

Reporter

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Business Senator: Final steps being taken before campaign finance bill's introduction



Business Senator Kevin Herrera

By Michelle Sutherland

Business Senator Kevin Herrera has assured *The Reporter* that the plans to table a Campaign Finance Bill to parliament is still in the pipeline as final touches are being made prior to its introduction.

In fact, Herrera indicated that just last week he held a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry to discuss getting the process back on track. He went on to say that it is their intention to introduce the bill and, therefore, sees it as a plus that the bill has already been drafted. All that's left now, according to Herrera,

is to go through the procedures to get it to the floor.

"We haven't done a whole lot on it since we were doing the rounds and the presentations some months back but we do intend to get it back on track," said Herrera. "Of course, there is a process that we have to go through before we get it on the floor, so we have to outline what that process is and look at the Standing Orders very closely and see how well we can follow the requirements. While there is no timeframe, I must mention that there are several steps that you have to go through before you can introduce a private bill like that, so there are several things to do."

When asked whether he feels that the Senate probe into the Definitive Agreement would hinder the tabling of the Campaign Finance Bill, Herrera opined that he does not see that being an issue. According to the senator, the probe and the bill are two completely different processes and as such would not affect each other.

The draft legislation was developed by the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry. If passed into law the bill will change the way that political campaigns are financed in Belize. The draft legislation seeks to establish a National Campaign Fund which would be managed

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Agriculture ministry braces for higher wheat prices given recent global events



By Michelle Sutherland

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and

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Ministry of Agriculture's CEO Servulo Baeza

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For the last two weeks President Xiomara Castro of Honduras has been using emergency powers provided by the constitution to flush out gang members from the capital City Tegucigalpa and from the port city of San Pedro Sula in an extensive crackdown to identify the men and women of the Mara Salvatrucha and its archival, the Barrio 18 Gang.

Thousands have been rounded up from city ghettos and from five prisons which have now been transferred to the custody of the military. The men rounded up were stripped to their boxer shorts and inspected for tattoos and other markings which would identify them as gang members. They are being detained and army sources say they will not ever be released to terrorize the community again.

President Xiomara Castro, Honduras’ first woman President, mobilized the army after women from the Mara Salvatrucha Gang attacked a prison which was being used as headquarters for the Barrio 18 Gang.

The women stormed the prison with guns and machetes and containers of gasoline, which they used to set the prison cells ablaze after they had locked their victims in. Twenty-one women prisoners died in that attack.

President Xiomara has become enormously popular for her resolute action in standing up to the gangs. Observers have noted that Honduras is following the example of President Nayib Bukele of El Salvador who has built special jails to accommodate the 67,000 -odd persons he has had arrested and detained under a Gang Emergency Act.

There has been a strong reaction to gangs and cartels across all of Central America after it was revealed that former president Juan Orlando Hernandez of El Salvador (2014 - 2022) had been involved up to his neck in the drug trade.

An indictment from the Department of Homeland Security accuses this former lawyer and two-term president of “participating in a corrupt and violent drug-trafficking conspiracy to facilitate the importation of hundreds of thousands of kilograms of cocaine into the United States” over a period of 18 years from 2004 to 2022. He was arrested and taken from his palatial home in Tegucigalpa a few months after his retirement from the presidency, and flown to the United States to face trial.

The news of what has happened to former President Juan Orlando Hernandez has sent shockwaves across all of Central America. People in politics, the military, the coast guard and the police now know that they are being watched and will be held accountable, if not by their own people, then certainly by oversight agencies of the United States.

Drug violence is like a malignant cancer which does not respond to radiation and other forms of therapy. What we are seeing in El Salvador and Honduras is a form of invasive surgery where the cancer is physically removed from the body of a community.

It’s not nice. But it works!

Business Senator: Final steps being taken before campaign finance bill's introduction

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by the Elections and Boundaries Department.

The money in the fund will be distributed to candidates within 180 days after elections as a way of reimbursing them for

finances spent in their election campaign. It is hoped that the private Bill will be introduced in the Senate before 2025.

At a recent sitting of the Senate, it was Union Senator Luke Martinez who called on the Upper House

to take the requisite measures to see the Campaign Finance Bill introduced.

Martinez, speaking on the Senate Motion to trigger the Senate Enquiry into the much-talked-about Definitive Agreement, said, “Run the campaign

finance legislation, leader of government business...run the campaign finance legislation, because when we start with this inquiry, we find out indeed who has set up their retirement plan and who is setting up their retirement plan.”

Agriculture ministry braces for higher wheat prices given recent global events

Cont’d from pg. 1

Of flour and wheat following Russia’s announcement that they were pulling out of the Black Sea Grain deal earlier this week.

Lennox Nicolson, controller of Supplies, told The Reporter on Thursday, “Any increases on the international market translate to increased price Belize faces when it imports wheat.

“Wheat prices may be driven by supply disruptions or increased logistics costs. This could potentially result in increased flour prices in Belize and increased costs for the production of bakery products. However, the extent and timing of any increases will depend on factors outside Belize, but we need to monitor the impact it may have on production

costs of flour and bakery products.”

While Nicolson reminded us that it is still impossible to predict the exact impact or timing of the potential increase, he indicated that under the Supplies Controlled Act, flour is a price-controlled item. This, he says, means that the price of flour will not change overnight since any changes will have to be made via a statutory instrument.

Furthermore, Nicolson said that the ministry is in communication with the mill and has access to import records for wheat. He said that they intend to evaluate the invoice cost and shipping costs for future shipments of wheat. Those findings including the impact that import costs have on the production costs of flour will be shared with Cabinet. The final decisions relating to

control price will be deliberated based on those findings.

CEO Servulo Baiza of the Ministry of Agriculture, who is currently out of the country, told The Reporter on Thursday that while an increase in the price of flour is expected, the mill would have to make a case for an increase, if justified, then that proposed increased would need to be presented to Cabinet for approval.

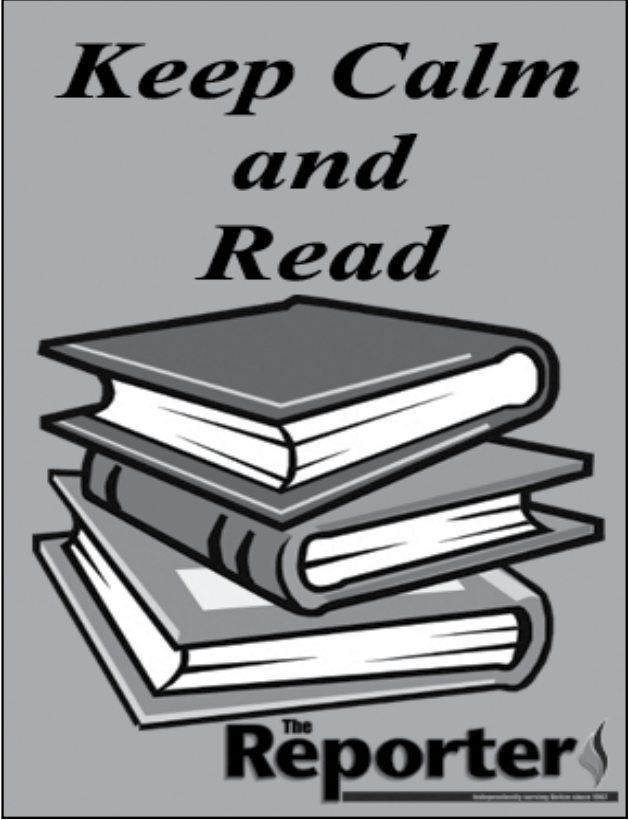
Last year, the United Nations and Turkey brokered the Black Sea Grain deal between Russia and Ukraine as a means of safely exporting Ukrainian grains across the Black Sea to developing nations. This was in an effort to drive world food prices down which at the time had spiked due to the ongoing war.

With this latest development, Ukraine will now have to reroute exports through its

land borders and small ports leading to an increased cost and a reduction in farmers’ profit. This, according to experts, could lead farmers to plant even less next season, therefore, placing further pressure on supplies going forward.

Reports say that while the Turkish and Russian Foreign Ministers are expected to meet on Monday to further discussions, this is not the first time that Russia has withdrawn from the Black Sea deal.

Russia’s withdrawal stems from their claim that Western sanctions were holding up parallel agreements to allow payments, insurance, and shipping for Moscow’s own agricultural products. Russian spokesperson indicated that they would only resume participation as soon as the relevant agreements were



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Belizean Youth Prepare to Participate in World Youth Day

A group of Belizean youth met with Minister Henry Charles Usher on Thursday, July 20, in Belmopan to formalize their participation in World Youth Day, a Catholic event, in Portugal.

During his address, Minister Usher encouraged the youth to deepen their spiritual journey and return to Belize to share their knowledge. “As you get closer to the Lord, bring that back to Belize and it’s the hope that you can then use that knowledge to make life better in Belize.”

Usher recalled that the Father of the Nation, George Price wanted to be remembered as a pilgrim, who walked the earth and strived to make it a better place. He encouraged the youth to follow Price’s example and then presented each participant with a small stipend and a Belizean flag pin.

In turn the youth presented the minister with a letter, which praised the religious freedom Belizeans



Youth team met with Minister Henry Usher

enjoy as a blessing. “This freedom awarded to us, as stated in Chapter 4 Preamble (a) of the Belize Constitution (2021), ‘is founded upon the principles which acknowledge the supremacy of God, faith in human rights and fundamental freedoms, the position of the family in a society of free men and free institutions, the dignity of the human person and the equal and inalienable rights in which all members of the human family are endowed by the Creator.’”

The Belizean contingent will have over 30 participants, representing youth

from the entire country. World Youth Day is an important spiritual event for Catholics. It is held every 2-3 years at different locations, in different countries around the world. The last was celebrated in Panama City, Panamá and this year’s event will be held in Lisbon, Portugal from 1 to 6 August 2023.

The last event pulled in over 400,000 youth, which covered a week of festivities, conferences, concerts and confessions. It is seen as a unique way to deepen faith and grow closer to Christ, through prayer and the sacraments, together with hundreds of thousands of other

As citizens, as young people of Belize, we are blessed with the freedom, and even encouraged, whether it be in our families, schools, and even churches, to have a personal relationship and to journey with God in order to fulfil our life’s purpose, which is to know, to love and to serve God. This freedom awarded to us, as stated in Chapter 4 Preamble (a) of the Belize Constitution (2021), “is founded upon the principles which acknowledge the supremacy of God, faith in human rights and fundamental freedoms, the position of the family in a society of free men and free institutions, the dignity of the human person and the equal and inalienable rights in which all members of the human family are endowed by the Creator.” This freedom has yielded a diverse people, which blend perfectly to produce the rich and vibrant Belizean culture we have all grown to know and love.

young people who share the same beliefs and interests.

Monitoring of New World Screwworm

The Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) advises its partners, stakeholders, and the public that it is closely monitoring the outbreak of New World screwworms in Central America.

Panama has declared a State of Zoosanitary Emergency and reported cases in cattle, pigs, dogs, and horses. Costa Rica has reported a single case in a dog.

The New World screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) is a parasite that can affect all mammals, including humans. Female flies of the Calliphoridae family and Chrysomyinae subfamily are

attracted to wounds and exposed mucous membranes where they lay eggs.

After a period of 12 – 24 hours, the larvae emerge and feed on the skin and underlying tissue of the host. This causes a condition known as a wound or traumatic myiasis, which can be fatal.

Belize became free from the New World screwworm in 1992 and has maintained this status since then. The possibility of re-introduction of the parasite into Belize is a potential threat to the livestock, small stock and avian industries, wildlife, and humans.

To ensure that the country remains free

from the New World screwworm, BAHA has re-categorized the risk of importation of animals from the affected countries as high and has heightened importation conditions to include mandatory veterinary inspection at ports of entry.

The public is reminded that the illegal importation of animals and animal products remains a threat to the health, safety, food security, and livelihood of all Belizeans. For further information, email the Animal Health Department at animalhealth@baha.org.bz or call 824-4872.

-End-



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DRAWING DATE: JULY 28TH, 2023

CARICOM aims for Women's equality

By William Ysaguirre

Belize is supporting CARICOM in its endeavour to ensure the women of the Caribbean enjoy equal rights and treatment in every aspect of life.

To this end, the National Women's Commission joined the CARICOM Secretariat to review and help to validate the CARICOM Gender Equality Strategy in an all day consultation at the Best Western Biltmore Plaza Hotel on Monday, July 17.

The policy aims "to accelerate the effective implementation of priority actions through a regional coordinated approach to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", as explained by Deputy Programme Manager Ann-Marie Williams for Gender Development at the CARICOM secretariat.

It has seven key priority areas: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion; Freedom from Violence; Economic Empowerment; Good Governance;



Ann-Marie Williams

Access to Health Services; Inclusive Quality Education; and Sustainable Natural Resource Management.

As CARICOM gender consultant Asha Kambon outlined, the draft policy document also goes into considerable detail of exactly how the strategy is to be implemented and includes a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) framework and ensure these seven goals are successfully achieved.

The framework will support systematic follow-up at the technical, institutional, and political levels.

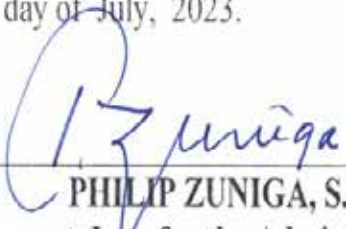
The policy aims to ensure that women have an equal opportunity to a high quality education to prepare them for equal participation in the economy and equal prosperity.

The aim is for women and men to be treated equally under the law, with the same access to social justice and protection by the law. The strategy also aims to give women equal political power by achieving parity of representation at every level of government. The goal is to create a world free of violence and discrimination against women, where all CARICOM citizens enjoy the sustainable development of the region's natural resources.

BELIZE CITY,
Estate of IRA JUSTO CASTILLO, deceased
STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Pursuant to Section 36 of the Administration of Estates Act, Chapter 197 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that all creditors and other persons having any claims or demands upon or against the Estate of IRA JUSTO CASTILLO, late of Hopkins Village, Stann Creek District, Belize, are required to send particulars in writing of their claims or demands to the Administratrix of the said estate, SEFERINA CASTILLO of Hopkins Village, Stann Creek District, Belize, and to send such particulars not later than the 21st day of October, 2023, AND NOTICE IS HEREBY ALSO GIVEN that at the expiration of the last mentioned date, the Administratrix will proceed to distribute the assets of the said IRA JUSTO CASTILLO, deceased, amongst the parties entitled thereto having regard only to the claims or demands of which particulars have been delivered and the Administratrix will not be liable for the assets of the deceased or any part thereof so distributed to any person or persons of whose claims or demands she shall not then have had notice.

DATED this 20th day of July, 2023.


PHILIP ZUNIGA, S.C.
Attorney-at-Law for the Administratrix



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Extended Deadline



Sugar Cane Farmers enjoy Sweet 2nd Payment

By William Ysaguirre

Despite a 164,000 tonnes shortfall in sugar cane deliveries this past crop, world sugar prices are up, and there will be \$17.8 million circulating in the sugar belt of Corozal and Orange Walk districts, as cane farmers collect a record second payment of BZ\$20.10 per tonne of cane delivered, which is \$3.19 more than last year’s average second payment of BZ\$16.91.

ASR/BSI has estimated the total cane price will be BZ\$70.22 for the 2022/23 crop, which will be the second highest price per tonne of cane since the year 2000, and the highest since the European Union sugar market was deregulated, Finance Director Shawn Chavarria for the American Sugar Refiners / Belize Sugar Industries (ASR/BSI) announced from the Tower Hill Sugar Factory via a virtual



ASR/BSI Finance Director Shawn Chavarria

press conference Wednesday, July 19.

Farmers had already collected a \$43.63 per tonne first payment upon cane delivery, and this second payment will help them prepare their fields for a better crop next year to buy fertilizer and to spray standing cane against frog hopper and other pests rising from the onset of the rainy season, Chavarria explained.

Farmers benefit directly from the better prices their sugar fetched on the export market under the existing commercial

agreement they have with ASR/BSI, and the company’s investment in direct consumption

sugars which sold to CARICOM for a higher price than raw sugar and the savings achieved on shipping costs by shipping overland to Big Creek Port all contributed to the better cane price.

The \$17.8 million second payment is more than last year’s \$17.6 million second payment, when the farmers had delivered far more cane.

There remains the matter of a new commercial agreement



to be negotiated with the farmers for the next harvest.

Chavarria could offer no insight on the state of negotiations, as the company has not moved from its previously stated position that it cannot afford to transfer \$20 million more in value to the farmers.

Chavarria remains optimistic that a working commercial agreement will be arrived at with the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA) before the start of next crop.

The company will endeavor to find common ground with the farmers “to work together to build a better and more sustainable business.”

He said the BSCFA’s

demand that the company pay them the EU Fair Trade premiums is unworkable, as ASR has never been involved in that transaction. The buyer—Tate & Lyle—has always paid the Fair Trade premiums directly to the farmers.

The company is also happy that it has achieved a compromise with the Government of Belize with a consent order to maintain the status quo regarding sugar export licenses and permits, until the substantive case can be heard and decided in the courts, which may not be until next year.

The company applied for an emergency injunction to get relief from sections of the new export regulation, “Sugar Industry (License to Import/Export) Regulations,

2023,” to control the import and export of sugar. The company challenged the new rule, as violating its rights under the Belize Constitution.

For the meantime, the company has applied for a license to be a sugar exporter and has received an export permit for this crop.

The case for the emergency injunction was to have been heard in court this Friday, July 21.

For the time being, BSI will be exempt from the parts of the regulation which it has challenged, unless and until a Judge decides they are lawful. The company says this “ill-conceived regulation” could have a potentially negative impact on the economy.

Weh Wi Ga Fi Seh

Haaf di yaa don gaahn: Yu hapi wid we yu di du?

How Yu Feel Tudeh Day Bowt di Kriol Langwij?

Bowt sebm yaaz abak, wi mi shyaa dis paat a wahn langwij atityood servay fahn di langwij stodi dis raita mi du fu ih yooniversiti stodiz bowt wi Kriol langwij. Wi ga di kweschon dehn eena Inglish jos sayka sohn a unu stil di seh Kriol haad fu reed! Memba, ih noh haad ataal. Yu jos need fu laan di letaz fi eech song (sound).

	SA	A	D
SD			
1. Kriol is usually spoken in my home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Kriol is a language I enjoy using.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I am comfortable speaking Kriol when relaxing with friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I am comfortable using Kriol to give a speech or interview.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Most Belizeans make errors when speaking English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Kriol speakers make more errors in English than Spanish/Taiwanese/other speakers make.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Kriol should be considered...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. When I hear a Belizean speaking Kriol & another speaking English, which do I think:			
	Kriol	English	Depends
a. Is more intelligent?			
b. Is more honest?			
c. Is more educated?			
d. Is more friendly?			
e. Has more money?			
f. Is more helpful?			

If yu waahn tel wi how yu feel, rait tu Silvaana Udz. Er if yu waahn put sohnting eena dis aatiki, email: sudz142@gmail.com Vizit: www.nationalkriolcouncil.org

BPM rejects redistricting proposal, considering continuous litigation against GOB

By Michelle Sutherland

The Belize Peace Movement (BPM) is contemplating pursuing continuous litigation against the Government of Belize, should the redistricting proposal fail to meet the required threshold as required by international standards.

This follows the BPM’s complete rejection of the document’s proposal that was presented to them by the Election and Boundaries Commission last week.

On Tuesday, BPM member Paul Morgan told The Reporter, “Should the unconstitutional threshold persist through the deliberations of the National Assembly, the BPM will resort to continuing litigation. As we speak the proposal document is

in the domain of the National Assembly which has the constitutional authority to amend the proposals. We expect a definitive response from the National Assembly before July 31st.”

The rejection, according to Morgan, is based on the fact that the commission used a threshold limit of 35% +/- the average. This method, Morgan says, seeks to derive near equal division is not only irrational but unconstitutional.

“What we expected and the minimum that Belizeans deserve is a threshold equal to or tighter than that set as far back as stated in the Belize 1981 Constitution,” ended Morgan.

The proposal is advising that the number of divisions remain at 31. However, they are advancing



BPM’s Paul Morgan

the idea to eliminate two constituencies in Belize City, cutting the number of constituencies from 13 to 11. They are also proposing an additional division for Belmopan and the Stann Creek District.

However, there will be no changes to the Corozal, Orange Walk, or Toledo Districts. An area of contention, however, remains for the newly defined area of Ambergris Caye, which experts say is above the 15% range.

SIB data: Unemployment at 2.8%; Labour Underutilization at approx. 8%

The Belize’s unemployment rate has hit a record low of 2.8 percent, with a potential labour force of approximately 10,150 persons, the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) reported last week.

The unemployment rate—one of several measures of labour underutilization—shows that unemployment has decreased significantly from 13% in September 2020, when the COVID-19 “Lockdown Recession” was in full swing, to less than three percent as of the first three months of 2023.

Female unemployment was estimated at 4.2 percent, and for male that figure stood at 1.9 percent.

The SIB also informed that unemployed persons have been out of work for some time. “While the rate of unemployment

remained low, persons who were unemployed were found to remain without jobs for an extended period of time, 40.8 percent of the unemployed population reporting that they had been without work for a year or more.”

SIB also reported that the number of persons classifiable as being in the Potential Labour Force (PLF) has decreased to 10,158 from last October’s 14,675.

The PLF are persons who are listed among those who are outside the labour force who are either looking for work but are not (in the short term) available to accept work, or available but not looking for reasons such as being discouraged jobseekers.

Disaggregated data from the SIB informs that among those listed as being in the PLF, close to 35 percent are unavailable to work because of family responsibilities.

Another 6.3 percent (or 635 persons) were classified as working “in own family farming, fishing or hunting” operation. Others (1.5 percent) had already found work, but are scheduled to start at a later date.

Among the PLF are those (2.8%) who are awaiting replies from employers to whom they had sent

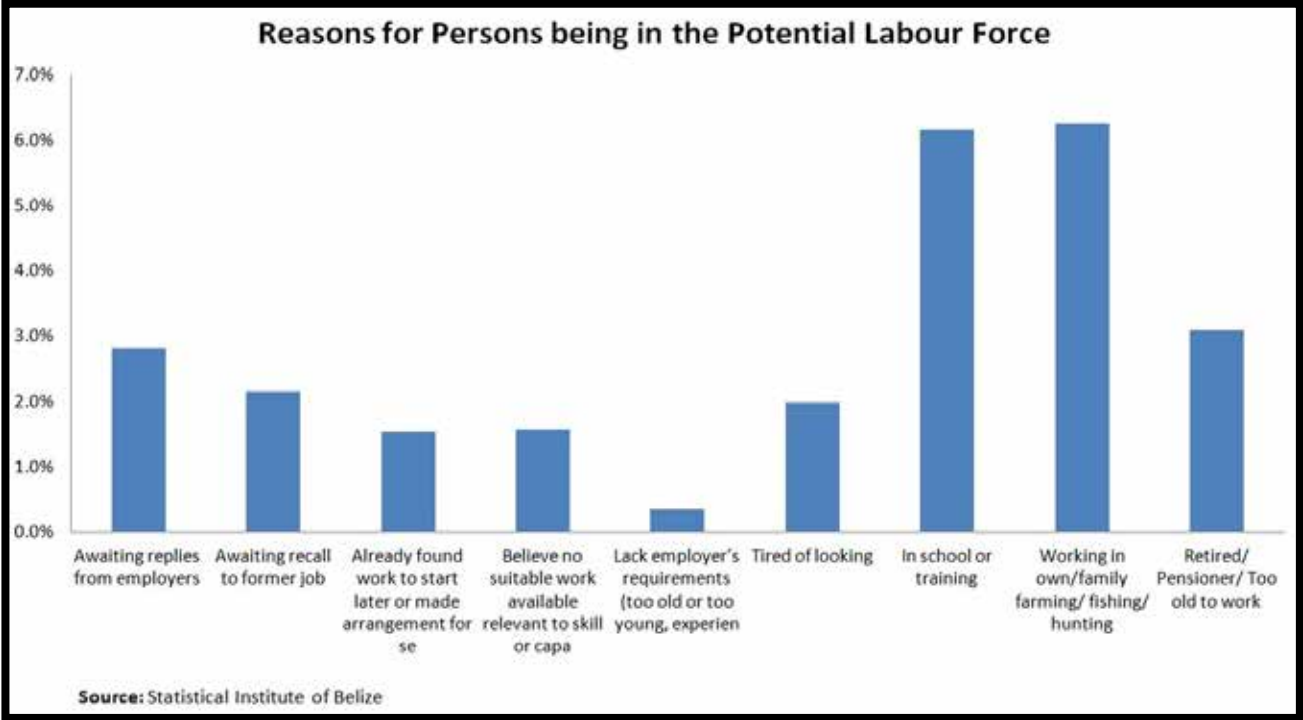
job applications, as well as those who are still awaiting for their former employers to call them back (2.1%). This latter group is likely mostly among those who lost work in the tourism sector on account of the COVID-19 “Lockdown Recession.”

Two percent of the persons listed among the Potential Labour

Force are those who say that they are just tired of looking. These individuals are what could be dubbed as the “discouraged workers” or “discouraged jobseekers.”

Among the four leading labour utilization (LU) statistics proposed by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the unemployment rate (LU 1) is undoubtedly the most well known. However, there is also LU 3, which is a comprehensive statistic that includes both the unemployed and those in the PLF.

Using the PLF data provided by the SIB, LU3 for Belize would place this labour-underutilization statistic just below eight (8) percent.



Economy grows GDP 11.5%

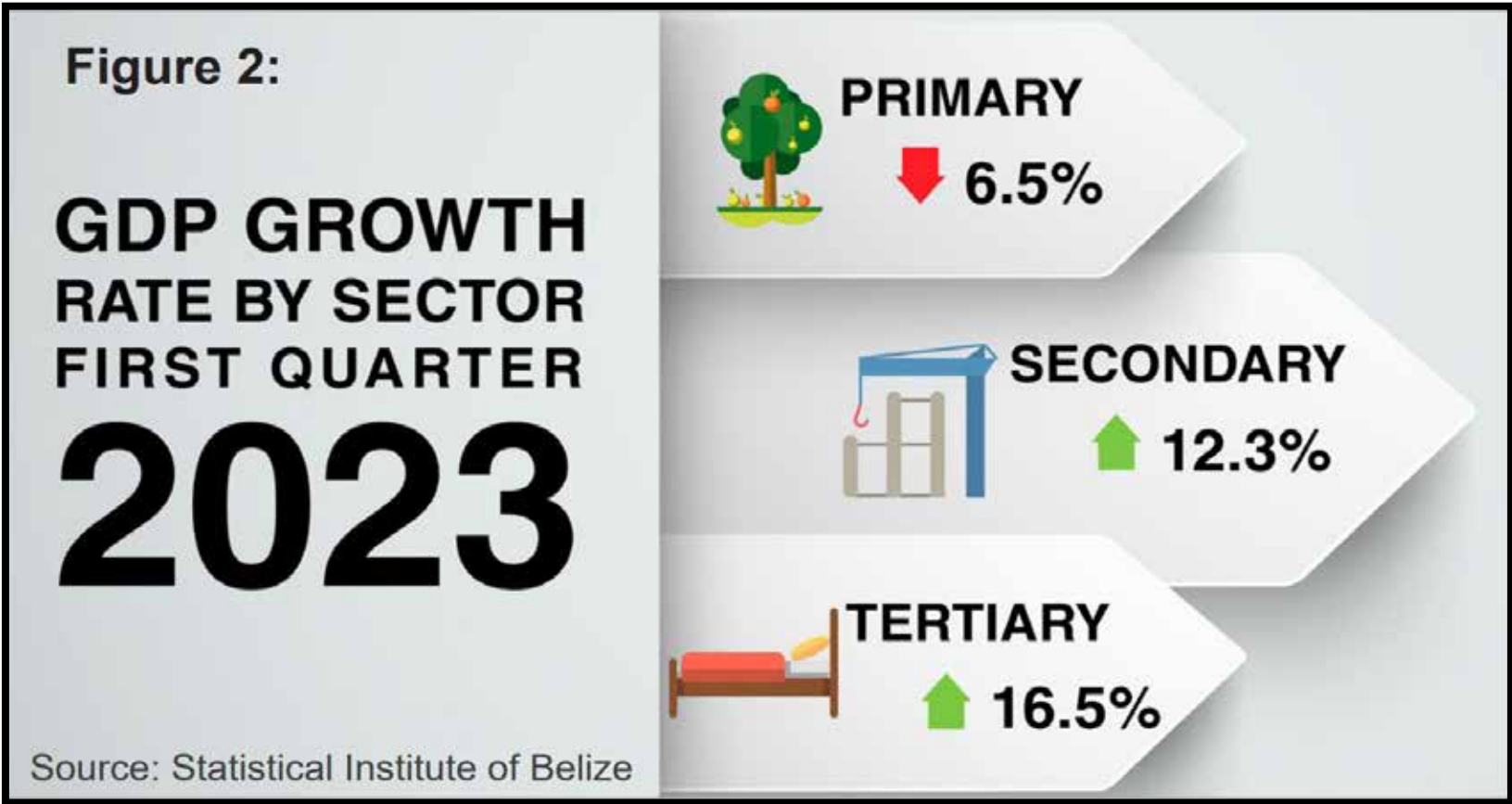
By William Ysaguirre

The Belize economy grew by 11.5 percent in the first three months of 2023, resulting in a record low unemployment rate of 2.8 percent and also a record low inflation rate of 3.9 percent for the month of May, according to the numbers which the Statistics Institute of Belize reported at a press conference on Wednesday, July 12.

Belize’s Gross Domestic Product GDP grew to \$1.447 billion for the first quarter of 2023, which is 149.5 million or 11.5 percent more than \$1.297 billion which Belize produced in the first quarter of 2022.

The biggest growth of 16.5 percent was in the tertiary or services sector.

Hotels and restaurants increased from \$71.3 million last year to \$104.8 million this quarter. Transportation increased in earnings



from \$33.3 million last year to \$49.7 million this quarter. Even wholesale and retail trade grew by 9.4 percent, from \$180.1 million last year to \$197 million in this first quarter.

The secondary sector in construction and manufacturing industries grew by 12.3 percent growth from \$188 million last year to \$211.1 million in this first quarter.

Beverage production far outstripped this average as tourists’ demand for Belizean brews drove a 34 percent increase in the beer and soft drink production. Construction was also booming, with a 28.4 percent growth from \$63.3 million last year’s first quarter to \$81.3 million in this quarter. Water production increased 7.4 percent, and electricity generation increased 3.6 percent.

This made up for shortfalls in the primary productive sector where production was down 6.5 percent from \$158.2 million in last year’s first quarter, to \$147.9 million this quarter.

Sugar cane production this quarter was up to 841,800 tonnes, a 7.6 percent increase over the 782,600 tonnes delivered in the first quarter of 2022.

Citrus deliveries also fell 65 percent from 24,100 tonnes last year to a mere 8,400 tonnes this quarter. Luckily livestock production grew by five percent, mainly in pork and poultry production, and a 43.6 percent increase in the fishing industry.

DPM not satisfied with redistricting outcome hints do-over

By Michelle Sutherland

While it is yet to be tabled in the National Assembly for debate, the redistricting proposal which was released last week has already generated several concerns, even among sitting Cabinet ministers, including the Deputy Prime Minister himself, who hinted at a “do-over.” Deputy Prime Minister Cordel Hyde

expressed that he and his colleagues had “major concerns” about the proposal particularly as it relates to the deviation rate. According to Hyde, the proposal’s 25% deviation rate immediately sent off alarm bells among his colleagues since it did not align with the 15% deviation rate, which is considered to be international standards.

Hyde told reporters, “We want to be in compliance with the constitution that says that each constituency, each division is supposed to have as close a number as possible, equal number as possible in terms of electors. And that’s what we want, and what we saw on Tuesday did not pass that smell test. “So ultimately this thing will be tabled

in the National Assembly. But I would want to think that the commission will end up having to have a do-over. But that’s where we are; that’s our initial reaction to it. We just didn’t like what we saw.” Area Representative for the Cayo South Constituency Julius Espat also expressed concerns, saying that he had a major issue with the lack of equitable



Deputy Prime Minister Cordel Hyde

Government to Open Western Border for Cargo Clearance on Saturdays

Belmopan, July 19, 2023.

The Government of Belize announces the opening of the Benque Viejo Border for cargo clearance on Saturdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Belize time) effective July 22, 2023. This decision stems from discussions with Belize's National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) aimed at implementing the 2014 agreement between Belize and Guatemala to extend operating hours at the border.

The NTFC, inclusive of members such as the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, welcomes the government's support for this initiative designed to enhance trade facilitation between the two countries. A key aspect of this development is the commitment from government border agencies to not impose additional fees for clearing goods during the new Saturday time slot. This commitment reflects the government's dedication to supporting and

facilitating trade for the private sector, ensuring a seamless and cost-effective process for businesses engaged in cross-border commerce and effectively reducing barriers to trade. To avoid delays, especially with the new operating hours, the government reminds the private sector that all exemption letters and licenses must be obtained prior to the arrival of goods at the border. To commemorate this historic occasion, a ceremony will be held at the Benque Viejo Border

on Saturday, July 22 at 10:00 a.m. Representatives from the business community and media outlets are invited to celebrate this milestone in Belize's trade relations. The Government of Belize reaffirms its commitment to advancing economic cooperation, fostering friendly relations with neighboring countries, and promoting a thriving and prosperous business environment. Ends

distribution contained in the report, including the fact that it did not follow international norms. Espat indicated that while the outcome of the report might not be pleasing to everyone, at the end of the day it must be able to withstand and even pass legal scrutiny. Espat said that when he inquired if the document would be able to withstand legal scrutiny, several legal advisors told him that it wouldn’t last ten minutes. After being told that the document didn’t even adhere to international standards Espat said that he did not waste any time to express his discontent and disapproval of the document.

“We can’t put a document that will not pass scrutiny and if we are doing that, then it’s irresponsible. And so that basically is – and not only myself, many others – that is in essence why we put out a statement saying that we have serious concerns – see they say it nicer than me,” said Espat. Last week, Cabinet informed that the Prime Minister had received a copy of the document from the Elections and Boundaries Commission. The document was taken to Cabinet for review and following a discussion, “serious concerns about the recommendations made by the Commission, “were raised.

S U D O K U

Medium Puzzle

8		3			5	2		
			1		4	7	8	
		5					4	
4				8	9			
9								
							1	
	8		4			5		3
		2				8	7	
7			5				2	

Sudoku rules are extremely easy: Fill all empty squares so that the numbers 1 to 9 appear once in each row, column and 3x3 box. Tip. Use a soft erasable pencil. Start with the easy puzzles, then move on to the harder ones. Make small pencilmarks to show which numbers are allowed in empty squares. This will come handy when analyzing techniques are used. Never guess! Only make moves based on logical deductions. There is only one unique solution for each puzzle.

Answer to Puzzle

9	2	1	8	6	5	4	3	7
4	7	8	3	1	9	2	6	5
3	6	5	7	2	4	1	8	9
7	1	6	9	4	2	8	5	3
8	3	4	1	5	7	9	2	6
2	5	9	6	8	3	7	1	4
6	4	3	2	9	8	5	7	1
5	8	7	4	3	1	6	9	2
1	9	2	5	7	6	3	4	8



REQUEST FOR BIDS

Belize

Supply and Delivery of Road Furniture for Maintenance

Loan # 4616/OC-BL

RFB No. 001 of 2023

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 Supply and Delivery of Road Furniture for Maintenance**.
2. The Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing, Government of Belize now invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for the Supply and Delivery of Road Furniture for Maintenance. The items comprising this Bidding are:
 - **Guard Rail System (10 sections of 300 mts) complete**
 - **Fish Tail Ends**
 - **Energy Absorbent Ends**
 - **Guard Rail Markers (butterflies)**
3. The Request for Bids will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) procedures specified in the Inter-American Development Bank's Policies (GN-2349- 15, January 2020) for the Procurement of Works and Goods financed by the Inter- American Development Bank and is open to all bidders from Eligible Source Countries as defined in the Policies.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the **Program Management Unit** for the **Additional Financing for the George Price Highway Rehabilitation Project** pmupcmow@gmail.com or gphrp.3344@midh.gov.bz 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 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Local Belize time)**.
5. **Qualifications Requirements Include:**
 - (a) **For National Companies**
 - Certificates of Good Standing from the Belize Companies Registry, Belize Social Security Board and the Belize Tax Services.
 - For International Companies**
 - Certificate of Good Standing from the Companies Registry
 - For All Bidders**
 - **Certificate of Incorporation**
 - Principal place of business of the Bidder**
 - Written power of attorney of the signatory of the Bid to commit the Bidder.**
 - Experience in supply and delivery of goods of a similar nature and value of BZ\$150,000 for each of the last five (5) years. Provide list of clients who may be contacted for further information on those contracts.
 - Reports on the financial standing of the Bidder such as audited financial statements (inclusive of auditor's reports) for the past three (3) years (2020, 2021 and 2022)
 - Information regarding any litigation, current or during the last three (3) years (2020, 2021 and 2022), in which the Bidder was/is involved, the parties concerned, and the disputed amounts and awards.
 - (b) **If the Bidder is a manufacturer:**
 - 1). **Financial Capability**
The Bidder shall furnish documentary evidence that it meets the following financial requirement(s):
 - i.) *Minimum average annual turnover in last three (3) years (2020, 2021 and 2022) shall be BZ \$150,000.00 per year*
 - ii.) *Provide audited financial statements for period 2020, 2021 and 2022.*
 - 2). **Experience and Technical Capacity**
The Bidder shall furnish documentary evidence to demonstrate that it meets the following experience requirement(s):
 - i.) *Have successfully completed at least 2 contracts of similar nature with a total value of BZ\$300,000 to qualify.*
 - 3). **Documentary Evidence**
The Bidder shall furnish documentary evidence to demonstrate that the Goods it offers meet the following usage requirement: Documentary evidence to establish conformity of the goods to the technical specifications/standards in the bidding document.
 - (b) **If Bidder is not a manufacturer:**
 - If a Bidder is not a manufacturer, but is offering the Goods on behalf of the Manufacturer under Manufacturer's Authorization Form (Section V, Bidding Forms), the Manufacturer shall demonstrate the above qualifications **(i), (ii), (iii)** and the Bidder shall demonstrate that it has successfully completed at least two (2) contracts of similar goods in the past five (5) years (2018 to 2022).
 - (c) All bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Security of BZ\$25,000.00
 - (d) And any other documents or information as stipulated in the Bidding Documents
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 August 15th, 2023**. Electronic bidding shall not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened 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 August 15th, 2023**.
9. **The address referred to above is:**

Attention:
Mr. Rolando Chan
Program Coordinator
Program Management Unit
1st Floor, Project Execution Unit Building
Power Lane, Belmopan
Cayo District, BELIZE
Tel: 501-822-1942
Email: pmupcmow@gmail.com AND
cc: gphrp.3344@midh.gov.bz

Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title: Results Based Management and Budgeting Specialist
Duty Station: Ministry of Sustainable Development Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management
Posting Period: One year
Direct Supervisor: To Be Determined

Consultancy Objective:

The Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management has sought the financial assistance from the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) to identify an RBM Specialist to support the MSDCC&DRM and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development in the development of frameworks and systems to improve and operationalize results-based planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting across the Government of Belize.

Analysis of position:

Overall Responsibilities:

1. Develop a work program to fulfil the deliverables of this ToR.
2. Conduct a review of the Medium-Term Development Strategy (MTDS) and other relevant national development strategies.
3. Conduct a review of the current budgeting processes and systems (institutional framework, legal and administrative/operational processes, as well as stakeholders)
4. Conduct a review of reforms and efforts made to introduce elements of results-based budgeting (including previous pilots, success and lessons learned).
5. Conduct a review of the Government's Public Sector Investment Programme, review capital investment planning and budgeting processes with a view to improving coordination between Finance and Economic Development.
6. Lead the development of a Results Based Framework, inclusive of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework.
7. Identify additional Ministries for the piloting of RBM and the implementation of a monitoring and evaluation framework aligned with the MTDS and their relevant national and strategic plans (target four to five).
8. Identify and document recommended workflow for mainstreaming and piloting of RBM within the broader Government Service including the development of procedural manuals and administrative guidelines and any other institutional mechanisms needed for effective implementation.
9. Assist in the preparation of annual monitoring and evaluation plans consistent with M&E Framework within the pilot Ministries.
10. Conduct a capacity assessment among Policy, Planning, Project, Finance Unit staff.
11. Organize capacity building training.
12. Develop plans to enhance knowledge networking, sharing best practices and technical expertise to the pilot ministries to foster an integrated approach.
13. Prepare periodic updates/briefings/presentations to the agencies involved to continuously inform of progress as required by the supervisor.

Expected Outputs:

The consultant is expected to work in close collaboration with counterparts in achieving the following expected outputs for this consultancy:

- Workplan and methodology for achieving task.
- Results Based framework aligned to the strategic focus areas of the Plan Belize and other guiding national strategies and plans.
- Monitoring and evaluation framework aligned with the Plan Belize and other guiding national strategies and plans.
- Documentation of recommended workflow for mainstreaming and piloting
- User and management friendly matrix for enabling a transition to RBM across the GOB.

**All products, final work and information shall be generated in hard and soft format described in this section.*

Execution of this Terms of Reference requires an expert having one or more of the following qualifications:

Technical Qualifications – Academic/Training:

LEVEL: Master's Degree: X

AREA: Area of Study: Finance, Economics, Results Based Management, Investment Management, or a closely related field.

Doctorate Degree: _____ **Area of Study:** _____

Skills, Experience and Qualifications Required:

1. First Degree in Finance, Economics, or a closely related field, preferably with an environment/biodiversity focus with a minimum of five (5) years relevant work experience.
2. At least five (5) years of experience in monitoring and evaluation, results-based management.
3. Knowledge and experience in designing M&E systems and conducting evaluations.
4. Excellent writing and analytical skill in drafting concept notes and reports.
5. Strategic vision and strong technical and analytical capabilities.
6. Proficiency in both written and oral English.
7. Strong leadership capability
8. Strong interpersonal and communication skills
9. Knowledge of national governance framework is strongly desired
10. Ability to prepare publications, reports, and presentations
11. Ability to work with a multidisciplinary and multicultural team
12. Computer literacy particularly in Microsoft excel and access, word and ppt
13. Flexible and ability to prioritize a variety of complex evolving tasks

Application Requirements:

- Interested persons should submit a letter of expression of interest
- The Letter of expression of interest should state monthly expected remuneration that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price.
- Personal CV, indicating all experience from similar projects, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the candidate and at least two (2) professional references.

Qualified candidates should submit their application and financial proposals no later than **July 24th, 2023**, to:

Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management
Attn: Biofin National Coordinator
Ground Floor Green Complex Building
#7552 Hummingbird Highway
Belmopan City, Belize
Telephone number 828-9056 or
Email Address: biofin-belize-asst@environment.gov.bz



FUN FACTS!

Rectangle goat eyes? It's all about enhancing survival



UC Berkeley and Durham University researchers were also intrigued by this atypical pupil shape. Being scientists, they decided to investigate and analyzed pupil shapes of no fewer than 214 land species.

What they eventually found was that pupil shape is linked to the ecological niche or role of the animal. The general pattern they've found is that predators generally have verti-

cal slit pupils because these help them judge distance better, making it easier to pounce on prey. Meanwhile, herbivores - which are the target of carnivores - have rectangular slit pupils as a line of defense, offering them a broader field of vision.

As a herbivore, apart from some antlers and hooves, there's not that much you can do to fend back a predator. The best thing they can do is run away, which

is why many herbivores are also fast and agile.

Before you can run, though, you need to know when it's time to make an exit which is where the goat's rectangular eyes come in. These enable a panoramic vision that can detect intruders approaching from various directions

Unlike humans and many other mammals, whose round pupils restrict their periph-

eral vision, goats can scan their surroundings with unparalleled accuracy. Their rectangular pupils create a wide-angle view, allowing them to spot potential dangers lurking on either side without needing to turn their heads.

With their remarkable peripheral vision, goats can swiftly identify predators, evade ambushes, and ensure their survival in the face of constant danger.

The horizontal pupils also enhance the image quality of objects directly ahead of the animal. This clear front image helps guide rapid locomotion over potentially rough terrain, the researchers noted in Science Advances.

"On the one hand, these animals must see panoramically to detect predators that could approach from various directions," the experts wrote in their study. "On the other hand, they must see sufficiently clearly in the forward direction to guide rapid locomotion over potentially rough terrain."




Water Needed!



DID YOU KNOW ?

IF YOU STILL FEEL TIRED AFTER A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP, YOU'RE PROBABLY DEHYDRATED. DRINK SOME WATER AFTER YOU WAKE UP.

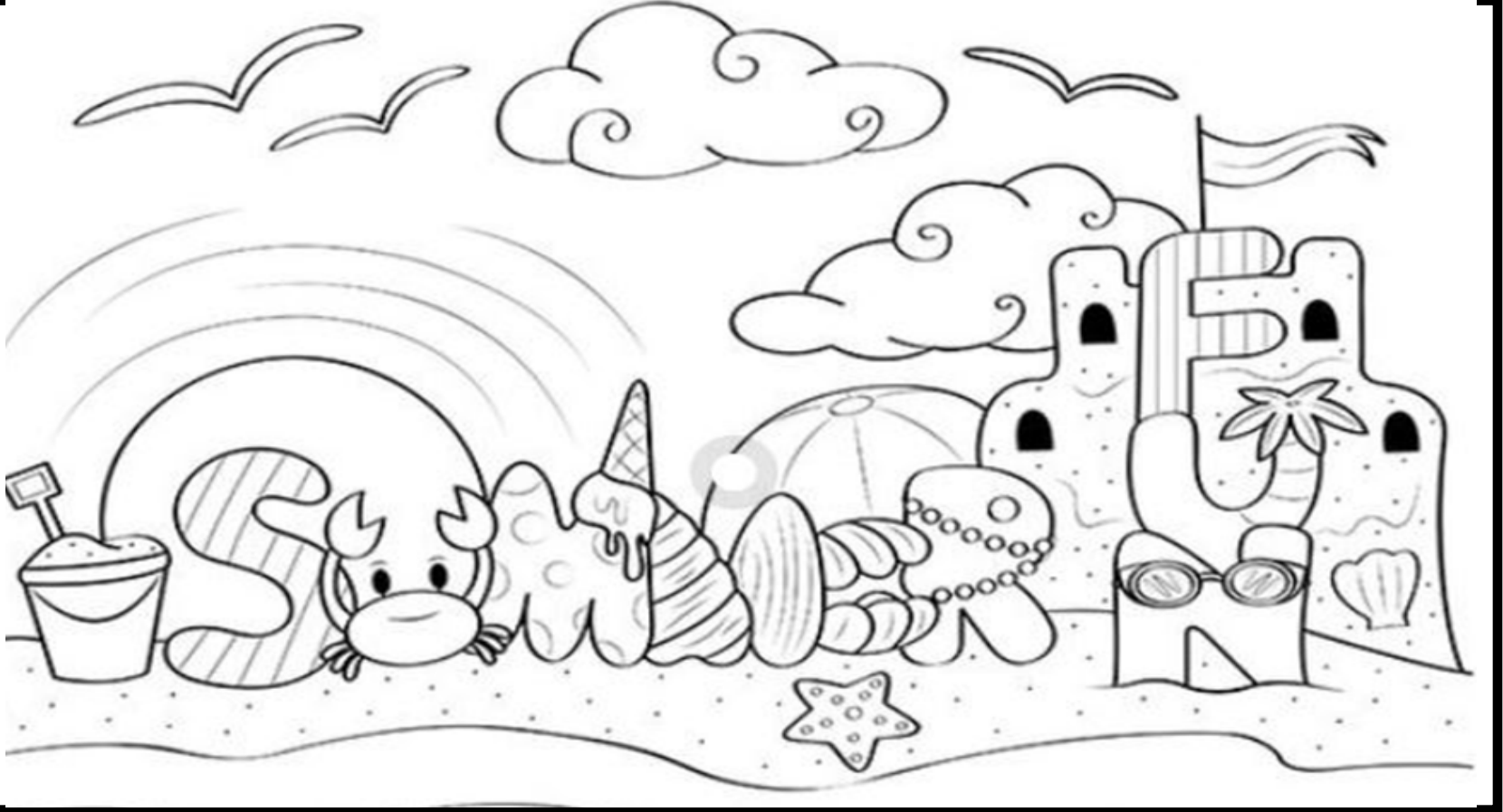
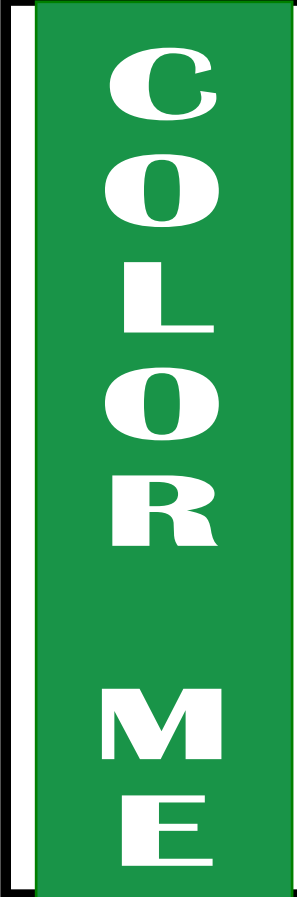
Best Study Times!



DID YOU KNOW ?

THE BEST TIME TO STUDY:

4 AM - 6 AM:	BRAIN FUNCTION:	100%
6 AM - 8 AM:	BRAIN FUNCTION:	50%
NIGHT TIME:	BRAIN FUNCTION:	20%





Using melatonin for sleep is on the rise, study says, despite potential health harms

More and more adults are taking over-the-counter melatonin to get to sleep, and some may be using it at dangerously high levels, a study has found.

The overall use among the US adult population is still “relatively low,” but the study does “document a significant many-fold increase in melatonin use in the past few years,” said sleep specialist Rebecca Robbins, an instructor in the division of sleep medicine for Harvard Medical School. She was not involved in the study.

The study, published in the medical journal JAMA, found that by 2018 Americans were taking more than twice the amount of melatonin than a decade earlier.

Melatonin has been linked to headaches, dizziness, nausea, stomach cramps, drowsiness, confusion or disorientation, irritability and mild anxiety, depression and tremors as well as abnormally low blood pressure. It can also interact with common medications and trigger allergies.

While short-term use for people with jet lag, shift workers and those who have trouble falling asleep appears to be safe, long-term safety is unknown, according to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health at the National Institutes of Health.

“In an associational study we found that older adults who reported frequent use — every night or most nights — of a sleep aid (over the counter or prescription) had a higher risk of incident dementia and early mortality,” Robbins said.

However, researchers could not determine which type of sleep aid — over-the-counter medications, such as melatonin, or prescription medications — was responsible for the findings.

Melatonin’s side effects

Since 2006, a small but growing subset of adults are taking amounts of melatonin that far exceed the dosage of 5 milligrams a day typically used as a short-term treatment, the study found.

However, pills for sale may contain levels of melatonin much higher than what is advertised on the label. Unlike drugs and food, melatonin is not fully regulated by the US Food and Drug Administration, so there are no federal requirements that companies test pills to ensure they contain the amount of advertised melatonin.

People are using twice as much melatonin as they did a decade ago, sometimes at dangerously high levels.

People are using twice as much melatonin as they did a decade ago, sometimes at dangerously high levels.

“Previous research has found that that melatonin content in these unregulated, commercially available melatonin supplements ranged from — 83% to +478% of the labeled content,” said Robbins, who coauthored the book “Sleep for Success! Everything You Must Know About Sleep But are Too Tired to Ask.”

Nor are there any requirements that companies test their products for harmful hidden additives in melatonin supplements sold in stores and online. Previous studies also found 26% of the melatonin supplements contained serotonin, “a hormone that can have harmful effects even at relatively low levels,” according to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health.

“We cannot be certain of the purity of melatonin that is available over the counter,” Robbins said.

Taking too much serotonin by combining medications such as antidepressants, migraine medications and melatonin can lead to a serious



drug reaction. Mild symptoms include shivering and diarrhea, while a more severe reaction can lead to muscle rigidity, fever, seizures and even death if not treated.

Is it bad to take melatonin every night?

Because it is purchased over the counter, experts say many people view melatonin as an herbal supplement or vitamin. In reality, melatonin is a hormone made by the pineal gland, located deep within the brain, and released into the bloodstream to regulate the body’s sleep cycles.

“There is a view that if it’s natural, then it can’t hurt,” said Robbins in an earlier interview on the impact of melatonin on children. “The truth is, we just really don’t know the implications of melatonin in the longer term, for adults or kids.”

“When adults took melatonin, it decreased the amount of time it took them to fall asleep by four to eight minutes,” Dr. Cora Collette Breuner, a professor in the department of pediatrics at Seattle Children’s Hospital at the University of Washington, told CNN in 2021.

“So for someone who takes hours to fall asleep, probably the better thing for them to do is turn off their screens, or get 20 to 40 minutes of exercise each day, or don’t drink any caffeinated products at all,” Breuner said.

“These are all sleep hygiene tools that work, but people are very reticent to do them. They rather just take a pill, right?”

Training your brain to sleep

There are other proven sleep tips that work just as well, if not better than sleeping aids, experts say. The body begins secreting melatonin at dark. What do we do in our modern culture? Use artificial light to keep us awake, often long past the body’s normal bedtime.

Research has found that the body will slow or stop melatonin production if exposed to light, including the blue light from our smartphones, laptops and the like.

“Any LED spectrum light source may further suppress melatonin levels,” said Dr. Vsevolod Polotsky, who directs sleep basic research in the division of pulmonary and critical care medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

So ban those devices at least an hour before you want to fall asleep. Like to read yourself to sleep? That’s fine, experts say, just read in a dim light from a book or use an e-reader in night mode.

“Digital light will suppress the circadian drive,” Polotsky said, while a “dim reading light will not.”

Other tips include keeping your bedroom temperature at cooler temperatures — about 60 to 67 degrees Fahrenheit (15 to 20 degrees Celsius). We sleep better if we’re a bit chilly, experts say.

Set up a bedtime ritual by taking a warm bath or shower, reading a book or listening to soothing music. Or you can try deep breathing, yoga, meditation or light stretches. Go to bed and get up at the same time each day, even on weekends or your days off, experts say. The body likes routine.

If your doctor does prescribe melatonin to help with jet lag or other minor sleep issues, keep the use “short term,” Robbins said.

If you are planning to use melatonin for a short-term sleep aid, try to purchase pharmaceutical grade melatonin, she advised. To find it, look for a stamp showing that the independent, nonprofit US Pharmacopoeial Convention Dietary Supplement Verification Program has tested the product.



Oración al Espíritu Santo

Espíritu Santo. Tú que me aclaras todo, que iluminas todo mis caminos para yo alcance mi ideal; tú que das el don divino de perdonar y olvidar el mal que me hacen y que en todos los instantes de mi vida estas conmigo, yo quiero en este corto diálogo agradecerte por todo y confirmar una vez más que nunca quiero separarme de ti, por mayor que sea la ilusión material! Deseo estar contigo y todos mis seres queridos por tu misericordia para estar contigo y los míos. (La persona debiera rezar esta oración 3 días seguidos sin decir el pedido. Dentro de tres días será difícil que sea. Publicar en cuando se reciba la gracia.

Gracias Espíritu Santo.

R.M.L.

All about The People

A Dollar for a Dollar



Neri Briceno

In terms of value and mere volumes, China Banknote Printing and Minting Corporation, the United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing and Britain’s De La Rue are the big boys in the business of currency printing and coin minting. Collectively, they supply hundreds of countries with raw currency and literally billions of dollars both in individual notes and trillions of dollars in value. Chances are that if your country is a member of the Commonwealth, it’s likely that De La Rue is your currency maker of choice.

De La Rue is one of the oldest currency printing companies in the world with a stellar reputation for producing secure, high-quality currency notes. The company is known worldwide and is worth approximately \$500.

Like the United States Bureau of Engraving and Print-

ing, if you are holding notes designed by them, it’s safe to say that your money is secure. Because businesses just don’t wake up one day and decide that they are going to design and print money. Most people do not readily understand the world of currency making. What these companies do is design and make the cash that you carry in your pockets and wallets. In other words, they are in the business of making and producing monies which are then sold to national governments for a profit.

The case with China Banknote Printing and Minting Corporation, and the United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing are a little different since they are government entities per se. However, like in any for-profit business, if their cost of production exceeds what they are selling - the monies they produce - they will likewise end up with a deficit.

Raw currency is a product like anything else. Take for example if you have a business that is making furniture. First, you may want to design it so that is it pleasing to the eyes, next you may look at how to build it so that it

is long-lasting and strong. Next, you decide how many units to make and at what cost. After considering the material you use, labor, taxes, and transportation, you would add a markup and that becomes your profit.

The same holds true in the making of money, there is a design process, a decision of what material the notes will be made of to make them strong and durable. You will factor in the cost of ink to print, the paper or polymer used for the notes, the manufacturing or printing process, the cost of electricity to print, the number of bills that will be printed, logistical and transportation costs, labour and profit costs. The cost is what the customer would pay for each note.

If Belizeans are under the impression that we will just switch out our old notes with Queen Elizabeth on them for fresh ones with George Price and

Philip Goldson’s faces on them, they are completely wrong. That is not the case, we will have to pay for each banknote that we change and eventually all the coins that have the queen’s image on them. There is a cost to this.

Internationally the average cost to print a bank note ranges from \$5.4 cents US to around \$19 cents US depending on the value. This averages around \$13.26 US cents per note. That works out to about \$265,000 for every million notes in circulation. Increase that number to a conservative 3 million notes and that number jumps to \$800,000 BZD just for the notes themselves. This does not include design and transportation. Factor in the number of replacements for torn and used notes every year and that cost rises.

Because of the rising cost of raw materials and metal, the US Mint estimated that it costs them

\$2.72 cents to produce a penny that was worth only \$1 cent. Yes, it was costing them more to produce pennies than the pennies were worth. Inevitably Belize would also have to change the face on its coins to match those on its bank notes. With the cost of raw materials still rising in 2023 as a result of supply chain disruptions, environmental pressures on mining and shortages in the labour force as a result of Covid, and using the conservative figure of \$2.72 BZD rather than USD, we can potentially incur an additional \$540,000 in changing coins. We are looking at close to \$1.5-2 million once this exercise is over. Is that money that we can afford?

Both Price and Goldson were known to be modest men. They were not flashy and extravagant like today’s politicians. Price demonstrated piety up to the Land Rover that he rode around in. Both men without a shadow of a doubt were ardent patriots but I believe that in their own way they did not relish the spotlight. They built no statues or monuments of themselves because I believe that they understood that people are known for their deeds and not by monuments to glory.

While I can understand the trend of thought of putting them on the currency, the big question is whether Price or Goldson would have supported such an idea. In a time when the nation needs financing for schools, hospitals, medicines, social care and if nothing else to re-

duce the amount of borrowing that we continue to entertain, \$2 million can be better spent elsewhere.

In my work travels I have been blessed to travel widely and rather extensively and if there is no other noticeable factor it is the reduction in the use of cash in every single aspect of the global economy. Studies have shown that in most developed economies, people carry an average of \$40 to \$60 on them and will physically enter a bank maybe every 2 to 3 months. In an era when even street side vendors are using their cell phones to go cashless, maybe a better investment would be to try and reduce cash usage and convert to cashless systems.


It has the potential to decrease the cost of business since trips to the bank become obsolete. It also reduces crime and jackings and that one thing that most Belizeans dread - standing in line at a crowded bank, waiting for a cashier, when only one is working.

While this change over from the queen to locals is an attempt to pull at our patriotic strings, it will pull harder at our pockets.

It’s all about the people!

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.

In a time when the nation needs financing for schools, hospitals, medicines, social care and if nothing else to reduce the amount of borrowing that we continue to entertain, \$2 million can be better spent elsewhere.



Public Notice of Investment

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the Social Security Act, Chapter 44 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020, that the Social Security Board, as per its Investment Framework, Section 49, has proposed to lend the sum of **Six Million, Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (BZ\$6,500,000.00)** to the Belize Airports Authority. Proceeds will be used for the resurfacing of the San Pedro runway, the Dangriga runway and the apron expansion and installation of fuel farms. The loan facility has a term of ten (10) years plus a six (6) month moratorium on the principal payment. The loan is payable monthly at a rate of five point five percent (5.50%) per annum on the declining balance.

Reporter's



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GRASSROOTS

BETTERMENT IN PORT LOYOLA WITH AREA REP. HON. GILROY USHER



By Hon. Gilroy Usher

“We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” –Martin Luther King, Jr.

Statements made on Wednesday by Anthony “Boots” Martinez, self-declared King of Port Loyola and former Area Representative for the division that Hon. Gilroy Usher Area Representative for Port Loyola and Minister of State for Youth, Sports, and Transport is neglecting the division is a clear indication that the former Area Representative for the constituency has short memory and is out of touch with reality.

Although Anthony Martinez was one of the most powerful Ministers in the UDP government for thirteen years with millions and millions of dollars from oil, Petro Caribe, and other sources Port Loyola was totally abandoned by Anthony Martinez and the UDP. Throughout their three terms Port Loyola had the worst streets in Belize City even when Martinez was Minister of Works. Under the UDP and Boots Martinez unemployment was sky-high and thousands of qualified Belizeans couldn’t find jobs. Proper housing and land were only for well-connected UDP’s, and recreational facilities like many other things were all abandoned.

As Area Reprehensive for Port Loyola Hon. Gilroy Usher has done many things to help make life better for the residents of the division. Here are a few of those achievements that are too numerous to mention.

□ With the use of the Community



Development Fund (CDF) in partnership Belize City Council, and MIDH many streets in Port Loyola were upgraded prior to Hurricane Lisa; more streets are currently being upgraded in the area, and funds have already been set aside for major upgrade of numerous streets across the division within the next four months including T-Street, Neal’s Pen Rd, and a portion of Caesar Ridge Rd near the Port of Belize.

□ For the first time in decades over 200 residents of the Area have become first time land owners, and for the first time in decades a Land Clinic was held in Port Loyola to address scores of long outstanding land matters.

□ A record number of ordinary students from primary school to university now received education grants to lessen the burden of their school fees on parents, and we continue to assist scores of students yearly with our annual Back to School Program.

□ Employment has been secured for many residents in the public sector, and in the Leadership Intervention Program among other areas, most of all hundreds of residents of Port Loyola have been able to secure good paying jobs in the private sector with the increase in the minimum wage from \$3.30 per hour to \$5.00 per hour. Due to the tremendous increase in available jobs presently, the rate of unemployment has fallen from over 20% under to UDP to 2% today with the PUP to the benefit of all Belizeans including the residents of Port Loyola.

□ Speaking about jobs over 200 small businesses in Port Loyola have received \$500.00 grant in supplies each to improve their businesses and better serve the public including a group of fishermen from Tut Bay



in the Yabra area of the division.

□ This Briceño Administration of which I am a proud member has put an end to inadequate housing for the people. This PUP administration said no more weak plycem houses without partition, ceiling, electrical wiring, and bathroom facilities for the people and commenced the building of affordable concrete starter homes with all the basic infrastructure for the most deserving families. As a result of that concern for the most needy six deserving families in Port Loyola have already received their starter homes. That is the average amount of starter homes already delivered to the other constituencies. Furthermore an additional 12 persons from Port Loyola should be receiving their starter homes before the end of the year, and dozens of families in the area have been assisted with home improvement grants in supplies through MIDH.

□ Finally, realizing the importance of sports in motivating the youth to be law-abiding and productive Belizeans, the badly broken basketball court and bleachers at the Jane Usher basketball court have been replaced with new concrete structures, and plans are underway to build a needed football field for the residents of the area shortly.

As a show of genuine commitment to make life better for all the residents of Port Loyola, I encourage Anthony Martinez and all other able persons to support the work of the PUP Port Loyola Committee and myself as we implement plans in make life better for all the residents of the division.

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.





Holiday Opening Hours

The public is advised that all Atlantic Bank Branches and Drive Thrus will be closed for business on Saturday, July 29, 2023 in celebration of Emancipation Day.

All branches and drive thrus will reopen on Tuesday, August 1, 2023.

NOTICE

GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE TREASURY BILLS
ISSUE NUMBER 8/2023

Tenders are invited for an issue of Government of Belize Treasury Bills. The amount of the issue will be \$64,391,800.

The Bills will be issued in electronic form only evidenced by an electronic book entry in the Central Securities Depository of the Central Bank of Belize in multiples of \$200 and will be repayable at par 91 days after issue. They will be issued on Tuesday, 25 July 2023 and will be redeemed on Tuesday, 24 October 2023.

Each tender must be for \$200 or a multiple of \$200 and must specify to five decimal places the amount, which is offered for each one hundred dollars face value of the Bills sought.

Members of the public who wish to participate in the auction must submit their bid to the Central Bank of Belize electronically to bids@centralbank.org.bz or at the designated drop off box no later than 12:00 noon on Friday, 21 July 2023.

The Auction in the Central Securities Depository System (CSD) will be open from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on Tuesday, 25 July 2023.

Successful bidders should arrange to settle via the Automated Payment & Securities Settlement System of Belize (APSSS).

Bank: Central Bank of Belize
Account: GLICORP0402627

The Government of Belize reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all tenders in whole or in part.

CENTRAL BANK OF BELIZE

Notices are placed on Central Bank of Belize Website (www.centralbank.org.bz)

THIRD NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 10 (3) of the Belize Mines and Minerals Act, Chapter 226, Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, **Errol Haynes of Haynesee Ltd., Belize City, Belize C.A.**, has applied to the Honourable Minister of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining, through the Inspector of Mines, Mining Unit for a **renewal of Mining License** No. 4 of 2018, for the **extraction of sand and gravel** from an area of the **Sibun River in the Adams Eddy area, Belize District, Belize C.A.**

The area to be mined is located at UTM co-ordinates:

Bar	Northings	Eastings	Bar	Northings	Eastings
1)	1907895	331406	7)	1908867	332061
2)	1908061	331255	8)	1909268	332470
3)	1908204	331259	9)	1909411	332613
4)	1908411	331434	10)	1909776	332978
5)	1908510	331569	11)	1910165	333105
6)	1908613	331720	12)	1910633	332982

The area to be mined comprises approximately twelve (12) acres.



For more information or appointments contact us at 630-8703 or visit us on Cemetery Road next to Rogers Stadium.



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Now Open:

Experiencing any of the following symptoms?

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- Sprains
- Slow healing wounds
- Diabetic ulcers
- Stress Fractures
- Diabetic peripheral neuropathy (loss of sensation or feeling)

Anodyne Therapy can help you.

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Human Rights, Prevention and Peace

By Human Rights Commission

On December 10th of this year, the world will observe the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To commemorate this milestone, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, OHCHR, has been conducting a series of activities throughout the year. One of these is the “HR75 Spotlight” which features monthly articles highlighting “a wide range of human rights issues, enshrined in the Universal Declaration, in need of concrete and urgent action from States and other duty bearers” (ohchr.org). The July publication is titled “Human rights, prevention and peace” which we feature in this space. Human rights, prevention and peace (Taken from ohchr.org)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international human rights system were created as a blueprint to prevent conflict and build peace. They also have a special role in averting the escalation of violence. Just as war, conflicts and insecurity increase the incidence of human rights violations, societies that respect human rights experience less violence and insecurity. They are more resilient and more inclusive, human rights reports show.

At a recent meeting, UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk said human rights was the best starting point for preventing crises and build peace.

“Full compliance

with human rights is the best antidote to the inequalities, unaddressed grievances and exclusion which are often at the root of instability and conflict,” Türk said.

By its nature, human rights work is often reactive to events, coming after human rights violations, conflict or crises. To deal with today’s challenges, UN Human Rights is strengthening its focus on prevention, aiming to engage earlier and more strategically to address the risk of violations, conflict or crisis before they impact lives, said James Turpin, Chief of Prevention and Sustaining Peace Section, UN Human Rights.

“Human rights possess preventive power,” Turpin said. “They are essential to addressing the causes and impacts of all complex crises, and to building sustainable, safe, and peaceful societies.”

Focus on prevention

From Syria to Sri Lanka to Colombia, the Office is stepping up its efforts to prevent conflict, violence and insecurity, including by addressing the role that inequalities, impunity and discrimination play in triggering conflict. This includes strengthening work on human rights indicators and data to ensure that human rights information and risk analysis informs early warning, planning and preparedness across the UN system.

The Office’s Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) provide early warning and human rights risk analysis to respond to potential,

emerging or current human rights crises. Located across UN Human Rights Regional Offices, ERTs play a crucial role in detecting the root causes of conflict and are part of the Office’s growing work to make prevention and peacebuilding a reality on the ground.

“What we are striving for is data and information in order to act early, so that we can protect the human

rights of those left behind,” said Adrian Combrinck, an Information Manager Officer in the Emergency Response Team in South Africa.

Countries in the southern Africa region are among the most unequal in the world, with high costs of living, heavy debt, and increasing food insecurity. Climate change and a growing energy crisis are adding more pressure to

a region suffering from social unrest, unemployment, and the shrinking of the democratic space. Combrinck’s and his team’s job is to analyse all these risks across 14 countries to help the UN system focus on preventing human rights violations.

To detect and address drivers of conflict, the Office is also developing solid indicators on killings and violence against human rights

defenders, civil society and media, as well as conflict-related deaths. This work can draw on analysing open-source information, for example, to track internet shutdowns and other issues relevant to early warning.

At the same time, human rights mandates and mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council’s

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PORT of BELIZE LTD

A Port with a Global Perspective

VACANCY

NOTICE

Apprentice Electrician Technician

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons to fill the following post in the Mechanical Department. In the Port’s continued effort to promote diversity both males/females, able/ differently abled are encouraged to apply for the available post.

Reports to: Senior Mechanic

Summary of Responsibilities: Uses a basic working knowledge of A/Cs, and electrical systems to conduct maintenance, fault-finding, and diagnostics on residential, industrial and equipment. Perform regular PMs and Corrective maintenance on all cooling units, buildings, and equipment. They diagnose electrical defects and malfunction of units. Assistance in upkeep of all systems while upholding safety guidelines and complying with codes and regulations.

Job Responsibilities:

- Assist with conducting troubleshoot of Electrical and Electronic components associated to Residential, industrial wiring and automotive.
- Assist in testing and removal off starters, alternators, motors, gensets, ATS and Batteries.
- Basic Knowledge of electrical code, safety and quality assessment, wiring diagrams, test instruments, motor, and circuits, blueprints and schematics, electromechanical repairs, ability to repair and service generators, transformers, switches, and circuit breakers.
- Troubleshoot repair and service of all Facility A/C’s.
- Create and Maintain Inventory list of all tools and related to A/C & electrical parts.
- Assist in developing parts or list of p-arts for servicing and repairs.
- Assist and Conduct PMs and Corrective Maintenance with Residential, Industrial and Automotive Equipment.
- Any other duties of a related nature assigned from time to time.

Job Qualifications/Requirement:

- Minimum of High School diploma or technical certificate from ITVET/CET or other certifying body.
- 1 - 2 years’ field experience would be an asset

Skills/Competencies:

- Good Communication Skills
- Able to work under pressure.
- Confidential
- Trustworthy
- Team Player

Compensation Package: Will be commensurate (in accordance with the Company’s Salary Structure).

To apply: Provide updated resume, cover letter (addressed to Human Resource Manager), copy of valid social security card, valid police report, name and phone number of two(2) previous employers.

Email to: jobapplication@portofbelize.com

Closing date for receipt of applications is Monday, July 24, 2023.

Human Rights, Prevention and Peace

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special procedures and the treaty bodies, offer unique tools to provide early warning of human rights violations. They support states and civil society through capacity building to identify and tackle issues, that, if left unaddressed, can become entrenched and lead to conflict and crisis.

The Office's push for a more preventive approach is in line with the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights, which stresses that the best form of protection is to avert the threats to people's lives and

rights in the first place and that there is no better guarantee of prevention than for Member States to meet their human rights responsibilities.

Economic, social and cultural rights

But effective early warning and prevention requires that attention be paid to all human rights – economic, social and cultural rights as much as civil and political rights – and that risks are addressed as early as possible, in development contexts as well as in crisis response and peace operations.

Marlene Urscheler, coordinator of the

Risk Analysis and Prevention Unit in the Emergency Response Section of Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division, said strengthening the bonds between communities, and reinforcing trust and inclusive development is essential for sustainable peace.

"Violations of economic, social and cultural rights can be as significant as violations of civil and political rights, but tend to be overlooked," Urscheler said.

However, in many cases issues such as land rights, access

to healthcare or food security are the underlying factors that feed tension in the communities.

"Prevention encourages us to step back and shift our focus in a creative way."

In Paraguay, for example, the collection and visualization of data and trends of alleged forced evictions of peasant and indigenous communities helped highlight the risks of increased social unrest and violence. Through this work, the Office was able to engage more effectively with the government, UN, civil society and

local communities on measures to mitigate risk of conflict over land rights.

In the Sahel region of Africa, where climate change is adversely affecting a broad range of rights such as access to food, sanitation, health and education, the Office is implementing a project to identify human rights risks due to forced migration and their impact on peace and security.

Accountability

Accountability and participation are also essential to build and maintain trust between communities and the State and to sustain peace. This is particularly the case in situations of grave human rights violations.

The call for justice and accountability resonates deeply for Yasmin Ullah. A Rohingya human rights activist, Ullah, fled Myanmar's conflict-torn Rakhine state with her family when she was 3. The 31-year-old activist lives in Canada, but says she cannot think of her country "without feeling a lump in my throat."

Speaking to the Human Rights Council during a recent panel discussion on human rights violations against Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar, Ullah said Myanmar

needs a truth and reconciliation commission to come to terms with the legacies of atrocities and massive human rights violations.

"The only way that we can ever get over this pain and heartbreak in Myanmar is through a national truth commission to help heal and reconcile the communities and to find a path forward," she said, adding that such commission would provide much-needed recognition to victims, an important step towards reconciliation.

For Ullah, who has just published a book on Rohingya myths and legends for children, accountability and transitional justice are the only lasting formulas to ensure that past human rights violations do not sow the seeds of future crises.

"Human rights are also the foundation of community rebuilding and empowerment."

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.



PORT of
BELIZE LTD

PRESS RELEASE



It is our esteemed honor to welcome Zim Shipping back to the Port of Belize (PBL). As one of the leading container shipping companies their decision to call at Port of Belize will undoubtedly result in benefits to all Belizean customers. Our continuous efforts to partner with ZIM Shipping to provide reliable container services will bring dependable and consistent execution of their planned supply chain. The far reaching globally connected ZIM network with access to over 100 countries will make its home at PBL offering a plethora of opportunities to all businesses; the one-stop gateway to a cheaper and better logistical access for the foster of economic growth in Belize.

For further information please feel free to contact the Port of Belize Limited at phone #:(501)223-2439 or email at info@portofbelize.com





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REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Consultancy Services



Consultancy Services for the Implementation and Dissemination of the New Strategic Plan including the Planning and Execution of a Change Management Sensitization Campaign for the Belize Tax Service

Institution: Ministry of Finance
Country: BELIZE
Project: Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Sector: Finance
Project No.: BL-L10315
Operation No: 4839/OC-BL
Deadline: Friday, July 28th, 2023, at 4:00 pm local Belize time

The Government of Belize (GOB) has received financing from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for the execution of a five-year tax modernization project entitled “Strengthening of Tax Administration” (STA) (BL-L1031). The Ministry intends to apply a part of the proceeds towards the consultancy service for the Implementation and Dissemination of the New Strategic Plan including the Planning and Execution of a Change Management Sensitization Campaign for the Belize Tax Service.

Objective of the Consultancy:

The purpose of this consultancy is for the implementation and dissemination of the Strategic Plan for the Belize Tax Service based on the merged actions and operations of the consolidated tax departments (Department of General Sales Tax and Income Tax Department); and to drive the Change Management Plan and Execute a Change Management Sensitization Campaign to ensure a successful transition and adoption of the new Integrated Tax Administration System (ITAS) by all stakeholders.

The consulting services (“the services”) includes the contracting of a Consultancy Firm for a period of ten (10) months to implement the newly developed strategic plan and develop and execute the change management sensitization campaign.

The Change Management sensitization campaign will focus on the people side of change to assist taxpayers in accepting and understanding the planned changes to business processes, systems and technology, job roles and organization structures and accountability framework.

The selected consultancy firm should have the following characteristics:
The Firm

General Experience:

- The firm should demonstrate at least five (5) years’ experience in similar assignment.

Specific Experience:

- **At least five (5) years in the following areas below:**
 - Implementation of Strategic Plans
 - Development of monitoring tool to measure key performance indicators
 - Development of change management strategies
 - Development of implementation plan for change management sensitization
 - Execution of change management sensitization
 - Development of communication material
 - Conducting workshops with staff and stakeholders
 - Conducting surveys to manage awareness
 - Staff training capacity

SKILLS, ABILITIES:

The selected firm will need to have or show:

- A solid understanding of how people go through a change and the processes involved.
- Experience and knowledge of change management principles, methodologies, and tools
- Ability to clearly articulate messages targeted to a variety of audiences
- Organized with a natural inclination for planning strategy and tactics
- Positive and professional approach to management
- Problem-solving and root-cause identification skills
- Experience with large-scale organizational change efforts

The firm should have but not be limited to the following Key Experts:

- Team Leader/Lead Consultant
- Communication Expert
- Implementation Expert

The Consultancy Firm specific objective will be.

- Develop and execute an implementation of the newly developed strategic plan
- Plan and develop the change management strategy and

- implementation plan
- Develop communication material for distribution to stakeholders
- Conduct change management sensitization workshops for stakeholders
- Manage taxpayer awareness and education

The Ministry of Finance now invites eligible Consultancy Firms (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested eligible Consultants must submit an Expression of Interest providing information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services (description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills, etc.). *The term “consultant” means a legally established professional consulting firm or an entity that may provide the services.*

Expression of Interest package should contain:

- (i) Document explaining interest, experience, and competence of the consulting firm.
- (ii) Firms experience in the assignment of similar consultancy services during the past five years. Description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments.
- (iii) Firms evidence of past jobs. (These includes letters from the respective client on the job (s) carried out, or a copy of contract or agreement with the client including copy of the TOR).
- (iv) Proof of nationality: Copy of certificate of incorporation, information of shareholders of company specifying the shares owned by each respective shareholder of the company and a copy of documentation of nationality of the shareholders of the company.

Additional documentation required for National Consultants:

- (v) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from Belize Company Registry
- (vi) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Social Security Board
- (vii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Belize Tax Service
- (viii) Copy of Current Trade License

Consulting firm will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) method 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) and is open to all eligible consultants as defined in the IDB policies. The selection of the successful firm will be based on a competitive process among short-listed firms that takes into account the quality of the proposal and the cost of the service. **Only the short-listed firms will be asked to submit a technical and price proposal.**

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications. For the purpose of establishing the short list, the nationality of a firm is that of the country in which it is legally incorporated or constituted and in the case of Joint Venture, the nationality of the firm appointed to represent it.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours **Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. local Belize time.**

Interested consulting firms are asked to submit their expression of interest via e-mail to Michelle.Longsworth@bts.gov.bz and copied to tamara.tingling@mof.gov.bz marked **STAP- Implementation and Dissemination of the New Strategic Plan including the Planning and Execution of a Change Management Sensitization Campaign for the Belize Tax Service** in the subject header, or submit hard copy on or before **4:00 p.m. (local Belize time) on Friday, July 28th, 2023**, to the following address:

Director General
Belize Tax Service
Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Eleanor Hall Building
Chetumal Street, Lake I, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114

For clarifications kindly contact:

Procurement Specialist
Project Executing Unit
Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Eleanor Hall Building
Chetumal Street, Lake I, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114/E-mail: tamara.tingling@mof.gov.bz