

# Reporter

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## MV "Frida 1" alarms Belizean conservationists



The authorities assure the public that the vessel is not conducting oil operations in Belizean waters.

By William Ysaguirre

The arrival of the semi-submersible drilling platform motor vessel "Frida 1" near the Belize City harbor on Thursday, June 1, set off alarm bells in the conservationist community, particularly with Oceana Belize, which had called for a national referendum at the suggestion of offshore seismic studies last November.

Both the Belize Port Authority (BPA) and the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation hastened to allay these fears by issuing two press

releases forthwith explaining that the MV "Frida 1" had been operating in Mexico and had only visited Belize to replenish supplies.

The BPA release further clarified that the vessel's deep draft prevented it from entering the Port of Belize and its harbor, and would, therefore, remain at anchor off English Caye for approximately six hours, while authorities processed the paperwork for it to return to Mexico.

"The MV 'Frida 1' is not authorized to conduct any other activity while in

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## PUP Ministers, UDP object to terms of Port of Magical agreement

By Javan Flowers

Members of Cabinet and members of the United Democratic Party (UDP) have objected to the overly concessionary terms contained in the leaked Definitive Agreement signed in October 2020 and

presented last month before Cabinet.

Speaking with the local media, Minister of Tourism and Diaspora Relations Hon. Anthony Mahler said, "The concessions, the issue of exclusivity in a specific area, the issue of if we

would raise taxes, that we would have to reimburse the developers. I don't agree with any of those things. I have many more issues, and we had a sober discussion in Cabinet, and we said no."

Former Prime

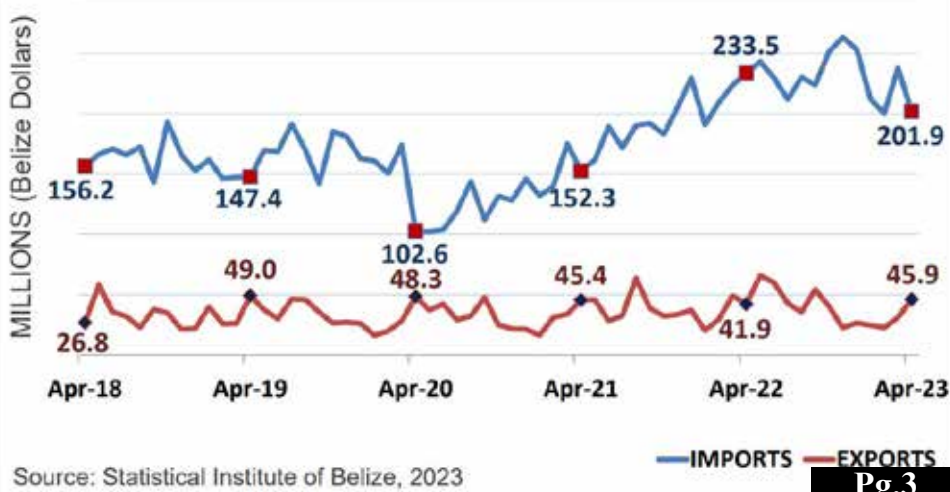
Minister Dean Barrow, Leader of the Opposition Moses "Shyne" Barrow, former Attorney General Michael Peyrefitte, and others within the United Democratic Party (UDP), have vehemently condemned then Minister Erwin Contreras for signing

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## Exports grow 9.6%, imports down 13.6%

Figure 1: Monthly Gross Imports and Domestic Exports; April 2018 - April 2023



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## Jasmine Hartin convicted of manslaughter, sentenced to pay \$75,000



(left) Jasmine Hartin [convicted of manslaughter by negligence] - (right) Superintendent Henry Jammott



# PUP Ministers, UDP object to terms of Port of Magical agreement

Reports are saying that Indian businessman Mr. Jack Charles has been moving against squatters who have been occupying his land just beyond Lord's Ridge Cemetery at the Krooman Lagoon site.

Mr. Charles says the land belongs to him, and he wants it back.

Krooman Lagoon was a shallow lake just off the George Price Highway, a mere half mile beyond Lord's Ridge Cemetery on land which formerly belonged to an American investor named Mogg. The good land at the edge of the highway was all taken by residential buildings when Mr. Jack Charles began to fill in the lagoon.

Residents in the area protested because the Krooman Lagoon was a natural drainage area for the surrounding higher ground, and businessman Jack Charles did not have permission or authority to fill in the lagoon. The late Mr. Dennis Bradley, a resident of the area, led the protest, and the Reporter supported him in this protest.

Despite warnings from the City Council, Mr. Charles continued to drain the lagoon until the entire lake area was reclaimed. The Belize City Council did nothing beyond making a lame protest, and Krooman Lagoon became dry land.

As soon as the land became habitable, eager squatters moved in and continued to move in until most of the reclaimed land was taken up. That was more than 15 years ago.

Today, those squatters are saying that they have rights. They have squatters' rights because they have been in peaceful occupation of the land for more than twelve years.

Even though there is no such thing as a "Squatter's Right" in Belizean Law, there is such a thing as the Registered Land Act which allows people who have been peacefully occupying land that does not belong to them to continue to occupy the land, and even to make a claim for de facto ownership. For government-owned or Crown Land, the occupation period is 30 years. For privately owned land the period is 12 years.

As recently as April 2018 the Supreme Court under Justice Madame Sonja Young made a ruling in which she determined that two defendants were entitled to continue to occupy a valuable piece of land, even though they had been labeled "squatters" and ordered by an earlier court ruling to leave.

In this significant judgment Justice Sonja Flowers ruled:

"This Court finds that Flowers (the defendants) were in adverse possession of the parcel for a period exceeding 12 years. A declaration to this effect will accordingly be made. Their actual occupation of the parcel coupled with this right created an overriding interest that is recognized and protected by the RLA (the Registered Lands Act).

"On the strength of the court's declaration, the Flowers may now apply for registration as proprietors of the portion."

*Cont'd from pg. 1*

an agreement that has been labeled "illegal" and "trash."

The document, signed between the Government of Belize (GOB) and Portico Enterprises (doing business as Port of Magical Belize) has drawn objection from politicians and the public alike given the extravagant tax exemptions and concessions that GOB would have been obligated to fulfill under the agreement.

The document, suspected to have been leaked by someone within Cabinet, was titled "Definitive Agreement" and, aside from the misspelling of the word "Definitive," made no mistake in spelling out explicitly all the details of the tax exemptions and concessions that a single Minister of Economic Development, Petroleum, Investment, Trade

and Commerce, Erwin Contreras, signed for a duration of 30 years.

Within the agreement under section 12 "Specific Obligations", subsection 12.1.1. demands that the Government introduce into the National Assembly and cause to pass "such primary and subsidiary legislation" agreed upon. Clause 12.1.1.1. agreed to notes that GOB is to exempt the Developer, the EPC Contractor, and their subcontractors from the payment of any and all customs and excise and revenue replacement duties, stamp duties, general sales taxes, environmental taxes, income taxes, business taxes, as well as contract taxes.

The Government is also to withhold taxes on or in connection with the importation, purchase, or procurement of "capital machinery, equipment, plant,

spare parts, building materials, fixtures and fittings, and office equipment, permits, design, engineering, procurement, construction, and other technical services for purposes of the Project during the development of the Project and, where applicable, the operations."

It goes on to demand that the Developer, its shareholders, funders, and the EPC contractor be exempted from the payment of income tax, business tax, capital gain taxes, or similar taxes during the term.

The agreement goes even further to demand that the government concede and refrain from imposing or introducing "new taxes, duties, levies or other fiscal imposts on the conduct of the Developer's business." If the Government were to do so, then the Developer would be entitled to compensation "for any reduction in the Developer's cash flows or distributable profits, or the dividends, interest or other amounts receivable by any of its shareholders or their affiliates or the Developer's Funders for the full amount of the Tax-Related

Losses."

Portico also demanded that GOB ensure that no third party could "potentially" compete with the Developer within a 25-mile radius, or benefit from any tax benefits or duty concessions for a period of 25 years from the commencement date. Therefore, if the Briceño Administration adhered to the agreement, Waterloo's Port of Belize Expansion Project and the Stake Bank Port Project would not benefit from tax benefits, given that both projects fall within that radius.

Interestingly, the Cabinet-confidential document was still tabled on May 15th, 2023, and purportedly made no complaint about the definitive agreement signed by a single UDP Minister without his then Cabinet's approval.

The request tabled simply recapped the work done thus far by Portico and concluded that "it is now critical that the tangible support of the government be provided through the requisite legislation which government committed to under the definitive agreement."

## MV "Frida 1" alarms Belizean conservationists

*Cont'd from pg. 1*

Belizean waters," the BPA release continued, but that Belize is obliged to treat it like any other ship, since the MV "Frida 1" is considered, first and foremost, a ship under international law.

The Ministry reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to protect Belize's marine reserves and the maritime space, after northern residents sounded the alarm on social media when the "Frida 1" was first sighted some 15 miles outside of the Hol Chan Marine Reserve early Thursday morning.

Further investigations by the Department of the Environment

and the Belize Coast Guard determined that the "Frida 1" had entered Belizean waters as part of its re-licensing exercise with Mexico, which required it to leave Mexican waters temporarily.

The Ministry acknowledged that it was fully cognizant of the moratorium on offshore oil drilling in Belize, and that it remains "committed to maintaining the ecological integrity of our marine reserves and ensuring sustainable and environmentally safe practices in our blue economy sector and blue space."



## THE REPORTER

Phones: 501- 227-2503 / 227-1767

Fax 501-227- 8278 P.O. Box 707

e-mail: [reporternewspaper@gmail.com](mailto:reporternewspaper@gmail.com)

website: <http://www.thereporter.bz>

Publisher Harry Lawrence

Editor Dyon A. Elliott

Financial Controller Rosa Maria Lawrence

General Manager Lisbeth Ayuso

Lithographer Rodolfo Castro

Journalists Michelle Sutherland

Javan Flowers

Desktop Publisher/

Graphic Designer Jackie Fuller

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# Exports grow 9.6%, imports down 13.6%

By William Ysaguirre

Belize's domestic exports grew by 9.6 percent while imports were reduced by 13.6 percent, the Statistical Institute of Belize reported in Belmopan on Wednesday, May 31.

Sugar exports more than tripled to \$24.3 million last month compared to \$6.5 million exported in April last year, petroleum exports increased to \$280,000, up from \$230,000 last year, resulting in an overall increase in exports.

These earnings compensated for 50 percent decline in banana exports from \$7.5 million in April 2022 to \$3.7 million last month.

Citrus exports were also down 70 percent to \$1.1 million, compared to \$3.7 million a year ago.

Marine fisheries products also fell 8.6 percent from \$3.5 million a year ago to \$3.2 million last month as the lobster harvest fell by half, and world conch prices reduced.

Other exports also fell, such as molasses which earned \$7.4 million last year were down to \$4 million

last month, and animal feed earned only \$3.6 million, down from \$4.9 million last year. Exports of red kidney beans and black eyed peas were halved, red kidney from \$1.7 million to \$800,000 and the peas from \$600,000 to \$300,000.

Among our trading partners, exports to the European Union grew from \$5.2 million last year to \$21 million last month, significant as the EU buys a lot of Belizean sugar. Exports to Mexico increased by 33 percent from \$900,000 a year ago to \$1.2 million last month, largely due to increased cattle exports.

But exports to the USA were halved from \$11.7 million last year to \$5.9 million last month, and the decline in bananas caused exports to the United Kingdom to fall from \$7.4 million last year to \$4.4 million last month. Reduced animal feed exports cause exports to Central America to fall to \$4.6 million, down from \$6.2 million a year ago.

Imports were also down 13.6 percent from \$233.6 million last year to \$201.9

million last month. Lower diesel prices caused the value of fuel imports to fall to \$35.5 million last month, from \$54.7 million a year ago. Belize also imported less aviation equipment and food processing machinery, valued at \$41.5 million last month, down from \$56.3 million in April 2022. Belize had also imported significant amounts of wheat in April 2022 but none this year, causing the value of food and animal imports to fall to \$24.2 million last month, compared to \$26.7 million a year ago. Imports of whiskey and cigarettes also fell to \$3.8 million last month, down from \$5.7 million last year.

Imports to commercial free zones increased to \$23.3 million last month, over the \$21.3 million imported a year ago; similarly, designated processing areas bought more shrimp feed and bourbon barrels, increasing to \$4 million in value last month, compared to \$3.2 million a year ago. Imports of detergents and vaccines increased to \$19.7 million, up from \$18.1 million last year.

# Jasmine Hartin convicted of manslaughter, sentenced to pay \$75,000

By Javan Flowers

Jasmine Hartin, the former partner of Andrew Ashcroft, has been convicted of manslaughter by negligence in the death of Superintendent Henry Jemmott and sentenced to pay \$75,000 within 12 months.

At the Supreme Court in Belize City, she was also handed 300 hours of community service and instructed to record a video to teach others about the dangers of "drinking and making foolish decisions."

Hartin was tied to the death of Superintendent Jemmott after police found her on a pier near where his body was recovered on May 28th, 2021.

Police reports

suggest she was found distressed and covered in blood, with Jemmott's body being found in the water in front of the pier with a single bullet wound to the head.

She was then detained and charged with manslaughter by negligence and released from custody in June 2021 on a \$15,000 bail. During her bail hearing, it was then revealed that Hartin and Jemmott were at a party together in Ambergris Caye on the night of his death.

Detectives said they went for a walk on the beach before sitting on a pier. There, Hartin gave Jemmott a shoulder massage, during which he then handed her his gun to put down.

Hartin told

investigators that she struggled with the handgun after Jemmott asked for it back and that it accidentally discharged. She added that she had been drinking at the time.

Her sentencing hearing had been set for May 31st, 2023, after Hartin pleaded guilty to manslaughter by negligence. During her guilty plea, the 34-year-old reportedly broke down in tears and allegedly told reporters outside the courthouse: "I just want Henry's family to have peace now, and I want this whole thing to be behind all of us so we can heal."

Police at the time said Mr Jemmott and Hartin were known to be friends.

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# GRASSROOTS

## THE DEFINITIVE AGREEMENT- The good and the bad



“Where liberty dwells, there is my country”– Benjamin Franklin

The Definitive Agreement (DA) signed by UDP Minister of Economic Development Erwin Contreras on October 1st, 2020 on behalf of the Government of Belize with Port Magical for a massive cruise ship project offshore less than two

By Hon. Gilroy Usher

months before the 2020 general election is another example of how leaders betray betterment for the people for selfish gain.

For those reasons I do not support the Definitive Agreement as it is, but fully support re-negotiation of mega investment with the people first.

The agreement is for 25 years. With it the government agrees to among other things exempt the developer from duties and numerous taxes. The agreement also exempts the developer from income and business taxes and capital gain taxes as well as taxes and duties on land transactions for the project, and it authorizes the developer to collect toll fees, pilotage and tonnage fees, and service fees among other fees for itself. To top off the sweetheart deal the agreement grants exclusivity for Port Magical to operate in a 25

mile radius.

The latter is a major concession that opens the country to costly litigation. That is the reality since both Feinstein Stake Bank Cruise Project, which is more than 75% complete, and Ashcroft's proposed Port of Belize bulk cargo and Cruise Tourism project are within an eight-mile radius of Port Magical. Such concession would stop the development of Stake Bank and Port of Belize dead in their tracks and force their possible sellout to Port Magical or force the government to pay compensation to those two companies that would make the compensation to Ashcroft for BTL seem like peanuts.

Those and many other tremendous giveaways and commitments made to Port Magical in the Definitive Agreement mean Belizeans will pay for the full cost of the investment. The Definitive Agreement is therefore the mother of all sellouts of the best interest of the people. It is worst than the deal the former Prime Minister made with Ashcroft when he agreed to pay the British billionaire \$600 million as compensation for BTL, a company that was worth \$100 million at best, when it was nationalized by the previous administration.

Since the exposure of the Definitive Agreement (really the Biggest Sellout Agreement) Ministers of the previous administration, that gave birth to the Definitive Agreement, now refuse to touch it with a ten-foot pole and vehemently condemn it

at every opportunity.

Their sincerity in condemning the agreement, however, is highly questionable.

With David Gegg as their local partner, Port Magical discussion with the previous administration for the investment started from 2017.

During that three-year span until Minister Contreras signed the agreement on behalf of the government of Belize, there had to be countless meetings with senior officials in government on regular bases for there to be satisfaction on the contents of the Definitive Agreement. The idea that Minister Contreras, who is neither an economist, an attorney, nor a financial analysts sat in an office with a representative from Port Magical and drafted the Definitive Agreement all alone without any input from powerful persons in the Cabinet knowing fully well that they would have needed the backing of those same powerful members of Cabinet for its acceptance is hogwash and neither here nor there.

It was as a result of those discussions that the law partner of the then attorney General was tasked to draft the Definitive Agreement. In politics, business is sent to law firms and other establishments by choice. You can bet your life on that. And the Chairman of the Cabinet Investment Committee at the time has stated that the

Cont'd on pg. 13



### Call for Expression of Interest

PACT is seeking the consultancy services of a qualified firm to carry out an assessment that identifies the functional roles that PACT needs to be executing within its current and future macro-operating environment and relative to the objectives set out in its Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027. The overall objective of the consultancy is to assess the current status of PACT's institutional capacity with a view to develop and designing a functional structure and organogram that aligns with the macro environment in which PACT is now operating, proposed legislative amendments, and the PACT Strategic Plan 2022-2027.

Expressions of Interest (EOI) from interested firms must include a signed cover letter and information regarding the competence and experience of the firm relevant to the assignment. It should also include the names and CVs detailing the relevant experience of the individual experts of the firm. The full Terms of Reference will only be shared with short-listed proponents upon the Request for Proposals.

The Call for EOIs will be made according to PACT's procurement procedures.

Packages should be submitted no later than June 6, 2023, at 5:00pm. Packages should be addressed to:

Mr. Radin Santos  
Procurement Officer  
Protected Areas Conservation Trust

Re: Expression of interest – Consultancy to Conduct an Institutional Human Resources Assessment for PACT

Soft copies should be sent via email to:

[procurementofficer@pactbelize.org](mailto:procurementofficer@pactbelize.org) and [execsecretary@pactbelize.org](mailto:execsecretary@pactbelize.org)

PACT is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against protected characteristics (gender, age, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, disability).

PACT is not liable for any costs incurred by Consulting Firms in submission of their application.



BELIZE MEDICAL AND DENTAL UNION

### PRESS RELEASE

Date: June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023

The Executive of the Belize Medical & Dental Union (BMDU) hereby calls on its membership, especially those members that were active up to 2018, to contact us as soon as possible.

The purpose of this is to update our database, to gather information of appointed beneficiaries, and to inform our members concerned of their rights, duties and benefits accrued during the tenure of the BMDU.

All members, active and those active up to 2018, are asked to please contact the Executive through the following:

- Email: [medicaldentalUbz@gmail.com](mailto:medicaldentalUbz@gmail.com)
- Phone: +5016018968

Deadline for necessary updates in this regard is Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 at midnight. The membership is urged to contact the Executive in a timely and efficient manner. Your kind attention is hereby greatly appreciated!

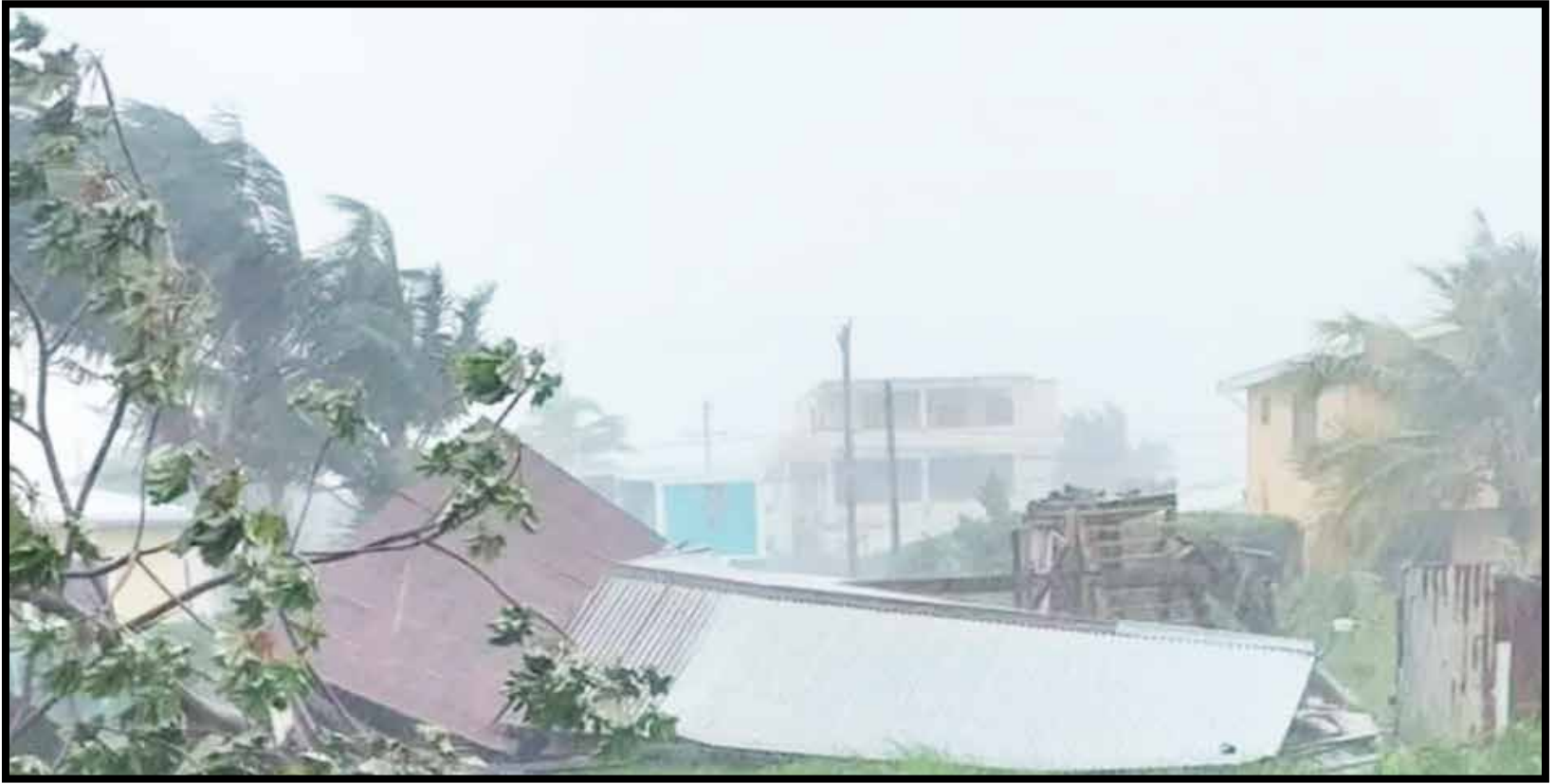
ENDS

# Hurricane Season starts now!

By Javan Flowers

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has released its forecast for the 2023 Atlantic hurricane season, predicting near-normal activity.

According to NOAA, the range of named storms with winds of 39 mph or higher is expected to be between 12 and 17. Of those storms, five to nine could intensify into hurricanes, with one to four potentially becoming major hurricanes with sustained winds of 111 mph or higher. The Climate Prediction Center, a division of the National Weather Service, expects a 40% chance of a near-normal season and a 30% chance of both an above-normal and



*Hurricane Lisa hit Belize City 2022 and left several homes and other property damaged.*

below-normal season.

The factors attributed to this year's Atlantic hurricane season being less active than in recent years include

various elements that either suppress or fuel storm development. NOAA scientists highlight the potential for El Nino to develop

this summer, which typically suppresses hurricane activity in the Atlantic. However, the influence of El Nino may be offset by favorable local conditions, including an above-normal West African monsoon and warmer-than-normal sea surface temperatures in the tropical Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea. These conditions provide more energy for storm development.

Speaking with media the Mayor of Belize City, Bernard Wagner, noted that preparation for this season started as the last one ended, "We've been doing preparation [for this] hurricane season throughout the year, and [we're] constantly preparing, when the hurricane season is finished we immediately start to [evaluate] what went

wrong, how can we improve in what area, and the main thing here is about the city being able to respond quickly and having the maintenance plan in terms of our drains."

He noted that the City Council must improve and bolster drains, to ensure that they are connected and flowing to a canal and then the canal to a river and the river back out to the sea.

The 2022 Atlantic Hurricane Season saw 14 named storms, of which eight became hurricanes, with two intensifying into major hurricanes.

Notably, the 2022 season remained active until November; something considered rare as activity usually slows down after October, and unfortunately, On November 2nd, Category 1 Hurricane

Lisa landed near Belize City, causing millions of dollars in damages, with extensive flooding, but fortunately, no casualties.

Some of the most destructive storms in the region included Hurricanes Ian, Fiona, and Nicole, which brought extensive damage to Florida's coast in the United States and Puerto Rico, respectively. Hurricane Ian landed on September 28th as a Category 4 with 150 miles per hour sustained winds, considered the deadliest to strike the Florida coast since 1935. Hurricane Nicole formed on November 7th and landed as a Category 1 storm north of Hutchinson Island, Florida. Finally, hurricane Fiona hit Puerto on September 19th as a Category 1 storm.

## Weh Wi Ga Fi Seh

How 2023 di goh?  
Gi tanks evriday:  
tee, dina, tee.

## Di Pentikaas Gaspl 2023

Laas week, wi mi tank di Anglikan chersch fi put een Kriol eena di laiv schreem a di Pentikaas Sondeh maas pahn Sondeh, May 28. Da-mi di Gaspl reedn Bishop Wright mi ga: Jan, Chapta 20, Vers 19-23. Kriol NKK vais-president, Michael Kemp, mi reed it! Sayk a laas week wi mi taak moa bowt di Joon 3 Flowaz Bank Day, da tudeh now wi di shyaa di Baibl vers dehn:

Saynt Jan, Chapta 20, Vers 19 tu 23.  
"Jeezas apyaa tu ih disaipl dehn"

<sup>19</sup> Da sayhn Sondeh eevnin, di disaipl dehn mi meet op tuge da wahn hows. Dehn mi ga di doa dehn lak op kaa dehn mi frayd fi di Jooish leeda dehn. Sodn-wan, Jeezas mi dehdeh di stan op monks dehn, ahn ih seh, "Pees deh wid unu."

<sup>20</sup> Wen ih don seh dat, ih shoa dehn ih too han dehn ahn ih said. Wen di disaipl dehn si seh dat da-mi di Laad, dehn mi oanli glad.

<sup>21</sup> Jeezas tel dehn agen, "Pees deh wid unu. Sayhn way how mai Faada sen mee, da rait soh Ai di sen unu."

<sup>22</sup> Wen Jeezas don seh dat, ih bloa pahn dehn ahn tel dehn seh, "Mek di Hoali Spirit kohn pahn unu. <sup>23</sup>Enibadi hoofa sin dehn unu fagiv, dehn don fagiv, bot if unu noh fagiv dehn, den dehn sin dehn wahn jos stay rait dehsoh.

Di Gaspl a Kraiss  
Prayz tu Kraiss, wi Laad.

If yu waahn sen een sohnting fu put eena dis Kriol aatiki, eemayl: [sudz142@gmail.com](mailto:sudz142@gmail.com) Pahn tap, yu ku vizit: [www.nationalkriolcouncil.org](http://www.nationalkriolcouncil.org)

## STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In The Estate of Alejandro Cruz Fernandez a.k.a. Alejandro Fernandez.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN Pursuant to Section 36 of the Administration of Estate Act, Chapter 197 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, that all Creditors and other persons having any claims or demands upon or against the Estate of Alejandro Cruz Fernandez a.k.a. Alejandro Fernandez, Deceased, late of No. 25 Carmen Street, Santa Elena, Cayo District, Belize, who died on the 9th day of July, 2017 in whose estate Grant of Probate has been granted to OLDA SHERRARD of Mile 60 George Price Highway, Cayo District, Belize, the lawful Executrix are required to send particulars in writing of their claims or demands to the Executrix of the said estate, C/O ORLANDO A. FERNANDEZ, Attorney-at-Law at P.O Box 236, San Ignacio, Cayo District, Belize and to send such particulars not later than within (3) three months from the date of the 1st publication of the notice, AND NOTICE IS ALSO HEREBY GIVEN that at the expiration of last mentioned date, Executrix will proceed to distribute the assets of the said Alejandro Cruz Fernandez a.k.a. Alejandro Fernandez, deceased, amongst the parties entitled thereto having regard only to the claims or demands of which particulars have been delivered and the Executrix will not be liable for the asset or any part thereof so distributed to any persons of whose claims or demands they shall not then have had notice.

DATED this 29th day of May, 2023

ORLANDO A. FERNANDEZ  
Attorney-at-Law for the Executrix

# PM signs USD\$45M loan agreement for new hospital amidst pushback from health workers

By Javan Flowers

Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño and H.E. Ahmed Al-Khateeb, Saudi Minister of Tourism and Chairman of the board of directors of the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), signed a development loan agreement for USD\$45M to construct a tertiary hospital in Belmopan.

As detailed under the loan agreement, the new tertiary hospital will be equipped with state-of-the-art medical facilities and integrated health services and is expected to benefit approximately 200,000 citizens annually, thus, enhancing the capacity of the local healthcare system by training health personnel from the University of Belize.

Prior to the official signing of the agreement, Briceño, in speaking with the media, underscored the importance of the new hospital. "The truth is that if a hurricane were to hit Belize City, the country [would] lose its only tertiary level hospital." As a result, he explained that the Government would embark on this venture to construct a new hospital in Belmopan to "relieve pressure" from the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital.

Briceño further acknowledged that Belize's only tertiary health institution desperately needs resources and assured Belizeans that through funding from Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), further development of the KHMH would be realized.

While the prime minister offered his vision for the project and assurances to the KHMH, a release issued by the staff of the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital Authority (KHMHA), solely represented by the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital Authority Workers' Union (the "union"), highlighted their grave concern regarding the rationale and timing given for the construction of the proposed tertiary hospital.

In the release, the union vehemently disagrees with the notion that the KHMH would no longer provide adequate care



Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño and H.E. Ahmed Al Khateeb, Saudi Minister of Tourism and Chairman of the board of directors of the Saudi Fund for Development

to Belize's ever-growing population, citing that the existing physical plant structure of the KHMHA was built with the vision for future expansion of the facility to accommodate an ever-growing population.

The union further noted that aside from the institution being constructed with the intent to expand in the future, in its almost 28-year history. "We have not been given a chance by successive governments to reach our full potential. Instead, we have been stymied by political interference in terms of collection of revenue, and our development and ability to serve have been chained to a subvention that has been slow to adjust to the global context of cost."

As it stands, KHMHA currently has a Human Resource shortage of 50 Nurses and 20 Doctors, as well as other healthcare professionals, and, as suggested by KHMHA, the Ministry of Health and Wellness has yet to address the shortage.

Aside from healthcare practitioners, the facility is also experiencing severe shortages of services such as Medical and Nursing services, physiotherapy, Bio-Medical Technicians, imaging services, Laboratory Technicians, Radiographers, and many essential supplies and equipment – that impact quality of healthcare services rendered.

The release continued by noting exactly how a \$90,000,000 investment could strengthen and resolve issues within Belize's healthcare system.

The union explained that the money could be directed towards capacity building for nursing education and the training of doctors and other healthcare workers to reduce staff replacement due to attrition.

It could also be utilized to strengthen and develop its key areas of Internal Medicine, Hemodialysis, Oncology, Cardiology (inclusive of intervention cardiology & Cardiovascular Surgery), Neurology, and Urology, among a laundry list of other areas, which also included bolstering infrastructure, and the structural of the institution to withstand a category-2 hurricane.

## PORT of BELIZE LTD A Port with a Global Perspective VACANCY: JOB OPPORTUNITY

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons to fill the following post in the Operations Department. In the Port's continued effort to promote diversity both males/females are encouraged to apply for the available post.

### TEMPORARY CRANE OPERATOR

**Reports to:** Operations Manager

**Summary of Responsibilities:** The Crane Operator reports to the Operations Manager (OM). He/she works on a roster determined by the vessel schedule and berthing plan. He/she are responsible to safely load/unload cargo ships that are berthed at the pierhead. In house training and mentorship will be provided as required.

#### Job Responsibilities:

- Operate PBL Mobile Harbor Cranes (MHC) at the Pierhead to facilitate the unloading and loading of container/cargo vessels in a safe and efficient manner.
- Operate 'Dragline Crane' as needs arise and directed by Supervisor/Manager
- Assist in operating any other PBL equipment/vehicles when needed and operations/driving duties that may arise from time to time.
- Daily equipment inspection per Checklist, servicing and all preventative maintenance of the equipment as assigned.
- Maintain and update the MHC Logbook with all required relevant information including engine hours / mileage, service and repairs and maintenance.
- Prompt reporting of all faults to the Operations Foreman in order for him to put in a work order to the Mechanical Manager for repairs.
- He/she shall conduct a pre-operation check and test run of the crane to ensure that it is ready and fit for work.
- Responsible for the upkeep of the equipment by assisting with minor maintenance from time to time.
- Assist with refueling the mobile harbor crane (MHC) in preparation for the next operation and park the MHC in the designated area as directed by the Operations Foreman.
- Report all accidents, damage incidents and performance issues immediately to the Operations Foreman on duty.
- Actively multi-skill in order to have ability to operate other PBL equipment including towheads, forklifts, vehicles etc.
- Any other duties and functions, of a related nature that may be assigned from time to time.

#### Job Qualifications/Requirement:

- High School Diploma
- Minimum five (5) years' experience working as a heavy equipment Operator; Crane Operator certification would be an asset
- A valid class E (All) driver's license

#### Skills/Competencies:

- Able to work as a team
- Ethical
- Ability to work independently
- Able to work flexible hours
- Supervisory and leadership skills required
- Proactive in addressing Operational emergencies
- Computer literate

**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, vaccination card, name and phone number of two (2) previous employers.

Applications should be emailed to: [jobapplication@portofbelize.com](mailto:jobapplication@portofbelize.com)  
Closing date for receipt of applications is Friday, June 9th, 2023

## Consultancy to support the preparation of an Organizational Management Strategy and Plan for the Vital Statistics Unit



### **Background:**

The Vital Statistics Unit (VSU) established under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, CAP 157 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, is under the auspices and oversight of the Attorney General's Ministry. The VSU, whose headquarters is located in Belize City, is headed by the Solicitor General as its Registrar, with its daily operations managed by a Deputy Registrar. This governmental unit bears the primary responsibility of being Belize's registry of births, deaths, and marriages and provides for the registration of any other vital statistics.

Considering the importance of vital statistics for national development programs, the Attorney General's Ministry and the E-Governance and Digitalization Unit developed a comprehensive transformation program to address various weaknesses at the VSU such as the inaccessibility of registration centers, inconsistency and inefficiency of processes, no system integration with key stakeholders, lengthy processing times, poor records management, poor statistical reporting, low service awareness, and low customer satisfaction. To strengthen the VSU's capacity to improve customer satisfaction, service awareness, and service quality, there is the need to develop a comprehensive brand and communication strategy.

### **Objectives, Duties and Responsibilities:**

UNDP requires the services of a consultant to develop a comprehensive organizational management strategy and plan for the Vital Statistics Unit.

### **Expected Outputs and Deliverables**

The following will be the expected outputs:

- Deliverable 1:** Work plan, two weeks after contract signing, indicating all relevant activities, proposed timeline, and responsibilities to take place under the consultancy.
- Deliverable 2:** Draft assessment report
- Deliverable 3:** Draft Organizational Management Strategy
- Deliverable 4:** Final version of the Organizational Management Strategy. This version must include comments provided by the Ministry and UNDP.

### **Qualification, Experience and Skills:**

- A minimum of a bachelor's degree in the field of business administration, organizational development, and/or management or in a related field
- Minimum of 5 years of experience in strategic planning
- Minimum of 3 years of experience in organizational and change management.
- Proven experience in developing organizational/strategic plans and strategies.
- Excellent command of written and oral English language, and interpersonal skills.

### **Information link:**

[https://procurement-notice.undp.org/view\\_negotiation.cfm?nego\\_id=6225](https://procurement-notice.undp.org/view_negotiation.cfm?nego_id=6225) or <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/201856>

### **Submission of Application Package:**

This specific tender is managed via the new supplier portal system of UNDP. If you are interested in submitting a bid for this tender, you must subscribe following the instructions in the user guide. If you have not registered a profile with this system, you can do so by following the link for **Supplier Registration**.

If you already have a supplier profile, please login to the **Supplier Portal**, then search for the negotiation using the reference number **UNDP-BLZ-00018**, following the instructions in the **user guide**.

**Assistance in Registering:** Call Procurement Associate **822-2688** during normal working hours.

**Deadline for Application: Tuesday, June 6th, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.**

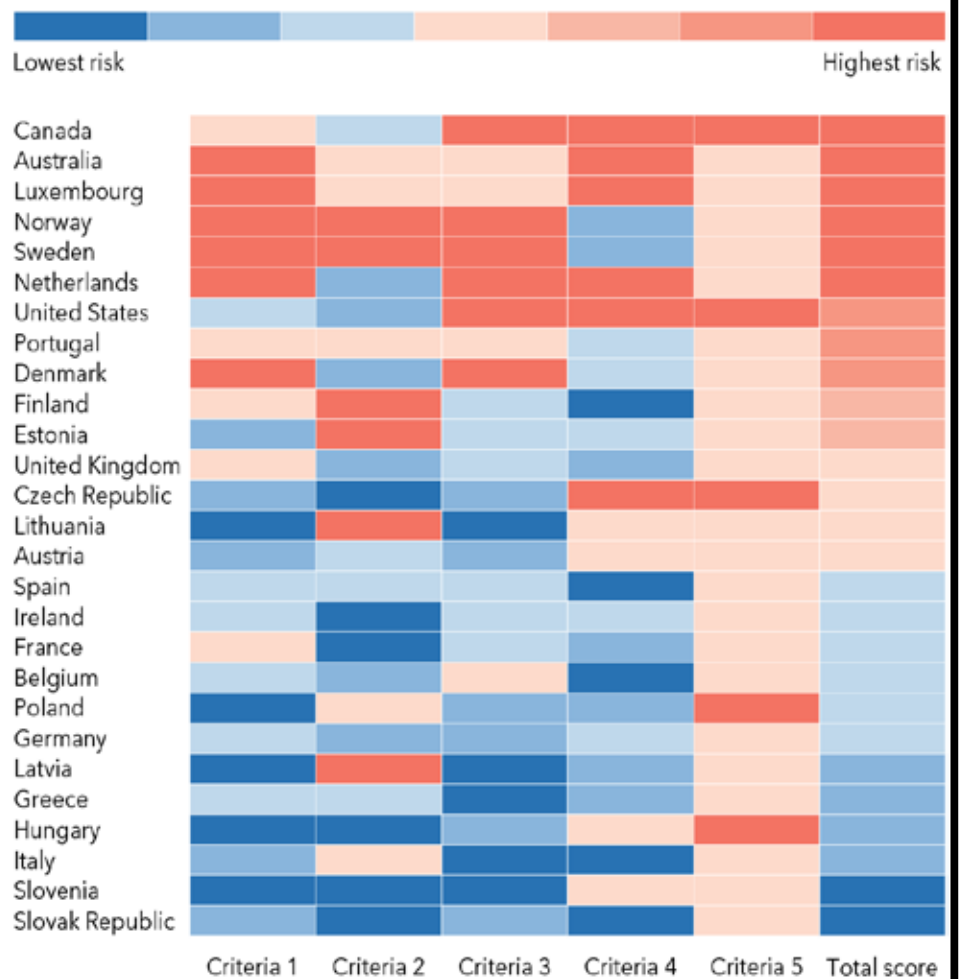
*UNDP is committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender, nationality and culture. Individuals from minority groups, indigenous groups and persons with disabilities are equally encouraged to apply. All submissions will be treated with the strictest of confidence.*

*UNDP does not tolerate sexual exploitation and abuse, any kind of harassment, including sexual harassment, and discrimination.*

# How Falling Home Prices Could Strain Financial Markets as Interest Rates Rise

## Housing market risk indicators

Economies with high household debt and more floating-rate loans have greater exposure to higher mortgage payments, with heightened risk of defaults.



Sources: BIS; ECB; Hypostat; OECD; and IMF staff calculations.

Note: Criteria 1 = households' outstanding debt as a percentage of gross disposable income, 2022:Q2; Criteria 2 = share of debt outstanding at variable interest rate (fixed rate up to one year), 2022:Q3; Criteria 3 = share of households owning home with a mortgage, 2020; Criteria 4 = cumulative real house price growth, 2020:Q1-22:Q1; Criteria 5 = cumulative policy rate changes, 2022:Q1-22:Q3. For each criteria, countries obtain a score between 0 and 4 reflecting their position in the cross-country distribution. The total score is the sum of the individual criteria scores.

IMF

By *Nina Biljanovska*

The pandemic propelled housing prices to record levels in many countries, especially advanced economies, amid low interest rates and tight property supplies. Then prices started falling late last year in many countries, while others saw the pace of gains slow.

The deterioration was more pronounced in advanced economies with signs of stretched valuations before and during the pandemic. With central banks raising interest rates to contain inflation, the average mortgage rate reached 6.8 percent in advanced economies in late 2022, more than doubling from the start of last year. Now, if borrowing costs keep rising or remain elevated for longer, demand and prices are likely to weaken further.

As the Chart of the Week shows, countries with high levels of household debt and a large share of borrowing issued at floating rates are more exposed to higher mortgage payments resulting in a higher risk of defaults. Canada, Australia, Norway, and Sweden are at greatest risk, according to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, a group of 38 mostly advanced economies. On the upside, in countries where housing prices grew rapidly, price declines in the runup to the current monetary policy tightening cycle could improve affordability—as we outlined in the World Economic Outlook published in April.

Meanwhile there are important differences between current conditions and the global financial crisis

a decade and a half ago. In most cases, while it is unlikely that falling home prices will spark a financial crisis, a sharp drop in house prices could dim the economic outlook. And the build-up of vulnerabilities warrants close monitoring in coming years—and possibly even intervention by policymakers.

Banks are better capitalized than before the global financial crisis, and underwriting standards in many advanced economies are tighter today than before the crisis.

However, the average household debt-to-income ratio across countries is about the same as in 2007, driven mainly by households in economies that managed to escape the brunt of the global financial crisis and have since run up substantial borrowing.

# PM Briceño delivers keynote address at Leaders' Summit in South Korea

By Javan Flowers

Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, on the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Korea, delivered the keynote address at the World Climate Industry Expo (WCE) Leaders' Summit in Busan, South Korea.

In his address, under the theme "Global Cooperation and Solidarity for the Fight against Climate Change in the Ocean," Briceño underscored the threatening effects of climate change on food security, the vulnerability of the livelihoods of humanity, the annual losses that Belize's gross domestic product (GDP) suffered and the unique sovereign-debt refinancing model that is the Blue Bond.

Briceño proposed that nations view ocean solutions as climate solutions, pointing to their importance as food security and biodiversity solutions. He further stated that to reverse the effects, "brain thrusts" must be developed to respond to the fundamental question: "How do we harness our achievements and accomplishments to scale finance in conservation that matters for our oceans and our people?"

Briceño concluded his speech by emphasizing to leaders that we can steer the planet toward a sustainable and resilient future by taking decisive and bold steps. Adding that nations must rise above self-interest and work together to combat climate change for the sake of the oceans, vulnerable and poor populations, and future generations.

While in Busan, Briceño's delegation also met with Dr. Frank Rijsberman, the director general of the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), who invited Belize to explore the



PM John Briceño delivers keynote address at Leaders' Summit in South Korea.

benefits of capacity-building and technical assistance with the aim of maximizing climate finance in Belize.

The GGGI was established as an international intergovernmental organization in 2012 with a vision of a low-carbon resilient world and supporting its members in transforming their economies into a green growth economic model.

Briceño and his delegation also visited the Green Climate Fund (GCF) headquarters. Their discussions centered on improving the approval process of the Project Preparation Facility, projects proposed by Belize that will be going to the Board of Governors for approval, the accreditation of the Development Finance Corporation, and the re-accreditation of the National Accredited Entity, the Protected Areas Conservation Trust, and the Regional Accredited Entity.

The Belize delegation concluded their day with a working dinner meeting hosted by H.E. Hyeon Jenny Kim, Ambassador and Deputy Minister of Climate Change in Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Prime Minister Briceño extends

his gratitude to Prime Minister Han Duck-soo and the Government and people of the Republic of Korea for their hospitality and for hosting this critical summit that focuses on moving forward in the face of climate change for all people and the planet.

Also in attendance were Hon. Eamon Courtenay Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration, and Dr. Osmond Martinez, Chief Executive Officer in the Ministry of Economic Development.



## VACANCY:JOB OPPORTUNITY

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons to fill the following post in the Operations Department. In the Port's continued effort to promote diversity both males/females are encouraged to apply for the available post.

### TEMPORARY OPERATOR (TOWHEAD)

**Reports to:** Operations Manager

**summary of Responsibilities:** The primary duties of the Temporary Operator (towhead) are to safely operate and maneuver towhead truck and chassis around the container yard and pier, safely transporting containers (20', 40' 45') and flat racks with out-of-gauge (OOG) cargo.

**Job Responsibilities:**

He/she is responsible for to safely drive within the facility and abide by PBL speed limits and safety measures put in place. In house training will be provided.

- Check, fuel and service Towheads before commencement of vessel
- Prompt reporting of all faults to the Cargo Operations Manager in order for him to put in a work order to the Mechanical Manager for repairs.
- Daily equipment inspection per Checklist, servicing and all preventative maintenance of the equipment as assigned
- Maintain and update the Container Stacker Logbook with all required relevant information including engine hours / mileage, repairs and maintenance.
- Position and fuel equipment (both stacker and towheads) at allocated time as coordinated with Technical Dept.
- Operate towheads to facilitate loading and unloading of container/bulk vessels from Pierhead to yard and vice versa.
- Assist with stripping of containers at the warehouse as required
- Report all accidents and damage incidents immediately to the Operations Supervisor on Duty. Take pictures of the accident scene in order to assist with the investigation.
- Actively multi-skill in order to have ability to operate other PBL equipment including vehicles, towheads, forklifts and ultimately stackers.
- Wearing proper PPE at all times, and report any safety non-compliance issues to the Operations Foreman.
- At the end of operations ensure the towheads are parked in its designated area as assigned.
- Any other duties of a related nature assigned from time to time.

**Job Qualifications/Requirement:**

- High School Diploma
- Minimum five (5) years' experience working as a heavy equipment Operator
- Experience operating container handling equipment such as forklift, container stackers and/or Crane Operator certification would be an asset
- A valid class E (All) driver's license

**Skills/Competencies:**

- Able to work as a team
- Ethical
- Ability to work independently
- Able to work flexible hours
- Proactive in identifying operational improvements and addressing operational emergencies
- Computer literate

**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, vaccination card, name and phone number of two (2) previous employers.

Applications should be emailed to: [jobapplication@portofbelize.com](mailto:jobapplication@portofbelize.com)  
Closing date for receipt of applications is Friday, June 9th, 2023

# BEL to become first billion-dollar company in Belize

By Javan Flowers

The Belize Electricity Limited (BEL) has proposed to invest \$527 million over the next five years to bolster its infrastructure dramatically and once this ambitious plan is realized, it is expected that BEL will become the first billion-dollar company in Belize.

During BEL's announcement, held at their headquarters in Belize City, CEO John Mencias said, "We need to build a modern services infrastructure that's 21st century, but what does that mean? It means we have to invest more, and we are proposing to invest \$527 million over the next five years."

Mencias continued and explained that if the company accomplishes the very ambitious plan, it is anticipated that the unit costs of power will fall due to the addition and



*E. Andrew Marshalleck - BEL's Chairman (Board of Directors)*

introduction of solar photovoltaic (PV) energy batteries, over the period, to the national electricity grid.

With BEL's 4,000 miles of transmission and distribution lines, the company's overall worth of fixed and non-fixed assets is valued currently at \$720 million, more significant than the assets of Belize Telemedia Ltd and Belize Water Service, making BEL the

largest commercial Enterprise in the country.

BEL maintains the position of being a green-energy leader citing that of the energy produced, 47% was obtained from Comisión Federal de Electricidad (CFE), while 53% was produced locally. Of that, 92% of electricity created from local energy sources were renewable, allowing BEL to top rates across North and

South America and the Caribbean.

As a result of the green energy savings and the relationship with CFE, BEL has managed to maintain electricity prices on average 40 cents per-

kilowatt-hour over the past 15 years, "to put that in perspective for you, over the past 15 years, the prices of everything in Belize has increased by 25% [while] electricity prices have remained the same," BEL's CEO highlighted.

Mencias further noted that BEL doesn't only offer lower prices on average than El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras but lower prices than ten states in the US, including New York, California, Hawaii, Alaska, Connecticut, as well as Australia, Japan, and almost the entire EU despite the company battling odds that "tend to push up the price of electricity."

The company

aims to increase reliability by building a more modern energy services infrastructure to then support Belizean industries. And in so doing, BEL is already anticipating to invest \$98 million this year into new and pending projects, such as submarine cables connecting Belize's major islands, among other projects.

Furthermore, it is these infrastructural developments on their assets that will see BEL's total assets grow from \$720 million at the start of the period to one billion dollars at the end of the period, thus paving the way for BEL to become the first billion-dollar company in terms of the assets deployed on the ground.



## SERVICE CONTRACT ANNOUNCEMENT

The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) invites applicants to submit proposals for a service contract to complete a WHO Global Policy Survey on Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (SRMNCAH) and Violence Against Women.

**Duration of contract:** June 19 – July 18, 2023

**Contractor Profile:** Professional should have the following:

- Education in public health or a health-related area.
- At least three years of experience in managerial or clinical position, working in reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child or adolescent health.
- Demonstrate strong communication and analytical skills.
- Excellent understanding of the maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health services as well as sexual and reproductive services of Belize.
- Be detail-oriented, pro-active, self-directed, and results-oriented.
- Background or previous experience conducting technical research.

**Deadline:** Interested applicants should submit the following to [blzmail@paho.org](mailto:blzmail@paho.org); cc: [contrero@paho.org](mailto:contrero@paho.org) no later than **June 7, 2023**:

- Cover letter
- Curriculum Vitae
- Financial proposal

For further details visit our website <https://www.paho.org/en/service-contracts>. Only submissions that meet all the evaluation criteria will be contacted.



# Heart • Mind • Soul

## 1 billion teens and young adults risk hearing loss from listening devices

More than one billion teens and young adults worldwide may be at risk for hearing loss, a new review study suggests.

“These findings highlight the urgent need to implement policy focused on safe listening habits worldwide in order to promote hearing loss prevention,” the researchers wrote in their study, published Nov. 15 in the journal *BMJ Global Health*.

People’s risk for hearing loss from noise exposure depends on how loud and how long the exposure is — even a single, very loud noise can cause hearing loss, but more often, hearing loss occurs from repeated exposures to loud sounds over time, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Young people in particular may be at risk for hearing loss because they use personal listening devices, such as mobile phones or portable audio players, and because of their attendance of loud events at entertainment venues, the researchers said.

Previous studies have found that, when using personal listening devices, teens and young adults commonly choose volumes as high as 105 decibels (db), and that the average sound at entertainment venues can range from 104 to 112 db, the researchers said. That’s well above safe listening levels, or levels that are unlikely to cause hearing damage, which the researchers define as 80 db for eight hours a day.

(To put things in perspective, normal conversation is about 60 db, a washing machine or dishwasher is about 70 db, and heavy traffic that you hear from inside a car is about 80 to 85 db, according to the CDC.)

At higher decibel levels, the period of time

that a person can safely listen to the noise is shorter—for example, at 92 db, the period of safe listening is 2.5 hours; at 98 db, the period of safe listening is 38 minutes, and at 101 db, the period of safe listening is just 19 minutes, the researchers said.

In the new review, the researchers analyzed information from 33 studies that included a total of 19,046 individuals ages 12 to 34 years old from 20 countries. About half of these studies examined young peoples’ use of personal listening devices and the volume level they prefer on these devices. The other half focused on noise exposure at entertainment venues.

Overall, the researchers found that 24% of young people in these studies were exposed to unsafe noise levels using personal listening devices, and 48% were exposed to unsafe noise levels at entertainment venues. Based on these findings and the total number of people ages 12 to 34 worldwide (2.8 billion), the researchers estimate that 670 million people in this age group would be at risk for hearing loss from using personal listening devices, and 1.35 billion from attending loud events at entertainment venues.

Exposure to loud noise can fatigue the sensory cells of the ear and result in temporary hearing loss or ringing in the ears (tinnitus), according to World Health Organization (WHO). Over time, repeated exposure to loud noise may cause permanent damage to the sensory cells, leading to permanent hearing loss, according to WHO.

To reduce this exposure risk, the WHO recommends that, when using personal listening devices, people choose a volume that’s below



60% of the maximum level. In addition, some devices and smartphone apps can help you monitor your noise exposure and alert you to unsafe noise levels. What’s more, people should take breaks from noise exposure and wear earplugs when in noisy environments such as entertainment venues, according to WHO.



CENTRAL BANK  
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[www.centralbank.org.bz](http://www.centralbank.org.bz)

**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Central Bank of Belize Denounces Proposed Special Meeting by Former Principals of St. Francis Xavier Credit Union Limited**

**Belize City, 31 May 2023:** The Governor of the Central Bank of Belize, in his capacity as Registrar of Credit Unions (Registrar), advises that it has come to his attention that former principals of St. Francis Xavier Credit Union (SFXCU) are calling a special meeting on 4 June 2023 at Centro Escolar Mexico, San Roman Village. The Registrar further advises that the former principals of SFXCU are not authorised to call any meeting on behalf of SFXCU, and such action is not in accordance with the Credit Unions Act (CUA).

Members of SFXCU are reminded that on 10 March 2023, the Registrar appointed Mr. Martin Marshalleck as Administrator to SFXCU. Mr. Marshalleck is responsible to the Registrar for the conduct of the business of SFXCU and is to carry out all orders and directions of the Registrar with respect to the credit union. Pursuant to section 61(8) of the CUA, the Registrar has approved for the Administrator to call a special meeting of members in June 2023 to report on the affairs of the credit union and the steps taken by the Administrator to protect their equities.

The Registrar thanks members of SFXCU for their commitment and understanding as the Administrator and staff of SFXCU continue to work arduously and honestly to protect their interests.

- ENDS -

ISSUED BY:  
THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
CENTRAL BANK OF BELIZE

1 GABOUREL LANE.  
BELIZE CITY, BELIZE  
T: +501 223 6194



# Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the aid sector

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, PSEA, constitutes policies and practices that apply to all staff at UN agencies, UN partners or Implementing Partners, and even volunteers of these agencies and other associates. What do these policies and practices address? These address Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, SEA, on the part of humanitarian workers towards beneficiaries.

As explained by UNHCR, it aims “to

reduce the risk of, prevent and respond to SEA by UN personnel, NGO partners, or other entities and persons involved in providing humanitarian or development assistance, including government staff, contractors, and refugee incentive workers, to ensure that allegations of SEA are reported and responded to in a timely and appropriate manner, and that victims of SEA are referred to support and assistance needed in line with a victim centred approach”.

As an Implementing Partner to UNHCR, the Human Rights Commission of Belize, HRCB, is committed to ensuring that its staff, volunteers, contractors and other associates comply with these policies and placing the rights and dignity of survivors at the forefront. The HRCB has established its PSEA policy and is taking all necessary actions to prevent, mitigate the risks Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and respond adequately to reports of sexual

misconduct.

But what is Sexual Exploitation and Abuse? As defined by UNHCR, Sexual Exploitation is “any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes, including but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.” Sexual Abuse is defined as “the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal

or coercive conditions. It includes sexual slavery, pornography, child abuse and sexual assault.”

But there are other instances of sexual misconduct within an office. This is considered Sexual Harassment and “is defined as any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation. When such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment may occur in the workplace or in connection with work. While typically involving a pattern of conduct, sexual harassment may take the form of a single incident. In assessing whether the conduct causes offence, the perspective of the victim shall be considered.”

So, what’s the difference? UNHCR specifies that “in the case of SEA, the victim is a person of concern, or a member of the local or host community. In the case of SH, the victim is a fellow humanitarian worker, whether working with UNHCR or with another agency or partner organization. In both cases of SEA and SH, the perpetrator is a fellow humanitarian or development worker. Both forms of sexual misconduct are unacceptable, and UNHCR is committed to eradicating them from our operations and offices and ensuring that all victims receive the support they need.”


Any organisation partnering with a UN agency must ensure that these Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment policies are in place and that volunteers, other subcontractors and the communities they serve are educated or made aware of such protocols. These not only include the policies but also mandatory trainings of partners and associates. Additional to this, that

partner organizations have in place proper mechanisms and procedures for personnel, beneficiaries, and communities, including children, to report SEA allegations. These should also comply with core standards for reporting which include safety, confidentiality, transparency and accessibility.

Another important part of all this is that the reporting mechanism be victim-centred and “support is automatically provided to victims unless they choose otherwise, shifting the onus from the individual to the organization”. As UNHCR explains, “Victim-Centred Approach is a way of engaging with victims that prioritizes listening, avoids re-traumatization, and systematically focuses on their safety, rights, well-being, expressed needs and choices. The purpose is to give back as much control to victims as feasible and ensure empathetic delivery of services in a non-judgmental manner”.

As a partner to UNHCR, the Human Rights Commission is committed to ensuring the safety and protection of our beneficiaries. Last week, the Commission held a training with its staff and partner organizations on PSEA. The Commission, as an agency that promotes, defends and upholds the rights of each person and supports these protocols ensuring respect; non-discrimination; safety; confidentiality; informed consent; support and prevention when it comes to sexual exploitation and abuse.

**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.**



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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**BUYING RATE OF THE UNITED STATES DOLLAR**

**Belize City, 24 May 2023:** The public is hereby informed that, in accordance with Regulation 32 of the Exchange Control Regulations, 2003, the Central Bank of Belize has fixed the **buying rate** of the United States Dollar at a rate of BZ\$2.00 to US\$1.00 for all United States monetary instruments, including currency notes, commencing 1 June 2023.

Therefore, all transactions involving the purchase and sale of all United States monetary instruments, including currency notes, must be conducted as follows:

**ALL UNITED STATES MONETARY INSTRUMENTS**

<b>Central Bank of Belize</b>		<b>Authorised Dealers</b>	
Buying Rate	Selling Rate	Buying Rate	Selling Rate
BZ\$2.00	BZ\$2.0063	BZ\$2.00	BZ\$2.0175

Note that this change aligns the buying rates for US currency notes and other monetary instruments at BZ\$2.00 to US\$1.00.

The Central Bank of Belize encourages individuals and firms to transact their holdings of United States currency and monetary instruments with an authorised dealer, subject to regulations under the Money Laundering and Terrorism (Prevention) Act, 2020.

**- ENDS -**

ISSUED BY:  
THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
CENTRAL BANK OF BELIZE

1 GABOUREL LANE.  
BELIZE CITY, BELIZE  
T: +501 223 6194  
E: [communications@centralbank.org.bz](mailto:communications@centralbank.org.bz)



## SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE REQUEST FOR BIDS - WORKS One Envelope Bidding Process

### Supply of Goods for 115kV Transmission Line Rehabilitation Energy Resilience for Climate Adaptation (ERCAP)

The Government of Belize (GOB) has been allocated grant funds (the Grant) from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), which are administered by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) and executed by Belize Electricity Limited (BEL) in conjunction with the Ministry of Public Service, Energy and Public Utility (MPSEPU) and the National Meteorological Service (NMS), in an amount equivalent to USD 8 million, towards the cost of an Energy Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation Project. A portion of the proceeds of the Grant will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for which this specific procurement notice is issued. Payments by the World Bank will be made only at the request of BEL, and upon approval by the World Bank, and will be subject in all respects to the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement. The Grant Agreement prohibits withdrawal from the financing account for the purpose of any payment to persons or entities, or for any import of goods, if such payment or import, to the knowledge of the World Bank, is prohibited by a decision of the United Nations Security Council taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. No party other than GOB shall derive any rights from the Grant Agreement or have any claim to the proceeds of the Grant.

BEL now invites electronic Bids from eligible Bidders for the **Supply of Goods for 115kV Single Circuit Transmission Line Rehabilitation from Westlake Substation to Maskall Substation, Belize.**

Bidding will be conducted through International Competitive Bidding (ICB) using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" dated January 2011 (revised July 2014) ("Procurement Regulations") and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.

Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the following person:

**Ms. Carolyn L. Crawford,**  
Procurement Consultant  
ERCAP Project Management Unit,  
Belize Electricity Limited  
E-mail: Carolyn.Crawford@bel.com.bz

The bidding document in English may be requested by interested Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address above. The document will be sent electronically upon this request.

Bids must be received at the email address below on or before **Tuesday, June 20, 2023, by 3:00 pm and will be opened on the same day at 3:30pm sharp**, Belize time.

#### Submission of bids by electronic email (EM):

A PDF copy of the bid should be submitted by EM. The PDF copy should be encrypted, or password protected. The email should not be encrypted but only the attachment shall be encrypted, or password protected.

#### The procedure for submission of bid is:

- A. The zipped file is to be sent to Manager, Procurement Department at **bidsubmittal@bel.com.bz**.
- B. Password or encryption key should be sent along with the bid to the same bid submission email address listed below.
- C. Bidders will receive a confirmation email from the BEL once their bid is received.
- D. Bidders should ensure that the bid document(s) are not corrupt or affected by any computer virus that may possibly deny an access to the files. BEL will not be responsible for such corrupt files which may deny access during the bid opening process.
- E. The maximum file size for each email will be 30 MB. Any email with an attachment above this size will bounce back. Hence, Bidders must ensure the attachments do not exceed the 30 MB threshold.
- F. Email submissions should be clearly labelled in its subject with the following: **Bid for the Supply of Goods for 115kV Transmission Line Rehabilitation- ERCAP - "include Bidders name or Company name"**.

Bids submitted electronically shall only be opened publicly at the Bid Opening time mentioned above on **Tuesday, June 20, 2023**, in the presence of bidders and/or their representatives who have submitted a bid. Bid opening will be held virtually using Microsoft (MS) Teams. The link to the MS-Teams bid opening invite will be shared with all Bidders prior to the bid opening date and all Bidders are encouraged to participate therein. **Late Bids shall be rejected.**

All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid-Securing Declaration.

The address referred to above is:

**Manager**  
Procurement Department  
Belize Electricity Limited  
2 ½ Miles Phillip Goldson Highway  
Belize City, Belize  
Email: bidsubmittal@bel.com.bz  
Telephone: +501-227-0954

BEL reserves the right to reject late bids or to cancel the bid opening session in its entirety. It will not be bound to assign any reason for not engaging the services of any bidder and will not defray any costs incurred by any bidder in the preparation and submission of their bid.



## 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 invest **Twenty Million Dollars (BZ\$20,000,000.00)** in Series 2 Debentures being offered by the Belize Water Services Limited (BWSL). Proceeds from the Debenture issue will be used for key capital projects. The Debentures have a term of ten (10) years and a coupon rate of 4.50% per annum payable semi-annually.

# THE DEFINITIVE AGREEMENT- The good and the bad

*Cont'd from pg. 4*

Definitive Agreement was only a Memorandum of Understanding between Port Magical and then administration. Obviously, the key players in the previous administration were fully aware of the Definitive Agreement, and are just playing good politics now by denying absolutely any knowledge of it prior to the last general election.

The previous administration's betrayal of the trust of the people with the Definitive Agreement is symptomatic of their thirteen years reign in government. The Supreme Court found the former Prime Minister guilty of spending over \$1 billion dollars of taxpayers money with absolutely no permission from parliament as is required by law for any spending over \$10 million. And during all that illegal spending spree not a single Minister at the time raised any concern about the need for accountability and openness in government and they treated the DA the same way.

Due to self-interest members of Cabinet who knew about Definitive Agreement acted like the three monkeys who heard nothing, saw nothing, and did nothing.

For maximum development from cruise tourism, it's mandatory that Belize have proper docking facilities for cruise vessels large and small. Tendering is too costly, too risky, and too time consuming for cruise lines, who want to give their guests the best experience at any port including Belize.

We must all work together to make proper docking facilities for cruise ships a reality in Belize as soon as possible.

We must also recognize persons, who are looking after special interest in tourism instead of opportunities to make life better for all Belizeans.

One of the main reasons why Port of Belize bulk cargo and cruise tourism project was denied approval was, because of concerns about for the safety of reef and the population near its development if it was allowed to store massive amount of dredged material in the sea near the development and inland on its property nearby.

It has now been revealed that with the Definitive Agreement Port Magical would need to dredge far more material that Port of Belize, is closer to the reef than Port of Belize, and would have to dump all its dredge material into sea as the development is miles from the shore.

Interestingly also, pointing to all sorts of reasons environmentalists have voiced bitter opposition to the request of Stake Bank to build a necessary causeway from the island to the shore which is a distance of approximately three miles. On the other hand, Port Magical would have to build a causeway of almost eight miles to enable cruise ship passengers to travel by bus and other land transport inland to enjoy the other beautiful parts of Belize.

Given what Stake Bank is experiencing with its request for permission to build it's necessary causeway, on what basis does Port Magical believe it will get approval to build a necessary causeway that would be more than twice the length of the causeway needed by Stake Bank .

For maximum benefit from tourism in all its areas, we must always have leaders who protect the rights and interest of the Belizean people and the country Belize at all times.

**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.**



CENTRAL BANK  
of BELIZE

[www.centralbank.org.bz](http://www.centralbank.org.bz)

## COMUNICADO DE PRENSA

PARA PUBLICACIÓN INMEDIATA

### The Central Bank of Belize denuncia la propuesta de reunión extraordinaria de los Exdirectores de Saint Francis Xavier Credit Union Limited

**Belize City, 31 de mayo de 2023:** El Gobernador de Central Bank of Belize, en su capacidad de Registrador de Uniones de Crédito (Registrador), informa que ha llegado a su conocimiento que los Exdirectores de Saint Francis Xavier Credit Union (SFXCU) están convocando una reunión especial el 4 de junio de 2023 en el Centro Escolar México, en la aldea de San Román. El Registrador informa, además, que los Exdirectores de SFXCU no están autorizados a convocar una reunión en nombre de SFXCU, y que dicha acción no es en conformidad con la Ley de Uniones de Crédito (Credit Unions Act (CUA)).

Le recordamos a los miembros de SFXCU que el 10 de marzo de 2023, el Registrador nombró al Sr. Martin Marshalleck como Administrador de SFXCU. El Sr. Marshalleck es responsable ante el Registrador y por la dirección de los negocios de SFXCU y debe cumplir con todas las órdenes y instrucciones del Registrador con respecto a la unión de crédito. En conformidad con el artículo 61(8) de la CUA, el Registrador ha aprobado que el Administrador convoque una reunión especial de miembros en junio de 2023 para informar sobre los asuntos de la unión de crédito y las medidas adoptadas por el Administrador para la protección de las acciones de los miembros.

El Registrador agradece a los miembros de SFXCU por su compromiso y comprensión mientras el Administrador y el personal de SFXCU continúan trabajando ardua y honestamente para proteger sus intereses.

- FIN -

PUBLICADO POR:  
The Office of the Governor

1 GABOUREL LANE  
Belize City, Belize  
T: +501 223 6194

# CEMO hosts symposium under the theme 'Building Disaster Resilience'

By Javan Flowers

The Belize City Council, through the City Emergency Management Organization (CEMO), hosted a symposium under the theme "Building Disaster Resilience!"

As the 2023 Atlantic Hurricane Season begins, the symposium served as a platform that convened stakeholders in order to address the gaps identified after the impact of Hurricane Lisa and to then facilitate the dissemination of valuable insights and best practices.

The event aimed to equip disaster response agencies with essential knowledge to enhance their response capabilities during emergencies. The symposium saw informative presentations from key stakeholders, such as CEMO, the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), Belize Electricity Ltd, Belize Red Cross, Belize Telemedia Ltd, National MET Service, and the Ministry of Sustainable



Development, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management.

One of the areas raised for discussion was shelter management and the lessons learned from having to shelter 1,653 residents.

Melanie Dawson, CEMO Liaison Officer for the Belize City Council, noted the preparations that had been taken to accommodate those

in need of refuge. "Basically what we do [is at] beginning of the year we do our shelter inspection to make sure everything is in place. [Ensuring that] the shelter is structurally sound and to make sure we have enough [resources] for the capacity of each shelter. We also have backup shelters, so if we had both shelters in the Lake-I division filled, we

CEMO hosts symposium under the theme Building Disaster Resilience 1

would have used our backup shelters."

Dawson also gave an overview of the cleanup efforts that the council undertook across the city following the all-clear. She explained that there was an excessive of 63,630 tons of solid waste removed from the streets of Belize City during the operation – an

immense volume that has been confirmed by NEMO, with the Belize City Council, to be National record.

Dawson expressed her gratitude to the various stakeholders that aided the effort. "Without having help from the different stakeholders, we couldn't [have] managed [to] clean up the city in a very swift movement like

we did. So [we are grateful] we had help from the MIDH, the Belize Waste Control, [as well as] the cane farmers."



## S U D O K U

Medium Puzzle

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

Answer to Puzzle

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

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.

# The Community Baboon Sanctuary and the CBS Women's Conservation Group – Working to Protect the Belizean Forest

By Wildlife Conservation Society- Belize

The Community Baboon Sanctuary, CBS for short, has been a household name in Belize for over 30 years. A protected area established in 1985 and known for conservation of the black howler monkeys and created to help address the threats of unsustainable agriculture practices and logging. Founded by primatologist Dr. Robert Horwich, and local landowner, Fallet Young, and twelve other landowners, with five main goals, education, conservation, community development, ecotourism, and research. The CBS encompasses seven communities including St. Paul's Bank, Willows Bank, Double Head Cabbage, Bermudian Landing, Isabella Bank, Scotland Halfmoon, and Flowers Bank.

Visitors to the center learn about the importance of biodiversity, sustainability, and the economic development of Bermudian Landing and surrounding communities; the latter being the main role of the Community Baboon Sanctuary Women's Conservation Group (CBSWCG), which



The Community Baboon Sanctuary is located 31 miles NW of Belize City in Belize River Valley (Photo © Trip Advisor)



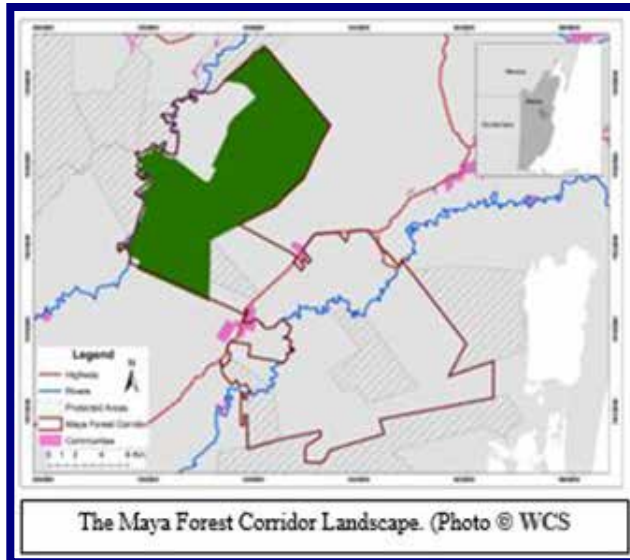
Howler monkey population has increased from 500 in 1985 to over 6,000 currently. (Photo © Trip Advisor)

was founded in 1998. Formed and led by women from these seven communities, the CBSWCG has focused its efforts on improving livelihoods while safeguarding vulnerable wildlife populations through the protection of forest. The group supports the conservation of the black howler monkey, or baboons, in a 6000-hectare sanctuary. The 200-plus landowners voluntarily participate in conservation efforts via a pledge system. Since its inception,

CBSWCG to date has produced a sustainable land management plan with environmental, economic, and social benefits that extend beyond the protected area. The CBSWCG has been working to help women in the Belize River Valley area, buffer communities for the Maya Forest Corridor, since 1998. Jessie Young is the founder and president of the CBSWCG. Mrs. Young says that since its inception there has been a large increase in the population of howler monkeys. "Our



Educational Activity by the CBSWCG. (Photo © CBSWCG)



The Maya Forest Corridor Landscape. (Photo © WCS)

success in the increase of howler monkey populations from 500 in 1985 to over 6,000 today, is due largely to the combined efforts of landowners and the CBSWCG. Landowners have also increased from 12 to 100 since CBS's humble beginnings. It is only through this important collaboration that we have been able to address sustainable forest management in the Belize River Valley area," Young admits. The Community Baboon Sanctuary

Women's Conservation Group spawned a new era for other women-led community groups in the area and was influential in the establishment of the Flowers Bank Community Group Cohune Oil Processing Facilities, as well as the Dauntless Designers Women's Group in Double Head Cabbage. Additionally, the Women's Group has invested over \$1m in conservation, education, and community development to protect Belize's forest. The CBSWCG distributes small grants to entrepreneurs, which helps to strengthen existing businesses in the area with a focus on those initiatives that promote sustainable use of our natural resources increasing benefits to people and biodiversity conservation. These grant initiatives include training in small business management, organizational management, record keeping, accounting, and business plan development. Youths are also a focus for the Women's groups. They have provided scholarships for primary and high school students and hold summer camps to inform children

about the importance of biodiversity and conservation efforts in the area. "We are also engaged in alternative livelihoods projects such as backyard gardening, tilapia farming, pigs and chicken rearing, and skills training," Mrs. Young boasted.

Mrs. Young encourages other similar groups and the public "to join our efforts to protect our forests by visiting us or making a contribution to our ongoing work."

She says she is excited to know that the CBSWCG will be collaborating with WCS, under the Small Donations Program "Restoring the Community Baboon Sanctuary Landscape Through Implementation of Climate-Smart Agriculture Practices and Riparian Forest Regeneration, which is cofounded by the EU-Desira project.

The Wildlife Conservation Society has been actively working in the Maya Forest Corridor Landscape for almost two years, with support from organizations and institutions such as the Belize Zoo and Tropical Education Center, Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Foundation for Wildlife Conservation, and the Belize Maya Forest Trust. The CBSWCG is also one of WCS's important ally in the work to protect Belize's Forest

WCS's works to improve forest sustainability, biodiversity, and protect important species, particularly those that are endangered, such as Baird's Tapir, the Central American River Turtle, locally known as the hicatee; and the yellow-headed parrot, to name a few. This work is being funded and co-funded by Whitley Fund for Nature and the European Union from the EU-Desira and the Five Great Forests of Mesoamerica.

## VACANCY

The Social Security Board invites applications from suitably qualified persons to fill the role of **MANAGER, HR STRATEGIES** in its Human Resources Services Division, SSB Headquarters, Belmopan, Belize.

**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:**  
Bachelor's Degree in Human Resources Management, Human Resources Development or other closely related discipline with five (5) years supervisory experience, preferably in Human Resources. Certification in one or more areas of Human Resources specialization would be considered an asset.

Visit our website at [www.socialsecurity.org.bz/careers/](http://www.socialsecurity.org.bz/careers/) to view further details and requirements on this position.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURE:**  
Application packages containing application letter, resume, two (2) recent letters of recommendation, copies of degree, certifications and other relevant academic credentials and current police record or receipt for record may be submitted via email only to:

General Manager, Human Resources Services, SSB Headquarters, Belmopan at:  
[odakers@socialsecurity.org.bz](mailto:odakers@socialsecurity.org.bz)

Copy emails to: Manager, HR Service Delivery, Human Resources Services, SSB Headquarters, Belmopan at:  
[bsantos@socialsecurity.org.bz](mailto:bsantos@socialsecurity.org.bz)

*Email subject line: "Application for Manager, HR Strategies"*

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 7th, 2023**





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