FFB this year is now USD\$2 million.

Football federations in other countries normally draw on financial support from their professional leagues, but Belize being such a small country, with no professional league, FIFA has stepped up its funding to develop football at the grassroots level, for Belizean children to develop their talents for the sport, who will, in time, grow up to become good professional players who can represent Belize internationally.

Infantino also paid a courtesy call on Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Cordel Hyde at the administration building in Belmopan, where he also met Minister of Sports Hon. Rodwell Ferguson, who welcomed the help that the Football in schools project is providing for football development in Belize.



INDIVIDUAL/LOCAL CONSULTANT

for

Strengthening of the Medicolegal Death Investigation System in Belize through Stakeholder Engagement and Legislative Reform

Belize National Forensic Science Service

The INDIVIDUAL/LOCAL CONSULTANT will:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review, with stakeholder participation, of Belize’s current medicolegal death investigation (MLDI) system, including its structure, processes, procedures, practices, and interface with the justice system, public health system, and civil registration system.
2. Conduct a comprehensive review, with stakeholder participation, of the legal framework that currently pertains to Belize’s MLDI system.
3. Make recommendations, with stakeholder input, for enhancing the conduct, integrity, and utility of death investigations and improve the public’s confidence in death investigations and in the system.
4. Produce draft primary legislation, with stakeholder input, necessary for strengthening Belize’s MLDI system.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES:

- (1) Conduct 1st Round of Stakeholder Workshops and/or Meetings
- (2) Preliminary Draft MLDI System and Legal Framework Review and Recommendations Report
- (3) Conduct 2nd Round of Stakeholder Workshops and/or Meetings
- (4) Revised Draft MLDI System and Legal Framework Review and Recommendations Report & Presentation of Revised Draft Report
- (5) Preliminary Draft Legislation
- (6) Conduct 3rd Round of Stakeholder Workshops and/or Meetings
- (7) Revised Draft Legislation & Presentation of Revised Draft Legislation
- (8) Final MLDI System and Legal Framework Review and Recommendations Report & Final Draft Legislation

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DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: 2nd September 2022

Working as one for the global good

Jaushieh Joseph Wu
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of China (Taiwan)

The global community is confronting a number of unprecedented crises: from the ongoing challenge of COVID-19 variants and stalled efforts on climate change, to supply chain disruptions and Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. Now more than ever, China's increasing rhetorical and military intimidation is jeopardizing regional peace and stability. All these will impact security and well-being of the world. As the UN members meet again in New York this year, it is worth reminding these leaders that all people—including the people of Taiwan—deserve to have their voices heard and to be part of the collaborative effort to tackle these challenges for the global good.

A beacon of democracy in Asia and a force for good in the world, Taiwan is a valuable partner that can help overcome these global challenges. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan has provided humanitarian support across the globe, including much-needed masks and medical supplies, as well as developing and sharing its homegrown vaccine. Taiwan also sent over 550 tons of relief supplies to the people of Ukraine following the Russian invasion of their country, in addition to making over US\$40 million in donations for Ukrainian refugees.

Further, Taiwan is committed to combating climate change, with a blueprint for net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and policies in place to help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As the world's 22nd-largest economy in

terms of GDP and a major semiconductor manufacturer, Taiwan plays a key role in global supply chains. And as a defender of democracy, Taiwan is working to safeguard the status quo and support the rules-based international order. While China is using coercion to export its brand of authoritarianism abroad, Taiwan lets its free and open society lead by example.

Sadly, Taiwan is unable to participate in the largest and most important forum of global cooperation due to the relentless suppression by the People's Republic of China (PRC). By deliberately conflating its "One China" principle with the UNGA Resolution 2758—the resolution that determined who represents "China" in the organization some 50 years ago—Beijing is misleading the world by spreading the fallacy that Taiwan is a part of the PRC. Contrary to these false claims, the resolution does not take a position on Taiwan, nor does it include the word "Taiwan." The long-term status quo is, the ROC (Taiwan) and the PRC are separate jurisdictions, with neither subordinate to the other. The people of Taiwan can only be represented in the international community by their free and democratically elected government.

The wrongful interpretation of UNGA Resolution 2758 has long deprived Taiwan of the right to participate in the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and it has also denied the international community of an opportunity to benefit from Taiwan's contributions. Worse yet, the PRC's efforts to rewrite Taiwan's status at the UN further undermine

global peace and stability. Beijing's recent dangerous military maneuvers surrounding Taiwan is a case in point.

The UN Charter states clearly that the purposes and principles of the United Nations are to maintain international peace and stability, and that international disputes should be resolved by peaceful means. However, Beijing continues to conduct military exercises in areas around Taiwan, undermining the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, escalating tensions, impacting international trade and transportation, and putting regional peace and security at risk. Such irresponsible actions need to be condemned and brought to a halt. Given the current circumstances, it is even more important that UN and its member states stop allowing such a member, which ironically is a member of the UN Security Council, to dictate the positions of the organization to suit its own political agenda. Acquiescing to China's wrongful claims over Taiwan will only destabilize the region, which is also against the very purpose of the UN.

Taiwan will resolutely defend its sovereignty and security. As a responsible member of the international community, Taiwan will also continue to exercise restraint in response to China's provocations, and work together with like-minded countries to uphold peace and stability in the region. And as we have shown the world over the years, we will continue to fulfill our international responsibilities by actively engaging with and contributing to the international community.

The theme of



Jaushieh Joseph Wu - Minister of Foreign Affairs Republic of China (Taiwan)


the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges" pointedly reminds us of the grave challenges facing the international community: the COVID-19 pandemic, food and energy shortages, disrupted global supply chains, and climate change, the list goes on. When the UN talks about "joint solutions" and "solidarity" to tackle

"interconnected crises," we could not agree more. Taiwan is more than willing and able to be part of such joint solutions. And the 23.5 million resilient Taiwanese people surely should not be excluded from such important global efforts.

We are thankful that countries worldwide are beginning to realize what Taiwan can offer and many support Taiwan's robust participation in the UN system. Among them, the European Parliament overwhelmingly

approved a resolution on July 6 this year expressing support for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations. The G7 countries have also expressed similar support. In particular, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken publicly encouraged all UN member states to join the United States in support of Taiwan's meaningful participation in the UN system last October.

Our shared obstacles require all hands on deck. Those grave interconnected crises cannot be resolved until the entire world comes together. Taiwan has proved to be a reliable and indispensable partner, and the people of Taiwan stand ready to contribute. Let's work together as one for the global good!



CENTRAL BANK
of **BELIZE**

www.centralbank.org.bz

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Bank of England to Withdraw
Legal Tender Status of £20 and £50 Paper Banknotes

Belize City, 16 August 2022: The Central Bank of Belize hereby informs the public that the Bank of England has notified that it will withdraw the legal tender status of **£20** and **£50** paper banknotes on **30 September 2022**. After this date, only polymer banknotes will be legal tender. The Bank of England is encouraging both individual and institutional noteholders such as financial institutions to use, deposit, or exchange these banknotes by 30 September 2022.

Members of the Belizean public holding these paper banknotes are advised to submit them for exchange at their domestic bank. Institutional noteholders in Belize should continue to return these sterling banknotes to the Central Bank for repatriation to the Bank of England.

Note that after the 30 September 2022 deadline, holders of paper sterling banknotes will no longer be able to use them in transactions.

More information can be found on the Bank of England's website at:
<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes/paper-20-paper-50-withdrawal>
<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/-/media/boe/files/banknotes/paper/20-50-paper-notes.pdf>

- ENDS -

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Commissioner Explained his Refusal to Greenlight UDP Protest Last Week

By Michelle Sutherland

“As the Commissioner of Police, I saw it fit that it would not have been prudent to hold a protest in the area of a gas station.” This is how the Commissioner of Police Chester Williams explained the Belize Police Department’s decision to deny the United Democratic Party (UDP)’s request to stage a protest last week Thursday in Belize City.

Williams, who is the only person authorized to grant permits for protests

and demonstrations, revealed that it was his instructions to the Officer Commanding the Easter Division Howell Gillett to deny the UDP request twice due to several reasons, including the fact that there is an ongoing State of Emergency in Southside Belize City.

“We have seen where recently people are acting out and acting violently. If it is that you are having a protest in the area of a gas station and the organizers of that protest cannot control the crowd as you would know



The UDP protested the cost of living without a permit for the police.

that these protests do at times harbor those persons who do not listen to what the organizers would say. Sometimes these

people tend to do what they want and use the opportunity of the protest to do so. So it was with that spirit that I had

denied the permission to protest.”

Williams said that he was skeptical of the protestor’s behaviors outside of a gas station and claimed that it was a disaster waiting to happen.

Williams also instructed his officers not to engage with the protesters as they marched through the streets without the permit. The commissioner pointed out that history has shown that the UDP has led the most violent protest so far in the country and so with a view not to have history repeat itself he instructed his officers to carry out the necessary policing to ensure that law and order were maintained and to prevent anyone from going into the gas station to cause any trouble.

But while the Chairman of the United Democratic Party Michael Peyrefitte had claimed that their denial to protest was a suppression of their rights of freedom, the Commissioner responded by saying that those are the chairman’s personal views, which do not necessarily have to be correct.

“I know Uncle P was hoping to be arrested so that he could use his arrest as a form of a political statement to gain public sympathy and so I gave instructions to my officers that if it is that they wanted to protest even though they did not have any permit we will leave

them to protest,” explained Williams jokingly.

For context, the letter, signed by Assistant Commissioner of Police Howell Gillett, dated August 18, 2022, which was penned to Peyrefitte said, “Your application to protest was duly considered. However, due to the State of Emergency in certain parts of the Southside of Belize City and other operational priorities, we will be unable to provide adequate security for the event. Therefore, we are unable to accede to your request at this time.”

Last week, the Vice President of the Human Rights Commission of Belize (HRC) Cynthia Pitts had frowned upon the Police Department’s refusal to grant the UDP permission to hold their protest and cited that it was a violation of their right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

“Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association,” said Pitts as she referred to article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She also highlighted the fact that these principles are echoed in several other international conventions as well as Belize’s Constitution. Along with other rights such as freedom of association and expression, the freedom of assembly forms the bedrock of a person’s right and freedom to peacefully protest.

Pitts went as far as to say that in the HRC’s view the Police Department had failed to provide sufficient, reasonable, and objective ground for denying the permit for a peaceful procession, as governed by section 13 of Belize’s Constitution and under the Control of Public Meetings and Public Processions Act.



CENTRAL BANK
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TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

- Knowledge of the Central Bank of Belize Act, Central Bank of Belize’s policies and procedures, accounting principles and practices, specifically in electronic assets management, and procurement procedures, internal control processes, and business and management principles; Possesses, applies, and maintain a high degree of knowledge in the relevant area to deliver quality work, and keeps informed of the latest trends and development in the discipline; Proficient in software applications including Microsoft Office Suite.

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P O Box 852 or Gabourel Lane
Belize City, BELIZE

Ref: Manager- Administration Department

Email: hr@centralbank.org.bz or online at www.centralbank.org.bz
(All applications will be held in strict confidence.)

No Excuses

It Is Neither Fair Nor Just

CONTRIBUTED:
SEDI

Twenty-year-old Derrick Uh of Christo Rey Village, Corozal is the latest in a long line of youths who have perished at the hand of our police officers since our Independence on September 21st, 1981. He will not be the last. I know of no youth who lost his life while in police custody prior to 1981. The Belize Police Force in the era of British Colonial rule in Belize was competent, professional and exemplary. It benefitted tremendously from the mere fact that it was part and parcel of the Police Force of the Mighty British Empire.

In contrast, today's Police Force is severely emaciated, seriously disunited, intellectually and morally wanting, lacking in adequate leadership and training, frightfully undisciplined and piteously devoid of resources - material and financial. Unless urgent steps are taken to reform it comprehensively, it runs the very real risk of evolving into our nation's most dangerous institution.

Incidents such as the negligent death of Derrick Uh in a metal cage while restrained in a windowless goods van on a torrid August day, the unprovoked execution by gunshot in the back of Laddie Gillett on an empty beach in Placencia and the fact that our country ranks 7th in the world for homicides, are irrefutable evidence that our Police Force has lost the ability to protect and preserve the citizenry of our nation. None of this is the fault of the ordinary policeman. It is the inevitable consequence of a deliberate policy pursued by all our Post Independence governments.

I have long agonized over the inexorable, precipitous and dangerously declining fortunes of our Police Force. I witnessed the onset of its decline in the early 1980's. I was then practicing law in partnership with the late B.Q. Pitts, one of Belize's early titanic criminal defence attorneys.

I inevitably, and not infrequently, became

privity to the complicity of police officers of high and low ranks, as well as that of governing politicians in the drug trade in the early days. The trade began with the cultivation and export of marijuana. It started out in the Stann Creek District and quickly spread to the Orange Walk district, dubbed Rambo Town. It was not long thereafter that cocaine began to be transshipped through our country.

The drug trade is the principal antagonist of our police force. It is multinational in scope. It ranks among the most lucrative in the world. It employs some of the world's brightest and best talents to transport the drugs by land, sea and air seamlessly across natural and artificial borders. The trade is exceedingly well financed. And, though completely clandestine and illegal, its network of financiers, facilitators, enablers, corrupters, agents and executioners include princes, presidents, prime ministers, lawyers, magistrates, high court judges, bankers, accountants, auditors, diplomats, businessmen, medical practitioners, pilots, ship captains, as well as cold blooded killers and merciless gangsters. The lure of the acquisition of quick fortunes and the attainment of a life of luxury and affluence that the drug trade offers, makes it equally irresistible to most people all over the world.

When the British relinquished responsibility for our government in 1981, they left very little money in our government treasury. Our economy was anemic. We had neither robust industries nor strong government institutions. Our police force was puny and unskilled, many of our youth were without employment. The vast majority of Belizeans were living from hand to mouth.

In an interview between Nuri Mohammed and National hero, Philip Goldson, in Los Angeles and broadcasted recently on KREM Radio, Goldson disclosed that the British government had offered to a delegation of ministers who had

visited London after our country had been granted full internal self-government in 1964, to effect substantial development in our colony, but that Premier George Price had stoutly opposed the acceptance of any development initiative in our country from the British.

Given the inexperience of the first Price Administration in na-

If Derrick Uh had died in England, under the same circumstances in which he died here in Belize, the Minister responsible for the Police would have tendered his resignation forthwith to the Prime Minister. That British convention is dictated by logic. The buck stops with the Minister.

tional governance and the paucity of talent and finances at its disposal, and the woefully underdeveloped state of our country, it was not surprising that in less than three years into Independence the new Price Administration was broke and had to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance.

While the IMF did assist with badly needed funds, it simultaneously imposed conditions which severely restricted government's expenditure on salaries and on social programs. Because government was both the single largest employer of our labour force and the single biggest spender in the country. The limitations imposed by the IMF negatively impacted our economy and made life even more difficult for the poor.

But by this time the nascent drug trade was beginning to infuse cash into our economy. And our governing politician's accommodated the trade with a "wink and a nod" given the difficult economic times we were facing. The ordinary farmer began, for the first time, to earn good money, paid in American dollars. Businessmen had ready access to US dollars to pay for imports. Police officers, politicians, lawyers and magistrates also benefited handsomely from the proceeds of the drug trade either in the form of legal fees or bribes.

Imperceptibly and inexorably a symbiotic relationship evolved be-

tween drug dons and our governing politicians which quickly sapped the desire for and interest in a well trained professional police force on the part of our leaders. This was first manifested when the Security Intelligence Services was inexplicably disbanded in 1989 at the height of the American led war on drugs in our coun-

try. Despite copious evidence over the years that members of our police force are in the employ of transnational drug cartels, not a single initiative has been taken to reform and transform the force into a robust professional institution capable of protecting our citizens and country from domestic as well as


foreign criminals. Some years ago our government deliberately refused an offer from the Canadian government to provide us with the services of a Canadian Commissioner of Police, free of cost, to assist us to reform and strengthen our force. Our governments have also resisted offers of assistance to reform our police force from the United Kingdom and American governments as well!

In Belize, the Minis-


ter for the Police Minister suffers no consequence for presiding over a Police Force that is crying out for reform and which poses a clear and present danger to its Police Officers as well as to Belizean public in general.

It is neither fair nor just for the lives of five police officers and their families to be turned into a virtual nightmare because their government deliberately and perennially fail to properly train, equip and supervise them for the job they are tasked to perform.

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper's stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.



Ministry of Sustainable Development,
Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
"When People Put the Environment First, Development Lasts."

Contact Person: Anthony Mai
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Email: envirodept@environment.gov.bz
Website: www.doe.gov.bz

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Notice

**Update to Public Notice on Lodgement of an EIA Report and Public Consultation
"Port of Belize Cruise Tourism Facility and Cargo Expansion"**

Belmopan, Belize. August 26, 2022. The Department of the Environment (DOE), within the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management hereby informs the General Public that the date for the submission of written comments on the review of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report for the "Port of Belize Cruise Tourism Facility and Cargo Expansion" project has been **extended to September 14, 2022.**

At the public consultation meeting to be held on September 1, 2022, at the Belize Biltmore Plaza Hotel commencing at 6:30 pm, members of the public can place their written comments in the Public Comment Box and/or can submit written comments using the below URL or via post mail using the provided contact information herein:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd4x5SsLjYXU7CD649P1uFYeEPD6kPEGLVWAAf44Rw3O48Rw/viewform>

For more information contact:

Chief Environmental Officer
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Tel: 822-548/2819
Email: eiaunit@environment.gov.bz or envirodept@environment.gov.bz
Website: www.doe.gov.bz
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END

The right to marriage in international law: A response to the Human Rights Commission of Belize

Tomás Henríquez,
Advocacy Director for
Latin America and
the Caribbean
ADF International.

On August 14, the Human Rights Commission of Belize submitted an article to *The Reporter*, which in turn was lifted from a United Nations press release. Despite the ostensible credibility of a UN statement, the contents of the article constitute egregious and highly deceptive misinformation about the status of international human rights law on the issue of marriage, and its ramifications.

There is no human right to same sex marriage. International human rights law, as based on the foundational tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, clearly states that men and women “have the right to marry and to found

a family”. Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, and consistently reaffirmed in subsequent treaties, the plain meaning of this provision relates clearly to marriage between man and woman.

Now, we live in times in which the meaning of marriage has been obfuscated, and we cannot shirk from answering with great clarity the fundamental questions of human existence. What is marriage? Is it any close relationship? Or something entirely unique?

Marriage is the union between a man and a woman, unparalleled by any other social contract. As in 1948, the majority of countries around the world continue to espouse this view. Even as political tides come and go, for the great majority,

marriage is something immutable, firmly rooted in cultural and religious truth across the world.

As debate on the true meaning of marriages rages, what we must agree on is that marriage is a matter of public

concern because it has public ramifications. The decision to create a marital union ripples out to family, friends, and often, to children, all of whom become interdependent, in many ways, for support and subsistence. The more marriages fail in sustaining the life of others around them, the more the state is called to intervene. The devaluing of

marriage brings adverse effects across all of society. The hope is that marriage will thrive in Belize, and that the proper foundations for a flourishing family life will be created and supported by both government and

governments (the United States of America being chief among them) increasingly have ramped up the pressure to force developing countries into accepting the complete redesign of the marriage institution. But most of the world still resists—only 32 out of 193 UN Member States have changed the legal definition of marriage. Even where it has been changed, judicial activism has often led the way, creating a dramatic societal shift without respect for democratic processes and support from the people.

Faux interpretations of human rights law are invoked to clobber judges, lawmakers, governments, and citizens into submission. No doubt, the understanding of the distribution of rights and duties of spouses within marriage has changed since the international human rights project was first launched in 1948. But the law’s acknowledgement of the essential structure and common duties of the marriage relationship has not—and remains unchanged in accordance with the same understanding of marriage that has guided us throughout human history. It must be noted that laws that prohibited interracial marriage were rightly condemned precisely because they violated the right to marriage enshrined so clearly in international law.

Readers without detailed knowledge of the international system will be excused from accepting the falsehoods promoted by some UN bureaucrats and parroted by Belize’s HRC. Much like in the tale of the Wizard of Oz, behind the proverbial curtain of the bureaucracy’s various “special mechanisms,” “high commissioners,” and “independent experts,” there is nothing more than an individual, with his

or her own biases and policy goals about how human rights should be interpreted, which they get to push on the rest of the world with the clout and cover of being an officer of the United Nations. Such views are not scientific or empirical conclusions, but rather subjective views that, like any opinion, are inseparable from the author’s bias.

That said, these offices wield tremendous authority, and all too often, countries, in particular those of the developing world, have little choice but to follow their directives—knowing full well that they are not binding, but lacking the ammunition to withstand the pressure that the international institutions levy via foreign aid and other avenues.

The Interamerican Court of Human Rights (under which Belize is under no jurisdictional obligation) has been particularly subject to ideological advocacy from its judges, issuing an advisory opinion in 2017 in which a majority of its members asserted an alleged duty of states to reform their marriage law to accommodate same sex couples. This is not only non-binding, but also directly contradicts the American Convention of Human Rights, which the Court was created to uphold. And State can and should contest and oppose such a reading. Many have done so already, with the Peruvian Constitutional Court being the latest to join its voice in dissent and in condemnation of the body for twisting the meaning of the Convention.

Belize must stand on guard, resisting fraudulent calls to change time-honored laws and values in an effort to keep up with radical ideologies. Strong marriages build strong societies, and now is the time to recommit to the institution of marriage, for today and future generations in Belize.

Readers without detailed knowledge of the international system will be excused from accepting the falsehoods promoted by some UN bureaucrats and parroted by Belize’s HRC.

civil society. It must be stated without reserve that it is the right of the people of Belize to determine for themselves how marriage is defined in their country. This is a crucial determination to be made at home in accordance with Belize’s democratic processes, not imposed from above by a faraway bureaucratic institution.

While international law is firmly grounded in a conception of marriage between man and woman, elements of the UN bureaucracy have, most unfortunately, embraced radical reinterpretations of the law in a bid to compel countries to embrace a reimagined world order. The UN has a specific office dedicated to just this—an “independent expert” on “sexual orientation and gender identity” that points the finger at countries that aren’t doing enough to advance this agenda. Far from stopping at same-sex marriage, this office calls for unfettered rights for “gender diverse” children in clear violation of the rights of parents and with total disregard for fundamental human rights to conscience and religious freedom. It’s no wonder that it is heavily contested by UN Member States at every opportunity.

The UN is far from alone in its mission to eradicate the foundational norms that have served as the basis for a successful society since time immemorial. Powerful

LOVE NEWS AND MUSIC POWER

PHYSICAL MAP OF BELIZE

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The Righters Write

Standing up

Contributed By *The Human Rights Commission*

This week, nurses and other healthcare workers protested across the country calling on government to improve a number of things including safer working conditions, better working hours and wages, and adequate supplies and equipment.

The action lies well within their rights in more than one way. First of all, take a look at Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – “Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.”

They also exercised their right as stated in Article 20 which, “combined with Article 19’s freedom of expression, together ensure the right to gather publicly or privately and collectively express, promote, pursue and defend common interests”.

Healthcare workers hold critical roles in the provision of care and the optimization of health services in all of Belize and it is important for the public to understand that they can only provide optimum services if they are provided adequate working environments and resources. Unfortunately, and many families can attest to this after visiting a public health facility, they don’t have these.

In 2021, Human Resources for Health explored how employment and working

conditions negatively affected the health of nurses in countries including Brazil, Croatia, India, Ireland, Italy,



México, Nepal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. It stated that many nurses worldwide work in precarious conditions. It added that the COVID 19 pandemic “has prompted more visibility to the vulnerability to health-damaging factors of nurses’ globally”. At home, our nurses and healthcare workers pushed through the worst part of the pandemic but at great costs to many of them, some doctors even losing their lives. And that was later compounded by salary cuts imposed by government, undoubtedly negatively affecting the health and wellbeing of all healthcare workers.

It is very important to understand, given the nature of their work, that staff shortages, increased responsibilities, governmental regulations, and other poor working conditions have contributed to nurse burnout and overall distress. Human Resources for Health further writes that “under usual employment and working conditions, health care workers are known to be at risk for depression, stress, anxiety, burnout or insomnia. The COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to significantly impact on mental health of health care workers. A systematic review found a prevalence rate of 23.2% of anxiety, 22.8%

of depression and 38.9% of insomnia. Moreover, this systematic review also found gender and occupational differences, where female nurses had higher rates of affective

symptoms”.

These factors do not only affect their professional lives, but it trickles into their personal lives as well. So, yes, nurses and other healthcare workers did excellently by standing up for their health and wellbeing. But they also, by extension, stood up and demanded better care for the people. The World Health Organization’s constitution states that, “The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition”. This, however, cannot be achieved if health systems lack proper supplies, equipment, medical staff or even medical facilities to serve the community. The Belize Medical and Dental Association stands in solidarity with nurses and reiterated in a release that “There is a lack of medications and resources to be able to properly care for patients, as well as under-staffing that may compromise quality and timely care.”

There is evidence that the working condition affects patient safety, though this is not particularly studied in Belize. Still, we have heard of many stories from disgruntled families complaining bitterly

about public healthcare facilities. The reasons behind the shortcomings have always been present only not clearly visible to the public. It is for this reason that, just like

to see their cause through.

There should be no doubt in the minds of policy makers - the protection of nurses’ health and that of healthcare workers is

administrative and organizational changes to improve their health equity and wellbeing (work-life balance). This should include international and national enforceable standards. Furthermore, it should also include psychological intervention programs that focus on crisis and post-trauma care for all healthcare workers.

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper’s stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.

unions and associations have expressed support to nurses and healthcare workers, the community should also show support

paramount. It is necessary to be aware of specific needs of our nurses and healthcare workers and implement sustainable

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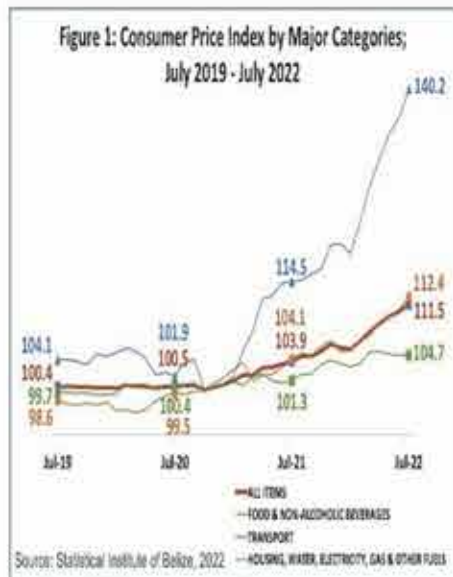
STATISTICAL INSTITUTE OF BELIZE

CPI release for the month of: July 2022 • Published on: August 31st, 2022

CONSUMER PRICES UP 7.3% IN JULY 2022: MOTOR VEHICLE FUELS, FOOD, AND LPG PRICES MOST AFFECTED

Overall National Inflation Rate¹ (All-Items):

For the month of July 2022, the All-Items Consumer Price Index (CPI), which summarizes price levels for all categories of consumer goods and services, stood at 111.5, up from a CPI of 103.9 recorded for July 2021 (see Figure 1). This indicates that the country experienced an overall national inflation rate of 7.3 percent on the cost of goods and services regularly purchased by Belizean households. This considerable overall increase in consumer prices was driven by rising prices across almost all CPI categories, most notably Mineral Fuels and Lubricants and Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages. Significantly higher prices were seen for items such as motor vehicle fuels, various food products, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), restaurant services, cinema entrance fees, and house cleaning and maintenance products.



Transport:

As has been the case in recent months, 'Transport' accounted for almost a half of the increase in consumer prices for the month of July. The category recorded an inflation rate of 22.5 percent, driven mainly by fuel prices, which were up by 33.2 percent on average compared to last July. This was, for the most part, a reflection of rapidly rising prices for premium gasoline, which were more than 50 percent higher than in July of last year (see Figure 2). At the pump, premium gasoline registered an increase of \$5.95, with the average price per gallon up from \$11.74 in July of last year to \$17.69 in July of this year. Diesel was up by \$2.81 from \$10.72 to \$13.53, while regular gasoline rose by \$2.50 from \$11.11 in July of 2021 to \$13.60 in July of 2022 (see Table 1). Additionally, passenger transport services rose by 13.8 percent, as increases in bus fares, taxi fares, and sea fares were seen across the country, while prices for new motor vehicles were up by 6.1 percent compared to July of last year.

Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages:

'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' had an inflation rate of 8 percent, the highest recorded so far for this category in 2022, as all food sub-categories saw rising prices during the month (see Figure 2). The most striking increases were recorded for meats, cooking oils, dairy products, and cereal products. Specific items that saw the most notable price changes for the month included, pigtailed, vegetable oils, coconut milk, various chicken parts, rice, eggs, natural milks, Irish potatoes, watermelons, and cabbages. Nonetheless, lower prices were recorded for a few food items, including some fresh produce such as tomatoes, oranges, onions, black beans, and red kidney beans (see Table 1).

Table 1: Average Prices of Selected Foods and Fuel (BZ \$); July 2021 and July 2022

Item	Unit of Measurement	Average Prices	% Change	
		July 2021	July 2022	
Rice	1 Lb	\$1.38	\$1.58	14.1%
Flour	1 Lb	\$1.07	\$1.22	14.1%
Ground Beef	1 Lb	\$5.49	\$5.78	5.3%
Beef Steak	1 Lb	\$8.24	\$8.84	7.4%
Chicken Cuts	1 Lb	\$3.23	\$3.37	4.5%
Chicken, Legs	1 Lb	\$3.25	\$3.39	4.5%
Chicken, Wings	1 Lb	\$4.67	\$4.88	4.6%
Chicken, Breast	1 Lb	\$3.99	\$4.13	3.7%
Whole Chicken	1 Lb	\$2.88	\$3.05	6.1%
Pigtail	1 Lb	\$5.59	\$7.32	31.1%
Whole Fish	1 Lb	\$6.54	\$7.86	20.2%
Natural Milk	1 L	\$2.80	\$3.09	10.5%
Egg	1 Unit	\$0.29	\$0.36	25.6%
Vegetable Oil	1 L	\$3.97	\$5.76	45.0%
Watermelon	1 Lb	\$0.66	\$0.89	36.1%
Cabbage	1 Lb	\$1.79	\$1.95	8.9%
Tomatoes	1 Lb	\$3.10	\$2.62	-15.5%
Onion	1 Lb	\$2.47	\$2.35	-4.6%
Irish Potatoes	1 Lb	\$2.12	\$2.47	16.7%
Banana	1 Unit	\$0.16	\$0.16	0.0%
Pineapple	1 Lb	\$1.22	\$1.30	6.3%
Orange	1 Unit	\$0.24	\$0.22	-8.2%
Sweet Pepper	1 Lb	\$4.15	\$4.31	3.8%
Black Beans	1 Lb	\$2.08	\$2.06	-0.9%
Red Kidney Beans	1 Lb	\$2.02	\$1.96	-2.8%
Soy Sauce	10 Oz	\$4.97	\$5.60	12.7%
Coconut Milk	400 Ml	\$3.30	\$3.89	17.7%
Premium Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$11.74	\$17.69	50.7%
Regular Gasoline	1 Gallon	\$11.11	\$13.60	22.5%
Diesel	1 Gallon	\$10.72	\$13.53	26.2%
Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)	100 Lbs	\$116.52	\$143.26	22.9%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022.

Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels:

In comparison to July 2021, prices for 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' saw an overall increase of 3.3 percent for the month. Within this category, LPG prices were up by a significant 22.9 percent, as the average cost of a hundred-pound cylinder of this product rose by \$26.73, from \$116.52 in July 2021 to \$143.26 in July 2022 (see Table 1). In addition, prices for construction materials for household use were up by 14.3 percent, while home rental costs were up by 0.6 percent compared to the same month last year.

Restaurants and Accommodation Services:

The category of 'Restaurants and Accommodation Services' recorded an overall inflation rate of 5 percent for the month of July 2022 (see Figure 2), driven mainly by higher prices for restaurant and cafe services.

Recreation, Sport, and Culture:

Prices for 'Recreation, Sport and Culture' were 6.4 percent higher than they were in July of 2021, reflecting mainly higher cinema entrance fees (see Figure 2).



Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance:

The 'Furnishings, Household Equipment, and Routine Household Maintenance' category recorded an inflation rate of 3.3 percent for July 2022. This was mainly the result of a 9 percent increase in prices for laundry products, soaps, and detergents (see Figure 2).

Information and Communication:

Due to lower prices for internet provision services, 'Information and Communication' continued to be the only major category recording a decrease, with prices within this category were down by 0.8 percent for the month (see Figure 2).

Inflation Rates by Municipality:

With an inflation rate of 9.8 percent, well above the national average, Orange Walk Town recorded the highest rate of increase in consumer prices for July 2022. Consumers in this municipality saw above-average increases in prices for various food items, home rental costs, restaurant services, laundry products, soaps, detergents, and women's clothing. On the other hand, the City of Belmopan recorded the lowest inflation rate at 5.9 percent, as consumers in this city saw lower than average increases in prices for food items, restaurant services, and laundry products, soaps, and detergents (see Figure 3).



Month-Over-Month Inflation Rates²:

While inflation rates are generally calculated as the percent change in prices for specific items between the current time period and the same period of the previous year, another useful measure for tracking short-term changes in consumer prices is the month-over-month inflation rate, which measures the percent change in prices between the previous month and the current month.

Over the one-month period between June 2022 and July 2022, consumer prices increased by 0.9 percent on average. The categories of 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' and 'Transport' were solely responsible for this increase, recording inflation rates of

Table 2: Month to Month Inflation Rates by Category (%); July 2022

Category	July 2022
ALL ITEMS	0.9%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	1.4%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.0%
Clothing and Footwear	0.0%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	0.0%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	0.0%
Health	0.0%
Transport	2.8%
Information and Communication	0.0%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	0.0%
Education Services	0.0%
Restaurants and Accommodation Services	0.0%
Insurance and Financial Services	0.0%
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	0.0%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022.

1.4 percent and 2.8 percent, respectively (see Table 2). Within 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages', fresh vegetables, dairy products, and cereal products saw the most significant increases, while an 11.5 percent rise in premium gasoline prices between June and July of this year accounted for the inflation within the 'Transport' category over the one-month period.

Year-to-Date Inflation Rate³:

The year-to-date inflation rate for the first seven months of 2022, when compared to the same period in 2021, stood at 5.8 percent. The 'Transport' category, with a year-to-date inflation rate of 18.4 percent, was directly responsible for more than a half of the overall increase in consumer prices for the seven-month period, as considerably higher costs were recorded for all motor vehicle fuels, new motor vehicles, and various passenger transport services. The 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' category was up by 6 percent, due mostly to higher prices for cereal products, meats, cooking oils, seafood, dairy products, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Prices within the category of 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' were up by 2.9 percent, due to higher prices for LPG and construction materials for household use. Among the other categories, prices were also notably higher for restaurant services, laundry products, soaps, and detergents. Nonetheless, these increases were partially offset by a 0.8 percent reduction in the 'Information and Communication' category, as a result of lower prices for internet provision services (see Table 3).

Table 3: Year to Date Inflation Rates by Category (%); July 2022

Category	July 2022
ALL ITEMS	5.8%
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	6.0%
Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics	0.7%
Clothing and Footwear	1.0%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	2.9%
Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	3.0%
Health	0.9%
Transport	18.4%
Information and Communication	-0.8%
Recreation, Sport and Culture	2.8%
Education Services	0.0%
Restaurants and Accommodation Services	5.0%
Insurance and Financial Services	-0.2%
Personal Care, Social Protection and Miscellaneous Goods and Services	0.7%

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022.

¹ The month-over-month inflation rate measures the percentage change in prices between the previous month and the current month. It is useful for capturing short-term price changes but is also affected by seasonal price movements.

² The year-to-date inflation rate as of July 2022 measures the percent change in the average CPI for the first seven months of 2021 compared to the average CPI for the first seven months of 2022.

³ The overall national inflation rate for the month measures the percent change in the CPI between July 2021 and July 2022.



Request for Bids (RFB)

Belize

Two Year Maintenance of the George Price Highway

Loan # 4616/OC-BL

RFB No. 002 of 2022

1. The **Government of Belize** has received a loan from the **Inter-American Development Bank** toward the cost of **Additional Financing for the George Price Highway Rehabilitation Project** and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payments under the **Contract for the Two-Year Maintenance of the George Price Highway**.

2. The **Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing, Government of Belize** now invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for the **Two-Year Maintenance of the George Price Highway**. The number and identification of lots (**contracts**) comprising this Bidding are:

Lot 1. Chainage 0+000 to 16+300 (Guanacaste Roundabout to Blackman Eddie Roundabout): 95m long Bridge and two approaches, Double Chip Seal Road, 2 large double box culverts, multiple cylinder and box cross culverts all Concrete, HDPE side culverts, lined and earth drains, cut to 1 hill side with exposed material.

Lot 2. Chainage 16+300 to 32+450 (Blackman Eddie Roundabout to Loma Luz Roundabout): Double Chip Seal road, 3 bridge, 1 large double box culvert & triple box culvert, multiple cylinder and box cross culverts all Concrete, HDPE side culverts, lined and earth drains, cut to 2 hill side with exposed material.

The sections of the Road(s) subject to Rehabilitation Works are: **“Lot 1 and Lot2”** The sections of the Road(s) subject to **Improvement Works are: Benching of Stone Face Wall to control erosion and water runoff (2 hill side with exposed material).**

3. The RFB will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding (NCB) procedures specified in the Inter-American Development Bank's **Policies for the Procurement of Goods and Works financed by the Inter-American Development Bank GN-2349-15** approved by the Board of Executive Directors of the Bank on 2nd of July 2019 and effective 1st of January 2020 and is open to all bidders from Eligible Source Countries as defined in the bidding document.

4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from **Program Management Unit** for the **Additional Financing for the George Price Highway Rehabilitation Project** pmupcmow@gmail.com, gphrp.3344@midh.gov.bz or procurement.officer.midh@gmail.com and inspect the bidding document at the address given below **First Floor, Project Execution Unit Building, Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing, #1 Power Lane, Belmopan, Cayo District** during working hours of **Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm (Belize time)**.

5. **Qualifications requirements include:**

(a) Copies of original documents defining the Principal Place of Business of the Bidder, the Certificate or Incorporation, Certificate of Good Standing from the Belize Social Security Board, Belize Tax Services and Company's Registry, Written Confirmation of Authorization to sign on behalf of bidder: (i) On company's letterhead stating the name and position of person to sign, (ii) Supporting documents (**Constitution of Company, Company Resolution or Minutes of Meetings and Power of Attorney**). Also, the History of Non-Performing Contracts, Suspension Based on Execution of Bids/Proposal Securing Declaration by the Employer, Pending Litigation and Litigation History.

(b) **Minimum average annual construction turnover:**
Lot 1: BZ \$200,000
Lot 2: BZ \$200,000

Calculated as total certified payments received for contracts in progress and/or completed within the last **Five (5) years, divided by Five (5) years**. Must meet **Fifty percent (50%) of the requirement for each Lot**.

(c) **General Construction Experience: last Four (4) years, starting 1st January 2018.**

(d) Must have substantially completed at least two (2) projects with at least value of the following to qualify for each **Lot: BZ \$400,000 for Lot 1; BZ \$400,000 for Lot 2.**

(e) **Specific Construction & Contract Management Experience:**
A - (i) A minimum number of one (1) similar contract specified below that have been satisfactorily and substantially¹ completed as a prime contractor, joint venture member, management contractor or sub-contractor² between 1st January 2018 and bid submission deadline: (ii) **One (1) contract with minimum value of BZ \$150,000**, and (iii) If more than one (1) Contract the value of all contracts should be equal or greater than **BZ \$250,000**.

B - For the above and any other contracts [substantially completed and under implementation] as prime contractor, joint venture member, or sub-contractor

¹Substantial completion shall be based on 80% or more works completed under the contract.

²For contracts under which the Bidder participated as a joint venture member or sub-contractor, only the Bidder's share, by value, shall be considered to meet this requirement between **1st January 2018** and Bid submission deadline, a minimum construction experience in the following key activities successfully completed³:

(f) Qualifications and experience of key site management and technical personnel proposed for the Contract.

KEY PERSONNEL

1.) Site Engineer
Academic Qualification
Minimum BSc. Civil Engineering, Hydraulic Engineering, or related field
Experience
Minimum Five (5) years' experience in providing technical and civil engineering services for programs which include but are not limited to construction of reinforced concrete pavements, double coat chip & seal pavements and/or construction of retaining walls including guard rails.
2.) Site Foreman
Academic Qualification
Minimum Associates Degree in Building Construction, Civil Engineering or related field
Experience
Minimum Three (3) years' experience in site supervision of reinforced concrete pavements, double coat chip & seal pavements and/or construction of retaining walls including guard rails.
3.) Environmental, Health and Safety Officer
Academic Qualification
Minimum Associates Degree in Environmental Science, Environmental Engineering, Environmental Management, Natural Resource Management or other related discipline is required.
Experience
Minimum Three (3) years' experience in works of a similar nature related to Environmental health and safety compliance
4.) Social Expert
Academic Qualification
Minimum Associates Degree in Social Sciences (Anthropology, Sociology, Law, Geography, Social Work, Psychology), Public Affairs, Communication, Project Management, or another related field.
Experience
Minimum Three (3) years' work experience in identifying, assessing, and managing social issues, preferably in development projects.

(g) Independently audited financial statements for the last three years (2019 - 2021);

(h) Evidence of working capital for this Contract: **Liquid Assets/Credit Facility**
Lot 1: BZ \$100,000.00 Liquid Assets/BZ \$75,000.00 Credit Facility
Lot 2: BZ \$100,000.00 Liquid Assets/BZ \$75,000.00 Credit Facility

(i) **Adequate sources of finance to meet cashflow requirements on works currently in progress and for future contract commitments (BZ \$100,000.00 more than the amount stated above for Liquid Assets)**

³Volume, number or rate of production of any key activity can be demonstrated in one or more contracts combined if executed during same time period.

(j) Authorization to seek references from the Bidder's Bankers;

(k) Proposals for subcontracting components of the work amounting to more than thirty percent (30%) of the contract price.

(l) All bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Security of: **Lot 1: BZ \$20,000**
Lot 2: BZ \$20,000.00.

(m) And any other documents or information as stipulated in the Bidding Documents.

6. **Proposed Program (Work Method Schedule properly detailed)**, Including a clear timeframe and compatible with backlog period.

7. A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be requested by interested bidders on the submission of a written Application to the address below.

8. Bids must be delivered to the address below at or before **10:00 am (Local Belize Time) on October 11th, 2022**. Electronic bidding shall not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened physically in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend in person or on-line at the address below at **10:30 am (local Belize time) on October 11th, 2022**.

9. **The address referred to above is:**

Attention:
Mr. Rolando Chan
Project Manager
Program Management Unit
1st Floor, Project Execution Unit Building
Power Lane, Belmopan
Cayo District, BELIZE
Tel: 501-822-1942
Email: pmupcmow@gmail.com AND