

# Reporter

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## Business Senator, Albert Rep, Economists: Supplementary Budgets so early in fiscal year is a concern



*Business Senator Kevin Herrera*



*Economist Dr. Phillip Castillo*



*Albert Area Rep. Hon. Tracy Pantón*

**B**usiness Senator Kevin Herrera, Albert Area Representative Hon. Tracy Pantón and Economics lecturer Dr. Phillip Castillo have all told The Reporter this week that a supplementary budget coming so soon after the start of the

new fiscal year is a legitimate concern. Senator Herrera told The Reporter on Thursday that while he would not impute any improper motives as to why supplementary provision is being utilized, he said he has concerns regarding the planning

being conducted at the ministry and departmental levels. "I think many of the ministries and departments really do not take the budgeting process seriously," opined Herrera, citing an example he had previously raised regarding the Ministry

of Defense. Herrera also stressed that a few line items are genuinely things that could be considered as unforeseeable, but many other new expenditures are very predictable things. Herrera also pointed out that while the official budget that

is debated at the start of the fiscal year is expected to show certain fiscal indicators, including primary balances which take into account revenues and expenditures, the same is not the case with the supplementary appropriations. "I think it is incumbent

on the government to show certain balance with respect to revenues and expenditure," said Herrera. "They definitely would want to show a surplus at that time, or at least show that they are very close and that the

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## Council of Churches hosts Constitution outreach forum



*(L-r) Attorney Richard Bradley, PCC Chairman Anthony Chanona, Vice-Chair Glenfield Dennison*

*By William Ysaguirre*

Belizeans have the opportunity to shape their vision of the future, by reforming the covenant which defines our freedoms,

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*Professor Robert Destro*

## Belize: 2nd country in Central America certified as Malaria free by WHO

*By Mellisa G. Elliott*

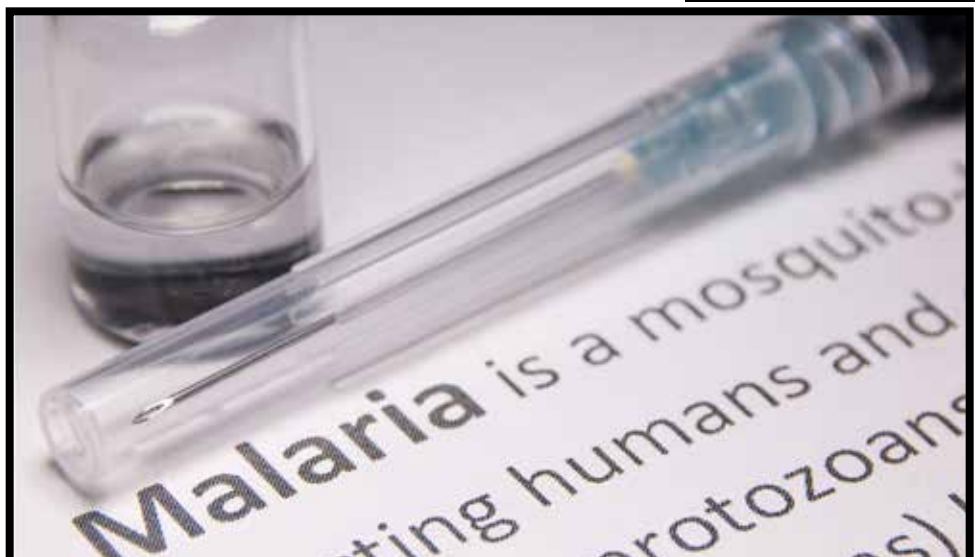
**T**his month, Belize becomes the second country within Central America to be certified Malaria free by the World Health Organization (WHO),

as the country joins El Salvador that became certified in February 2021.

Certification is given when a country can prove that there has been no transmission for at least three consecutive

years. While the second in Central America, Belize is the third such certified in the world for 2023, following Azerbaijan and Tajikistan.

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**A**t the meeting of the House of Representatives last Friday during a raging debate over who authorized the sweetheart deal giving favorable terms to Portico for a deep water port near Northern Lagoon, Prime Minister John Briceño produced documentary evidence which effectively implicates former Lands Minister, Erwin Contreras of the Corozal North constituency.

Mr. Briceño produced documents for 17 land transfers, all of them executed on the same day, November 4, 2020, to the same company, Key Star Ltd. The documents show a sale of 850 acres of the government-owned seafront to a company called Key Star Limited. The sale is for the sum of \$117,993. That is an average price of \$138.82 per acre.

A few months later all 17 land titles were transferred to Portico Limited, the company in charge of the proposed port at Northern Lagoon.

Amid all the allegations flying back and forth, this is documented evidence that cannot be faked. In all the heated exchanges about who did what and for whom, this evidence stands as proof that former Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Erwin Contreras, starred in a sweetheart deal that was of immense financial benefit to Portico Limited through its intermediary, Key Star Limited.

In our view, this pretty much settles the question of who was behind the Definitive Agreement with Portico. Would Mr. Contreras have carried out this massive transfer of crown land on his own, without the active help and collaboration from one or more of his cabinet colleagues?

We may not have an answer to this question but in our view the evidence against former Minister Erwin Contreras is overwhelming.

Mr. Contreras is not the first Minister to abuse his office and he will not be the last, because our parliamentary system lends itself to this kind of abuse. The Commission which is now examining our Constitution with a view to revising it should be looking at this kind of institutionalized corruption and devising a policing system with more built-in transparency and clout.

## Business Senator, Albert Rep, Economists:

Supplementary Budgets so early in fiscal year is a concern

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budget looks positive; however, when they do the supplemental budgets, there is no such requirement...there is no corresponding revenues. ... Instead, these supplementary budgets are looking at expenditures in isolation."

Herrera's comment speaks to the fact that at the start of the fiscal year certain fiscal indicators are highlighted. Among them is the primary balance, which is the difference between total revenues and total expenditures (less interest charges). The Approved Estimates tabled in the House of Representatives in March reported a primary surplus of 0.39 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, if the recent Supplementary Appropriation of \$69 million was included in the already approved expenditure (\$1.496 billion), the primary balance turns to a deficit equivalent to 0.71 percent of GDP (-\$44.5 million).

For her part, Albert Area Representative Hon. Tracy Panton likewise questioned the management of the budget process. "While we cannot say this is done intentionally, something is definitely wrong in the budget management process," said Panton, who like Herrera accepted that some of the new expenditure items are indeed things that could be classified as "unforeseeable," but most of the other areas are spending that should have been planned beforehand.

University of Belize Economics Lecturer Dr. Phillip Castillo also spoke with The Reporter saying the amount so soon after the start of the 2023/24 fiscal year is indeed something to monitor, as it may speak to management shortcomings at the technical level.

### Budget Variances

The budget planning process is one that Senator Herrera had criticized during the April budget debate, when he had

highlighted the large budget variances found across fiscal periods.

Speaking back in April, Herrera opined that while some variance is expected in any budget process, international convention usually considers variances (i.e., the difference between actual spending and what was budgeted for) of 10 percent or more to be worthy of investigation.

According to Herrera, 15 out of 25 major budget headings had budget variances outside that 10-percent threshold.

Nine of those programs had "unfavorable" variances, meaning they overspent their budgets. Herrera zeroed in on the nine that overspent by variances above 10 percent, with the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, and Labour being as high as 36 percent, spending more than \$5.4 million over what was originally estimated.

Among this group, the average overspending

was about 17 percent for FY 2022/23.

On the under-spending side, several departments and ministries spent notably less than was budgeted.

The average "favorable" variance is -12 percent. Here, Herrera had made the point that if this type of thing was being better monitored, then there would have been less need for the government to have come to the National Assembly for supplementary allocations.

In Fiscal Year 2022/23, the numbers show that nearly \$60 million in Recurrent Expenditure was under-spent. Those are monies that could have been used for needed capital expenditure, explained Herrera in April this year.

If reallocated, that is \$60 million could have reduced the need for at least some of the supplementary appropriation acts tabled last fiscal, a year in which four Supplementary Acts totaled more than \$180 million.

## Belize: 2nd country in Central America certified as Malaria free by WHO

*Cont'd from pg. 1*

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)'s Director Dr. Jarbas Barbosa also praised the achievement: "Following the achievement of Paraguay, Argentina, and El Salvador, Belize today becomes the fourth country in the Americas and the second in Central America to be certified as free of malaria over the last five years."

WHO Malaria report 2022 recorded that in 2021, cases for Guatemala was 1,273, Honduras 1,657, Panama 4,364, Nicaragua 23,323, and Costa Rica 189.

Malaria and Climate Change

But while the efforts go towards eliminating Malaria, what about Climate change? S.D. Fernando Professor at the Department of Parasitology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, the author of "Climate Change and Malaria – A Complex Relationship,"

noted that Climate change will increase the opportunity for malaria transmission in traditionally malarious areas, in areas the disease has been controlled, as well as in new areas which have been traditionally non-malarious.

The report also notes that an increase in temperature, rainfall, and humidity may cause a proliferation of the malaria-carrying mosquitoes at higher altitudes, resulting in an increase in malaria transmission in areas in which it was not reported earlier.

At lower altitudes where malaria is already a problem, warmer temperatures will alter the growth cycle of the parasite in the mosquito enabling it to develop faster, increasing transmission and thus having implications on the burden of disease.

Malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal disease

that is spread by the bite of an infected female Anopheles mosquito.

The World Health Organization Malaria report in 2022 an estimated 619,000 malaria deaths globally in 2021 compared to

625,000 in 2020. Before the pandemic 2019 the number of deaths stood at 568,000. The global tally of Malaria cases reached 247 million in 2021 compared to 245 million in 2020 and 232 million in 2019.

### THE REPORTER

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**RF&G LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY LTD.**

Date: June 20, 2023

Sharlene Young-Banks of 67 Euphrates Avenue, Belize City, Belize District, Belize C.A. having made written declaration that Policy G7540437 under RF&G Life Insurance Company Ltd has been lost and having made request to the Company for a duplicate of the Policy, notice is hereby given that unless objection is raised within one month of the date herein, the requested duplicate policy will be issued.

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Date: June 20, 2023

Anna Martinez of 3 Street South, Corozal Town Corozal District, Belize C.A. having made written declaration that Policy LTA0000107 under RF&G Life Insurance Company Ltd has been lost and having made request to the Company for a duplicate of the Policy, notice is hereby given that unless objection is raised within one month of the date herein, the requested duplicate policy will be issued.

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Date: June 20, 2023

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**VACANCY:JOB OPPORTUNITY**

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

**DOCKWORKER**

Reports to: Warehouse Supervisor

**Summary of Responsibilities:** The Warehouse Dockworker is responsible for assisting with the stripping of containers and deliveries of cargo to consignee at the Warehouse.

**Job Responsibilities:**

1. Assist Foreman and Tallyman with stripping of containers;
  - Assist with inspection and counting of cargo on pallets
  - Assist with labeling and loading of cargo
2. Store cargo in warehouse.
  - Assist forklift operators (when needed) with safe storage and handling of cargo.
3. Loading of cargo for deliveries to consignee
  - Assist with the tallying of the pallets
  - Deliver cargo unto consignee's vehicle
4. Assist in general cleaning of Warehouse
5. Any other duties that may be assigned from time to time

**Job Qualifications/Requirements:**

- Minimum of High School diploma or equivalent qualification required.
- 3-5 years professional experience

**Skills/Competencies:**

- Good Communication skills
- Team Player
- Good basic math and reading skills.
- Confidential
- Trustworthy
- Able to work under pressure.

**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 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

## Council of Churches hosts Constitution outreach forum

*Cont'd from pg. 1*

The Constitution of Belize, declared constitutional law professor Robert Destro of the Columbus School of Law, at a public forum hosted by the Belize Council of Churches and the Evangelical Council of Belize at the SCA Mercy Center in Belize City on Thursday morning, June 22.

The People's Constitutional Commission invited Destro to help translate and simplify the legal terminology of the 162 pages of the Constitution, into simpler language that a layman can understand, producing a 50-page outline

which PCC chairman Anthony Chanona distributed to all present.

The PCC secretariat also distributed copies of the PCC's 16-page précis, "The Fundamental Rights of the People of Belize" and the 20-page booklet prepared by attorney-at-law Richard "Dickie" Bradley - "A Brief Summary of The Belize Constitution" Volume 1. Bradley delivered a short preamble to Destro's lecture.

It all comes down to the question of "Whom do we trust?", said professor Destro, and it makes his job quite simple: to help Belizeans to understand the Constitution, so that they may best decide if there is anything in it they would like to change. The Commission's job is to translate the Constitution into language all Belizeans can understand, and then to listen to the public's feedback, Destro said, describing the process as an exercise of democracy.

The Commission is tasked to encourage our fellow citizens to dream of a future they would like, and to help to build that future, in which every member of society is encouraged to work for the common good. It is a vision of the future of the community, in which the rights of the people of the country are respected, and that the people's views can be helpful to the Government.

The Constitution is the supreme law of the land, it defines and limits laws, because it is a covenant that the Government will abide by the rule of law, he said. If you don't respect the rule

of law, if you refuse to enforce the law, then you no longer have a democracy, he warned.

For the system of government to work, there must be the dignity and respect given to the people who provide the service, he affirmed. The financial well-being of the country depends on the elected government, and whether investors can or cannot depend on the country's leaders to abide by the law. To have a wholly democratic, lawful society in practice, you have to enforce the rules, he cautioned.

Members of the audience raised the question of whether political party loyalties might color and affect the reform process. The commission members responded that the reform is first and foremost about the nation of Belize, and other affiliations with a Church, trade union, or political party must be set aside.

Belizeans are human beings first, and their fundamental rights are bigger than a political party or religion. Individual integrity depends on the individual, there are no shades of integrity, you either have it or you don't. Belizeans will have to ask themselves, which comes first: my country, or my party, church, trade union or ethnic group.

The younger generation, the 62 percent of the population who are younger than 25 years, are encouraged to become involved, to answer the questionnaires and to participate in the reform, for it is they who will have to live in the future shaped by this reform process.

### CLASSIFIED ADS

**VACANCY:** A vacancy exists for Warehouse Assistant at COSMETIC CORNER. Please Call: 227-0145 for more information.

**Lost Registration Application:** The original Certificate for a boat Registration Number BZ-2861, vessel name Dumpas belonging to Shayne Young of #1 Thurton Lane, Belize City have been reported lost. A new registration certificate has been required under Part III of Harbours & Merchants Shipping Act, Chapter 234 of the Consolidated Laws of Belize (Revised Edition 2000) has been requested.

# Human Resources, Capacity-building, and Research Can Ensure Sustainable Forests in Belize

By Wildlife Conservation Society- Belize

Belize has amazing examples of sustainable forest practices. Some recent successful forest management initiatives have occurred within the Maya Forest Corridor (MFC).

A combination of human resources, capacity-building, and research is used as a step forward to achieve sustainability in this landscape. For example, science researchers and biologists from several organizations have monitored jaguars in the MFC using cameras and collaborated with students from universities in the United Kingdom and our very own University of Belize.

The jaguar is an iconic species in Belize, a member of the Big Cat Panthera family (tiger, lion, jaguar, leopard, and snow leopard), and one of five wildcat species found in Belize (the other four are ocelot, jaguarundi, margay, and puma).

Over the years, there have been increased incidents of human-wildlife conflict caused mostly by deforestation and overhunting, especially in buffering communities of the MFC.

The Maya Forest Corridor is important to maintaining the jaguar population because it provides connectivity to the Selva Maya that spans Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize, and one of Mesoamerica's Great Forests.

Through a special partnership between Panthera and University of Belize Environmental Research Institute, researchers learned how to carry out field assessments and monitor wildlife. These research initiatives resulted in the capture of the very first jaguar at the "Tapir Camp" at Cox Lagoon, within the MFC in 2012.

The jaguar had been previously caught by the Runaway Creek crew and well-known scientists and former sustainable development minister, Dr. Omar Figueroa.

WCS's Conservation



Jaguars are very good swimmers. (Photo ©J.Larsen Mahler/WCS)



Evidence of a fire inside the Maya Forest Corridor. (Photo ©WCS)



Ms. Raquel Vega is now certified as a wildland firefighter.

Ranger at the MFC, Michael Brakeman, who was part of the trapping team over a decade ago says, "The researchers were able to take blood samples and change the [tracking] collar that monitored this jaguar's location before releasing it back into the wild." He noted that, "These types of collaborative works have helped us to identify important wildlife that still live in this newly protected area. I am proud to be part of the team leading the continued preservation of this area in Belize, an important part to keeping our forest intact for my children's future."

Another example of collaboration using human resources, research, and capacity-building is the work that the Maya Forest Corridor Fire Working Group has been doing during the 2023 fire season.

This is a group of committed and hard-working representatives

from Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Foundation for Wildlife Conservation, the Belize Zoo and Tropical Education Center, members of MFC buffer communities, and WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society). Recently, the group conducted a prescribed burn to reduce the fuel load within the MFC.

With co-funding from the European Union (EU-Desira), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN), WCS has helped control and suppress at least five fires in the area since March 2023. MFC Site Manager at WCS, Yahaira Urbina explained that "Community involvement is key for management. The Belize Zoo spearheaded the initial establishment of the MFC Fire Working Group, through a CARSI grant from the US Embassy that focused on fire management and



Rangers fighting fire inside the MFC. (Photo ©WCS)

human health.

This effort has resulted in the formation of a coalition involving communities such as Mahogany Heights,

Frank's Eddy, and La Democracia villages, and the managers of properties in the MFC. The aim of the program is to increase their knowledge of fire management and wildland firefighting capacity."

The European Union (EU) facilitates continued training

with community members like the Vice Chairperson and former Chairlady of Mahogany Heights, Ms. Raquel Vega, to build capacity to manage wildfires in their areas. Ms. Vega says the training will help her to educate her community. "I gain the experience to pass on to them that whenever there is a fire, together we can assist until help arrives." She further explains that "Here in Mahogany Heights, WCS is engaged with

the community. The children are educated in birdwatching and learn about the Maya Forest Corridor and how to protect it. WCS also does family events that involve the parents."

The EU says it is "committed to climate action and assisting Belize in the sustainable use of its natural resources, protecting biodiversity, and fighting deforestation. Reducing fires and ensuring human and biodiversity health is one of many areas of EU interest." By funding fire-management training for first responders, monitoring patrols for early detection of fires and fire-fighting operations, the organization is accomplishing one of its goals to help protect Belize's forests.

1 Panthera's Belize pioneered jaguar study in the Cockscomb Basin in Belize, which helped to establish the first protected area for jaguars.



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

### Requirements Gathering for CRM & CIS Billing Solution

The purpose of this **Request for Proposals (RFP)** is to solicit proposals from organizations that are equipped with the breadth of technical expertise and experience necessary to deliver the required services.

Submissions must be made using the RFP Response Form presented in Schedule A. The use of this document is required to ensure uniformity of responses. Bidding parties are free to submit supplemental information to support the responses made using the supplied response form. Total size of the electronic submission should be less than twenty-five megabytes (25 MB).

The RFP document, which outlines the project purpose & deliverables, project scope, RFP & project timeline, proposal evaluation & criteria, and bid submission dates are available on BEL's website at [www.bel.com.bz/Tenders.aspx](http://www.bel.com.bz/Tenders.aspx)

RFPs will be accepted by email only and should include the bid number located on the respective bid form.

Submit bid via email to [bidsubmittal@bel.com.bz](mailto:bidsubmittal@bel.com.bz) no later than **3:00 p.m. local time on Monday, July 10, 2023.**

For more information or queries, send email to [bidboxrequest@bel.com.bz](mailto:bidboxrequest@bel.com.bz)

Cost incurred for preparation of the tender document is the sole responsibility of the bidder. The lowest or any tender will not necessarily be accepted.

# People's Constitution needs \$7m; allocated \$1.5 m: PCC Chairman

The People's Constitution Commission (PCC)'s budget is roughly 20 percent of the full estimated amount needed, PCC Chairman Anthony Chanona indicated to the media this week.

Chanona said, "The 2023/24 fiscal budget read an approval of \$1.5 million of a \$7.2 million budget that was submitted, so we have a \$5.7 million deficit." The Chairman also shared his hope that the supplementary budget will help them fill that aforementioned deficit.

It is possible the Chairman is referring to a future supplementary, as the one presented on Friday, June 16th, 2023, does not contain any additional provision for the PCC. However, the Budget estimates for FY 2023/24 do show \$1.5 million for "Constitutional Review."

Chanona explained that their \$7.2 million

projection is informed by the recent referendum expenditures. Readers would recall that last year's postponed referendum on the so-called "Marijuana Bill" (formally the Cannabis and Industrial Hemp Control and Licensing Bill 2022) was likely to cost approximately \$5 million, while the referendum for whether or not Belize should go to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) was \$15 million.

"So we are just between the marijuana and the I.C.J. [referenda]," quipped the Chairman.

Interestingly, it must be delineated that the PCC's mandate is unrelated to the referendum, per se. Section 6 of the PCC Act mandates the Commission with two broad functions: (a) Conduct a comprehensive review of the Constitution, and (b) prepare and submit a report that outlines the

findings of the review to the prime minister.

In carrying out those two functions, the PCC Act establishes precise parameters, which include the requirement to consult with all Belizeans, as the process is dependent on the Belizean people providing their views as to the type of changes they would wish to see in the Constitution. It is noteworthy, however, that the PCC officials have reported that close to 98 percent of the population have not read the Constitution of Belize, a fact that has inspired the PCC to launch an education campaign.

In terms of the referendum, this is

Act.	Description	CAPITAL II EXPENDITURE						
		2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Budget Estimate	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Budget Estimate	2024/25 Forward Estimate	2025/26 Forward Estimate
1000	Purchase of Furniture & Equipment	\$14,700	\$18,405	\$25,000	\$24,400	\$0	\$0	\$0
1002	Purchase of Computers	\$0	\$38,426	\$0	\$27,092	\$0	\$0	\$0
1007	Capital Improvement to Buildings	\$0	\$33,595	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2069	Constitutional Review	\$0	\$0	\$250,000	\$152,509	\$1,500,000	\$1,000,000	\$0
9000	Purchase of Furniture & Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	\$60,000	\$40,000
9002	Purchase of other Office Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$28,000
9003	Purchase of Computers & Peripherals	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$60,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
9004	Purchase of Photocopier	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$40,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
9006	Purchase of Air Conditioning Unit	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	\$18,000	\$18,000
9021	Capital Improvement to Building and Facilities	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL II EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>\$14,700</b>	<b>\$90,427</b>	<b>\$275,000</b>	<b>\$204,001</b>	<b>\$1,775,000</b>	<b>\$1,203,000</b>	<b>\$196,000</b>

outlined at section 22 of the People's Constitution Commission (PCC) Act that mandates that there must be a referendum at the conclusion of the PCC's consultation process with the Belizean people and after the final report has been submitted to the prime minister.

The Act reads:

"A referendum shall be conducted where the National Assembly passes a resolution declaring that the matter stated in the report, whether the Belize Constitution should be repealed and replaced or amended, is of sufficient national importance that it should be submitted

to the electors for their view through a referendum."

Consequently, given the compulsory language of the PCC Act—especially if the report recommends material and substantive changes—the end of the Constitutional review must end with a referendum.

## COASTAL ZONE AND FISHERIES SECTOR CONDUCT INCLUSIVE CONSULTATIONS FOR NATIONAL ADAPTION PLAN

Belmopan, June 20, 2023.

For the development of a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) for the Coastal Zone Areas of Belize and Belize Fisheries Sector have commenced, the first on June 20, 2023, in Dangriga Town and other sessions earmarked for June 22-23, 2023, in Belize City.

The objective is to prepare a comprehensive and robust multi-sectoral National Adaptation Plan (NAP) for the coastal zone and fisheries sector that will highlight the climate change adaptation and mitigation challenges and priorities, taking into consideration private sector engagement, gender dimensions and indigenous peoples. The NAP will result in the identification of viable, relevant, and appropriate adaptation actions to strengthen the national response to climate change impacts. This, in

order to reduce the vulnerability to climate change by building adaptive capacity and resilience, and to facilitate the integration of climate change adaptation into development planning at the national level.


Climate change, via its varied manifestations, is altering the economic, environmental, social, and cultural landscapes globally, with no single region or country spared via any exception. The economic sectors in many countries which took decades to build are suddenly faced with unprecedented onslaught from climate related challenges, which are directly leading to reduced productivity.

Addressing medium and long-term climate change impacts in the coastal zone and fisheries sector further requires a coordinated strategy document for implementing climate change adaptation. This will increase capacity,

build resilience and enable sustainable human and ecosystem health as well as gender-inclusive socio-economic well-being, and reduce losses and damages.

"Indigenous knowledge and cultural preservation of coastal fishing communities to combat climate change is the number one ingredient towards adaptation", stated GCF National Project Support Consultant, Jeffy Gomez in acknowledging the importance of including indigenous communities.

This consultation series is an initiative of The Government of Belize through The Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation (MBECA), in collaboration with The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Representation for Jamaica, the Bahamas and Belize and Belize's National Designated Authority to the Green Climate Fund (GCF).



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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Notice of Special Meeting for Members of St. Francis Xavier Credit Union Ltd.**

**Belize City, 21 June 2023:** Members of St. Francis Xavier Credit Union Ltd. (SFXCU) are notified of a special meeting to be held on Sunday, 9 July 2023. The Governor of the Central Bank of Belize, in his capacity as Registrar of Credit Unions (Registrar), has approved for Mr. Martin Marshalleck, the appointed Administrator to SFXCU, to call this special meeting in accordance with section 61(8) of the Credit Unions Act (CUA). Further meeting details will be published by the SFXCU Administrator forthwith.

This special meeting is being called to update the credit union's membership on the affairs of the credit union and the steps taken to protect their interests. The external auditor's report, which covers all the areas identified in the recent examinations and the special investigations conducted on SFXCU, will also be presented.

The Registrar appointed the Administrator to SFXCU on 10 March 2023, and since then, the credit union has continued to operate normally without interruption. The primary function of the Administrator is to manage and operate the credit union in accordance with the CUA, the by-laws, and its policies and procedures. Additionally, the Administrator is charged with the responsibility to consider and implement prudent corrective measures, necessary to remedy issues identified by the Registrar.

SFXCU's members are urged to attend this important meeting, as the Administrator and staff of the credit union will report on their work to protect members' interests.

**- ENDS -**

ISSUED BY:  
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# DG Okonjo-Iweala to business leaders: We must push for re-globalization and reform

In her keynote address to the 13th World Chambers Congress in Geneva on 21 June, Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said the multilateral trading system works but that parts of it need reform. She also underlined the risk to global prosperity if trade fragments into rival blocs and reiterated her call for “re-globalization” rather than deglobalization.

Rising geopolitical tensions and the constant crises of recent years — the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, climate shocks and the resulting disruptions to trade — have sparked questions about whether the multilateral trading system still works, the Director-General told the gathered business leaders.

“My answer is: Yes,

the system works. Yes, parts of it need to be fixed. We need to fix what needs fixing. We don't need to throw the baby out with the bathwater,” she said.

“The WTO has made things better for business,” the Director-General said, citing the Information Technology Agreement eliminating tariffs on almost USD 3 trillion worth of trade, the Government Procurement Agreement opening up more than USD 1.7 trillion in annual public contracts to competition from firms in participating members, and the Trade Facilitation Agreement cutting red tape and making it cheaper and faster to move goods across borders.

Nevertheless, the WTO's dispute settlement system still needs fixing in order to

provide the certainty business needs, the Director-General noted. In addition, keeping the WTO fit for purpose for the 21st century economy requires updating the organization's rulebook, particularly in regard to digital trade.

“The future of trade is services, it's digital, it's green — and it has to be inclusive,” she said.

A looming threat is deglobalization and fragmentation of trade. WTO economists have warned that a decoupling of the world economy into two rival blocs would lower long-run global GDP by over 5 per cent, with developing and least developed economies hurt the most.

“We must push back against the pressures for global economic fragmentation, which would be costly and

could well weaken supply resilience,” the Director-General said. “A better path forward is what we are calling ‘re-globalization’: deeper, more deconcentrated markets, achieved by bringing more people and places from the margins of the global economy to the mainstream.”

“Greater diversification would make it harder to weaponize interdependencies,”

she continued. “This holds for critical minerals as well. Many rare earths are not so rare, but we need technological innovation so that the developing countries where they are found can extract and process them in cleaner ways.”

The Director-General urged business leaders to continue speaking up for multilateral cooperation on trade, adding that the “companies and chambers you run are

at the centre of making trade work better for people and the planet.”

Held every two years, the World Chambers Congress brings together participants from around the world to address common challenges that shape the activities of chambers of commerce and businesses. The 13th Congress is focusing on the topics of multilateralism, innovation and sustainability during the 21-23 June event.



WTO Director General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

## Overnight Tourist arrivals close to pre-pandemic levels



Total overnight tourist arrivals for the first five months of 2023 are approximately 91 percent of the total recorded for that same period in 2019, signaling the tourism sector's near return to pre-pandemic levels, data confirms.

For the months January to May this year, data from the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) informs that a total 219,023 overnight visitors chose Belize. For 2019, the authorities reported 241,628 for this same period. For last year, 2022, the figure stood at

170,051, representing about 70% of pre-pandemic levels.

For context, it is worth recalling that during 2020, the COVID-19-related restrictions had pushed down arrival figures to less than 125,000, representing a near 50 percent decline, which only worsened throughout the latter part of 2020.

The occupancy rates for the accommodation sector also shows signs of rebound. For the entire 2020, the average monthly occupancy rate was recorded at a dismal 10.6. Last year, the average climbed

up to 29 percent. Comparatively, for the first four months of this year, the occupancy rate already stands at just above 40 percent. For the same period in 2019, occupancy averaged approximately 46 percent.

In his mid-term statement, Prime Minister John Briceño announced that first-quarter growth for Belize is estimated at 11.5 percent, a growth that, inter alia, tourism is likely to have been a significant contributor based on the foregoing statistics and historical patterns.



**CENTRAL BANK**  
of **BELIZE**

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**ANUNCIO PÚBLICO**

PARA PUBLICACIÓN INMEDIATA

**Convocatoria de reunión Especial para los Miembros de**  
**St. Francis Xavier Credit Union Limited**

**Belize City, 21 de junio de 2023:** Se les notifica a los miembros de St. Francis Xavier Credit Union Ltd. (SFXCU) que se llevará a cabo una reunión especial el día domingo 9 de julio de 2023. El Gobernador de Central Bank of Belize, en su capacidad de Registrador de Uniones de Crédito (Registrador), ha aprobado que el Sr. Martin Marshallleck, Administrador designado de SFXCU, convoque esta reunión especial en conformidad con la sección 61(8) de la Ley de Uniones de Crédito (Credit Unions Act (CUA)). El administrador de SFXCU publicará más detalles de la reunión.

Esta reunión especial se convoca para poner al día a los miembros de la unión de crédito sobre los asuntos de la misma y las medidas adoptadas para proteger sus intereses. También se presentará el informe del auditor externo, que cubre todas las áreas identificadas en las recientes inspecciones y investigaciones especiales llevadas a cabo en SFXCU.

El Registrador nombró al Administrador de SFXCU el 10 de marzo de 2023 y, desde entonces, la unión de crédito ha seguido funcionando sin interrupción. La función principal del Administrador es gestionar y operar la unión de crédito en conformidad con la CUA, los estatutos y sus pólizas y procesos. Adicionalmente, el Administrador tiene la responsabilidad de considerar e implementar medidas correctivas prudentes, necesarias para remediar los problemas identificados por el Registrador.

Se les pide a los miembros de SFXCU a asistir a esta importante reunión, ya que el Administrador y el personal de la unión de crédito informarán sobre el trabajo que se lleva a cabo para proteger los intereses de los miembros.

**- FIN -**

PUBLICADO POR:  
THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
CENTRAL BANK OF BELIZE

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

# Belize Certified Malaria-Free with IDB Support

**June 21st, 2023, (IDB)**—After three years without autochthonous cases, the World Health Organization (WHO) has certified Belize as malaria-free. This major achievement is the result of years of hard work and collaboration between the government of Belize and the Regional Malaria Elimination Initiative (RMEI), supported by the IDB, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), donors and other technical partners.

Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by a parasite that is spread from human to human by some types of

mosquitoes. It is mainly found in tropical countries, and the disease is preventable and curable. Infants, children under five years, pregnant women, travelers, and people with HIV / AIDS are at higher risk of severe infection.

RMEI is a public-private alliance administered by the IDB and financed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Global Fund, the Carlos Slim Foundation, and nine countries of Mesoamerica.

Although there have been no reports of imported, introduced, or autochthonous cases in Belize since 2019 and no reports of relapsed or induced

malaria cases since 2013, continued surveillance and cross-border collaboration are essential to maintaining this malaria-free status.

The Minister of Health and Wellness of Belize, Mr. Kevin Bernard, said: "Our biggest success is the fact that we are now malaria free. For our country, it is a great achievement. We pledge our commitment to ensure technical support and continuous financial resources to remain malaria free".

"The elimination of malaria in Belize is a significant milestone towards healthier countries and communities in Mesoamerica

and beyond," said Rocío Medina Bolivar, Country Representative of the IDB Group in Belize. "I congratulate Belize on this great achievement and reaffirm our commitment to working together with the Government of Belize to tackle other health challenges and attain Belize's development goals," she added.

The IDB, as a member of the RMEI Partnership Committee, supported this elimination effort and remains committed to working with its partners to eliminate malaria throughout Mesoamerica, a way of improving lives in the region.

# Belize grew by 11.5% in Q1: Prime Minister



Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño

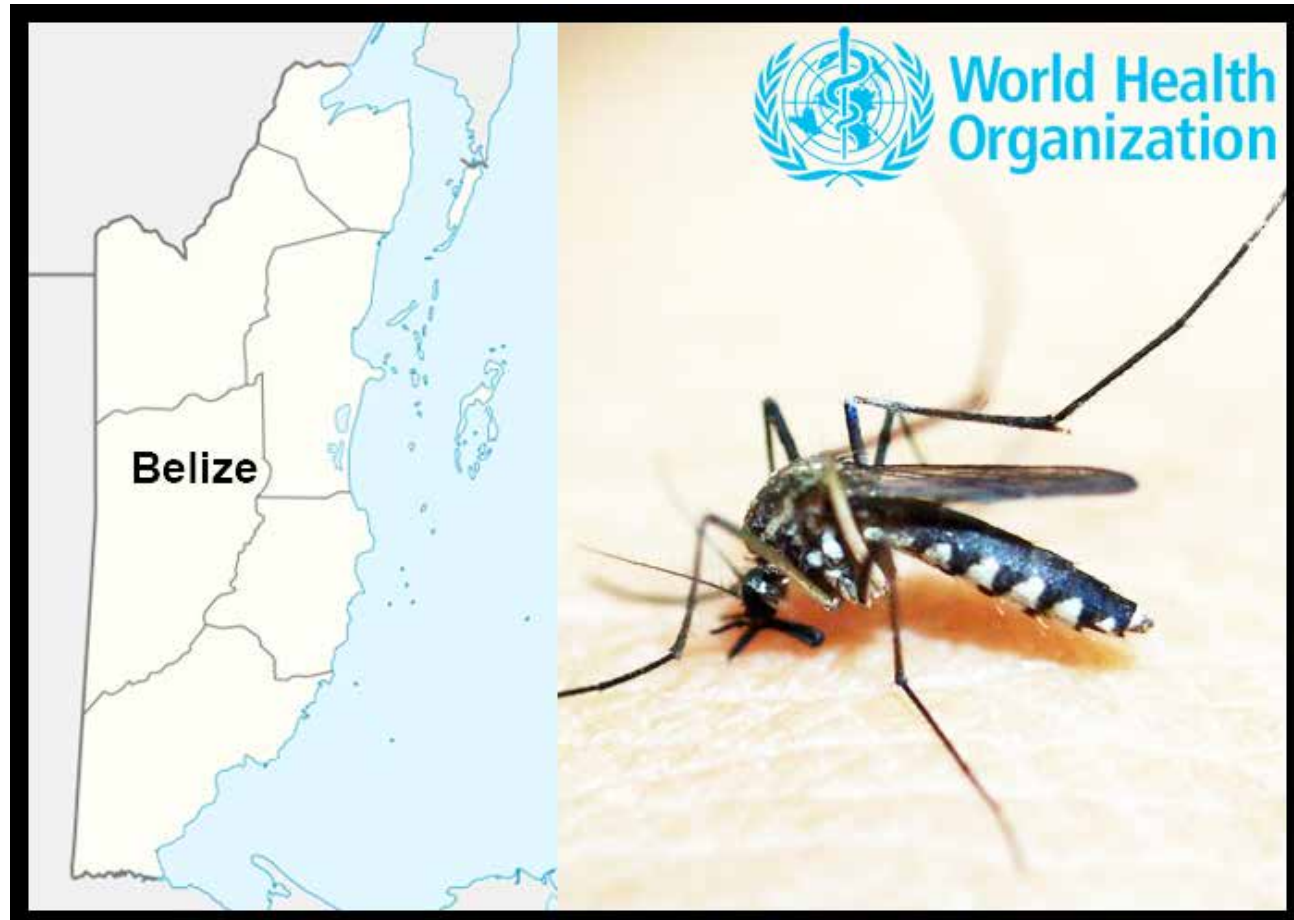
The Belizean economy reportedly grew by 11.5 percent for the first three months of 2023, Prime Minister John Briceño announced Wednesday.

Speaking in his pre-recorded Mid-term Review, Briceño told the nation that data from the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) will soon reveal the double-digit growth from the country.

Last year's first quarter growth was reported at 5.3% by the SIB, driven predominantly by the recovery in the tertiary sector. SIB data shows that from 2017 to 2021, first-quarter growth has been 2.1 percent, 1.8 percent, 5.2 percent, 4.5 percent, and 8.4 percent, respectively. For the last six years, first-quarter growth averaged approximately 4.55 percent; consequently, Q1 2023's predicted 11.5% would be a strong signal on the economic prospects for Belize, thus far.

Given the tourism sector's steady contribution to Belize's economy, it is worth noting that the tourism sector continues to rebound from the COVID-19 "lockdown" recession. Statistics provided by the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) informs that during the first three months of this year, total overnight tourist arrivals stood at 143,319. Last year during that same period, that figure was reported at 97,817. The latter figure, therefore, represents a 47 percent increase in overnight arrivals.

Noteworthy, though, is the fact that Belizean tourism still has not fully returned to its pre-pandemic numbers. In 2019, overnight arrivals for the first quarter of the year stood at 158,155. As a result, this year's first-quarter total (143,319) represents just about 91 percent of the 2019 total.



# S U D O K U

Medium Puzzle

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

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

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

## NOTICE

### GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE TREASURY BILLS ISSUE NUMBER 7/2023

Tenders are invited for an issue of Government of Belize Treasury Bills. The amount of the issue will be \$83,200,000.

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 Wednesday, 5 July 2023 and will be redeemed on Wednesday, 4 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](mailto:bids@centralbank.org.bz) or at the designated drop off box no later than 12:00 noon on Friday, 30 June 2023.

The Auction in the Central Securities Depository System (CSD) will be open from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on Wednesday, 5 July 2023.

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

**Bank: Central Bank of Belize**  
**Account: GL1CORP0402627**

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

## Weh Wi Ga Fi Seh

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

### Moa Sentens bowt Harikayn

**Yu hafu put dong wahn gud fongdayshan if yu noh waahn harikayn bloa dong yu hows.** You have to put down a good foundation if you don't want hurricanes to blow your house down.

**Wi bai op lat a groasriz wen harikayn di kohn.** We buy lots of groceries when a hurricane is coming

**Wen wi yehr dat di harikayn neva soh schrang agen, wi mi feel lee gudish.** When we heard that the hurricane had lost strength, we felt kind of good.

**Mi ma gaahn bai sohn gudz fi geh redi fi harikayn.** My mom went to buy groceries to get ready for the hurricane.

**Harikayn bloa dong mi ma hows laas yaa.** The hurricane blew down my mom's house last year.

**Haabat nayl op di winda dehn wen harikayn midi kohn.** Herbert nailed up the windows when a hurricane was threatening.

**Da mi don di en a Novemba ahn harikayn stil mi deh owt.** It was the end of November and hurricanes were still out there.

**Unu don ga unu harikayn plan? If yu hafu moav wen harikayn di nak pahn Bileez doa, yu noa wehpaa yu gwehn?**  
**Stay sayf!**

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)

## Individual Consultancy

### Resource Mobilization and Partnership Building.



#### Background:

The UNDP Belize Country Office (CO) has a diverse portfolio of projects shaped by the development priorities and challenges of the country outlined in the Belize Horizon 2030: National Development Plan (Horizon 2030); the UN's Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF) 2022-2026; UNDP's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and the CO's Country Programme Document (CPD) 2022-2026. UNDP's diverse development solutions require adequate and sustained financing. The designation of Belize as an upper middle income makes the mobilization of financing for development programmes and projects difficult. Many traditional international development partners have reduced Official Development Assistance to Belize and instead are focusing on Least Developed Countries.

This impels the CO to identify new and innovative ways of resource mobilization and fostering partnerships with traditional donors while building partnerships with non-traditional actors.

#### Objectives, Duties and Responsibilities:

The objective of the consultancy is to revise and update UNDP Belize's current Resource Mobilization Strategy and Action Plan to better enable the organization to mobilize resources to meet the development priorities of Government.

- Assess the relevance of the CO's current CPD, especially looking at its alignment with overarching policy directions from Horizon 2030; UNMSDF and UNDP Strategic Plan;
- Review the CO's strategies, work plans, current funding model and pipeline of interventions to better understand the needs and desired outcomes of UNDP Belize;
- Conduct a comprehensive analysis and mapping of potential donors (traditional and non-traditional) to assess the feasibility of securing multiyear funding for critical initiatives. This includes mapping donors' strategic areas of interest and exploring opportunities for partnerships and mobilizing and leveraging resources from potential partners such as the private sector, philanthropic foundations; the Government (through development services) and other organizations;
- Based on the items above, revise and update the CO's Resource Mobilization and Partnership Strategy and Action Plan.
- The Strategy should include an analysis of past fundraising experience, explores future opportunities and strategies and outlines a time-bound action plan to systematically research and raise funds. In addition, the Strategy should include recommendations on ways to develop and maintain strategic partnerships and engagement with key donors (past, present and future) focusing on recommendations from the Roadmap for SDGs Implementation.

#### Expected Outputs and Deliverables

The following will be the expected outputs:

- a. **Deliverable 1:** Report on Inception Meeting detailing relevant documentation and data gathering required.
- b. **Deliverable 2a:** Detailed Presentation on Assessment/Relevance of CO's CPD, pipeline interventions and current funding model
- c. **Deliverable 2b:** Detailed Presentation on Donor Mapping of areas of potential funding and partnerships Draft terms of references for NIP Update consultant team
- d. **Deliverable 3:** Draft Resource Mobilization and Partnership Strategy and Action Plan reviewed and finalized.

#### Qualification, Experience and Skills:

- a. Master's Degree in Economics, Finance, Business administration, Development Studies or any other relevant field
- b. At least five (5) years of relevant experience in developing, or facilitating the development of resource mobilization strategies and mobilizing resources, especially in a middle-income context and setting, particularly, Small Island Developing States
- c. At least five (5) years' experience in developing and/or assessing and analyzing corporate and national development strategies, plans and programmes;
- d. Ability to identify innovative approaches and opportunities to funding in a challenging ODA setting;
- e. Experience in designing partnership strategies and building partnerships with a diversity of development actors.
- f. Experience working with UNDP, other UN agencies or any other international development partner desirable;

#### Information link:

[https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view\\_negotiation.cfm?nego\\_id=7089](https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_negotiation.cfm?nego_id=7089)  
or  
<https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/203779>

#### 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-00019, following the instructions in the [user guide](#).

*Individuals employed by a company or institution who would like to submit an offer in response to a Procurement Notice for IC must do so in their individual capacity, even if they expect their employers to sign an RLA with UNDP.*

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

**Deadline for Application: Tuesday, June 27th, 2023 at 2:00 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.*

## Individual Consultancy – Transport Planner

**Type of Location:** Consultant will be station and work in the Department of Transport under the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Transport.

**Expected Duration of Assignment:**

One Year with possibility of extension subject Finance and Performance evaluation.

**Background:**

In 2019, the Government of Belize in partnership with the United Nations Development Fund, funded by the European Union, signed an agreement to facilitate transformation within Belize's Transportation Sector through the enabling of low carbon means of transportation. The ambition is to establish the foundation for further investments in e-mobility as a part of system transformation. Foundational work undertaken through this initiative is expected to contribute to NDC/ LEDS implementation, ultimately enabling the deployment of 77 hybrid and electric buses by 2030 (17 by 2025) and the avoidance of 117 KtCO<sub>2</sub>e/year from the transport sector by 2030. To this end, The Department of Transport is seeking a Transport Planner to support the implementation of the short-term transportation reforms needed to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Transport and transform the public transportation sector through piloting of e-mobility within Belize.

**Objectives, Duties and Responsibilities:**

The Transport Planner is required to develop, administer, evaluate, and monitor transportation plans, programs, and projects, specifically the EU funded project- Piloting e-mobility within Belize's Public Transport System. The Planner will participate in policy development and implementation and identifies emerging needs to help facilitate the growth and transformation of the sector. The Planner is expected to foster teamwork and display the communications skills required to interact productively with senior and junior personnel within the Department of Transport, as well as representatives of outside agencies and organizations. The planner will provide overall support to the Chief Transport Officer in addition to other duties such as the management, research, and development of strategies surrounding transportation planning for the E-mobility pilot project.

- Provide technical expertise within the project framework and support the review of existing regulations, policies, and standards.
- Support implementation of the inter-city pilot project.
- Support the establishment of a web-based knowledge management platform to facilitate the sharing of expertise information and experiences in the transport sector.
- Support the use of an electronic platform capable of monitoring and analyzing real-world ranges achieved vs. the manufacturer's range predictions of electric vehicles utilized within the project pilot.
- In conjunction with the communication team at the Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics and E-governance, support the launch of a joint communication campaign.
- Lead the development of a National Transport Sector Transformation Strategy and Action Plan.
- Responsible for the management and coordination of day-to-day implementation of the e-mobility pilot project within the Department of Transport.
- Provide any additional support to Chief Transport Officer as it relates to advancing project objectives and the goals within the Department of Transport

**Expected Outputs and Deliverables**

**Monthly Deliverable:** As detailed in the Terms of Reference

**Qualification, Experience and Skills:**

- A University degree in Transportation planning, engineering, policy or any other related field.
- At least 3 years of demonstrable project/programme management experience or experience in managerial position or filed research position. Must be self-motivated, self-directed and team oriented.
- At least 5 years of experience working with ministries, national or provincial institutions that are concerned with natural resource and/or environmental management.
- Knowledge of transportation systems and the transport sector in Belize including some knowledge of electric mobility
- Training in Planning, Policy Development or Monitoring and Evaluation.
- Ability to identify strategic issues, opportunities, risks, and communicate broad and compelling organizational direction in respect of the project.
- Ability to apply statistical tools to data, in preparing reports and in collecting demographics and statistics.
- Possesses good analytical, interpersonal, and oral and written communication skills.
- Advanced MS Office skills.

**Information Link:**

[https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view\\_negotiation.cfm?nego\\_id=7305](https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_negotiation.cfm?nego_id=7305)

or

<https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/204195>

**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-00021**, following the instructions in the [user guide](#).

**Deadline for Application: Thursday, June 29th, 2023 at 2:00 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.*



# Belize is now Malaria Free!



*By Mellisa G. Elliott*

Belize is now certified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as Malaria free, a joint release from the Government of Belize and WHO announced this week.

Malaria is a life-threatening disease that is spread via the Anopheles mosquito; however, the disease is preventable and curable and is mainly found in tropical countries. Children under five years, pregnant women, travelers, and people with HIV/ AIDS are at higher risk of severe infection.

Belize has had no reports of imported, introduced, or autochthonous (indigenous) cases since 2019 and no reports of relapsed or induced Malaria cases since 2013.

The Minister of Health and Wellness of Belize, Mr. Kevin Bernard said, "Our biggest success is the fact that we are now Malaria free. ... We pledge our commitment to ensure technical support and continuous financial resources to remain Malaria free."

For his part, Belize's Inter-American Development Bank Group Country Representative Rocio Medina Bolivar said, "I congratulate Belize on this great achieve-

ment and reaffirm our commitment to working together with the Government of Belize to tackle other health challenges and attain Belize's development goals."

The Government of Belize and the Regional Malaria Elimination (RMEI) supported by the IDB the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), donors and other technical partners all collaborated in working to eliminate Malaria within Belize.

WHO's Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is quoted in the release as saying, "This is a remarkable achievement for Belize and a testament to the country's unwavering commitment to public health. The successful elimination of malaria demonstrates that, with concerted efforts and collaboration, we can overcome public health challenges and create a healthier world for all."

Prime Minister of Belize Hon. John Briceño also expressed gratitude to the WHO and the international community for their support.

According to the release, Belize's malaria elimination strategy relied on a comprehensive approach.



## All about The People

# This is not democracy



Neri Briceno

During his tenure as Mayor of New York City between 2002 and 2014, billionaire Republican Michael Bloomberg attempted to please the far-left leaning constituents in a predominantly democratic controlled city by implementing a ban on sugary drinks over 16 ounces, but especially on sodas.

The ban was skillfully framed as a health issue to reduce obesity and hence overall healthcare cost. The initiative was being pushed through by the city's Board of Health. In a liberal city like New York where people are more inclined to support

*Today, we have a young population that will beg rather than work. Will prefer to sit for hours on clinic day at a minister's office for petty hand outs and give-aways rather than look for a job or create a job.*

the perceived fight on obesity, Bloomberg figured that this would be an easy win for his administration, while at the same time cementing support from his liberal audience.

The proposal backfired and beverage companies as well as private individuals who believed that their rights were being trampled, sued. The case ended up in the State of New York Court of Appeal, where it was ruled that the city's authority overstepped its authority and that it exceeded its regulatory scope. In other words, it's not the responsibility of the state to determine the quantity or type of food that people want to eat.

People's food choice is an ingrained right and as long as companies or food establishments are not serving poisonous, contaminated or expired food, people's nutritional needs are totally up to them. The state has no control whether a person gets fat, slim or otherwise, that is up to the individual. The job of the state is not to

police what people desire to eat.

The ruling sent a powerful message to liberal state and local governments around the United States who were clamoring for restrictions on sugar intake. The ruling also addressed the complexity and absurdity of trying to control the amount of sugar in a packaged drink when people had total freedom to add as much sugar to their own coffee, tea, or juices at home, at work or in a leisure private setting. Additionally, there was no clear study as to how much sugar was too much. The courts surmised that this was a huge overstep of government.

Yesterday I watched in dismay as the Minister of Education announced that this administration is preparing to pass legislature to ban the sale of sugary drinks in schools. While on the surface this may seem like some type of protective measure for school children, at its core, like the case in New York

City is state controlled. If the intent is to reduce sugar intake in kids, then that is not the responsibility of the state but rather that of the parent or guardian.

The job of the state if that is its intended purpose, is to educate kids to reduce sugar intake, but not ban it totally. Democracy is about freedoms and having choices, the less the state is involved, the better.

I could understand if this were the 1900's when Coca Cola was laced with cocaine as one of its ingredients, but that is not the case. When the state bans sugary drinks on campus, if at home or in their leisure kids continue to consume it, then the ban is a complete waste of time.

What about the vendors off campus but right across the schools that sells unpacked drinks like juices, iced teas, milky-ways, shakes or smoothies? Will there be limits on sugar content and if so, who will police it? This idea is ill conceived, counterproductive, and outright nonsense. I get extremely fearful

when I see the state trying to exert undue control over the population. It opens the door for an avalanche of future controls and restrictions that add no value to the population except to give the state added control over its citizenry. This is not democracy.

So far this administration for the most part has been scandal-free. Scandals have been the atomic bombs that have destroyed most previous administrations; however, cracks are starting to show in the armor with some missteps they are making. This ill-conceived sugar ban is one. This party must bear in mind that the breaking of a dam

starts with a crack before the floodgates open.

The initial apparent support by the government for the illegal, despicable, treasonous one-sided port definitive agreement that was signed by a previous minister and the subsequent depart of the Attorney General signals to the Belizean public that GOB has to get its act together. Additionally, the openness of the government to the idea of a convention to challenge the sitting Mayor of Belize City who remains a popular as well as results-oriented mayor, shows that this administration is willing to shoot itself in the foot.

Belizeans overwhelm-

ingly elected this administration because they were tired of the corruption, nepotism, and the business as usual of everyday politics. This administration has not been without its challenges and missteps, but the Belizean public has grown weary of fumbling administrations and come March 2024, the municipal elections will be the litmus test of its performance.

In Belize City, they can either build on the successes of the mayor who opened the gates for their ultimate victory in the general elections and put in the work to make that happen or go with those who now want to bask on

that success and ride the coattails of success.

I am no political pundit and definitely not a political adviser for the ruling party, but the choice seems clear. It's totally up to the party if they want to heed. The people deserve good governance.

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.**

### Press Release



## RE: Atlantic Bank Redesigns Personal Atlantic Online and Launches Banking APP

**BELIZE CITY, BELIZE, JUNE 23, 2023** – As a technologically driven institution, Atlantic Bank is delighted to announce the launch of our redesigned and reimagined personal online banking platform and the highly anticipated launch of our banking app. This newly redesigned Atlantic Online and mobile app will be accessible to customers starting June 26, 2023.

The new Atlantic Online offers a modern look and feel, with exciting new features for an enhanced personal banking experience. Customers can now enjoy responsive and optimal viewing personal Atlantic Online on any device. Users can perform third party credit card payments; recurring and multiple transfers; send and receive notifications; and view their favourite accounts. Existing customers can simply log on to the new platform using their current Atlantic Online credentials, whilst new customers, can easily sign up at any our branches countrywide.

Atlantic Bank Mobile is an online banking application that allows customers to perform banking transactions and services anywhere and anytime, from their favourite mobile device! Atlantic Bank Mobile offers users a modern, secure, convenient, and quick way to access their accounts and manage their finances. Atlantic Bank Mobile will be available for download on both iOS and Android devices and can be downloaded through the respective app stores.

The launch of our newly redesigned personal Atlantic Online and Atlantic Mobile app demonstrates our commitment to delivering an APPmazing banking experience. Our online banking offers innovation, convenience, and security to meet your evolving digital banking needs.

For more information, visit [www.atlabank.com](http://www.atlabank.com), Contact Us or Live Chat. Atlantic Bank takes this opportunity to thank our customers for their continuous trust and for choosing to bank with us!

### About Atlantic Bank

Atlantic Bank is the preferred service-oriented financial institution in Belize, providing local and international access to an array of financial products and services via a country-wide network of branches and a dynamic range of technology-driven channels.

*Building the future together*

# GRASSROOTS

## The Mountain Pine Ridge Youth Challenge —a second chance for youth



By Hon. Gilroy Usher

“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.” –Franklin D. Roosevelt

Last week Friday Hon. Rodwell Ferguson Minister of Youth, Sports, and Transport; Hon. Gilroy Usher Minister of State in the Ministry; C.E.O

Adele Catzim; Kevin Cadle, the director of Youth Services; and senior members of his staff visited the Mountain Pine Ridge Youth Challenge for at risk youths.

The camp is located at the former D Silva BDF Camp in the Mountain Pine Ridge about half hour drive on the southern side of Georgeville on the George Price Highway in the Cayo District.

It was opened about two months ago to give at risk youth the opportunity to take stock of their lives in a peaceful, quiet, and welcoming environment away from the many negative influences in the society and develop self-motivation to turn their lives around into become law abiding and productive citizens.

The Mountain Pine Ridge Youth Challenge is collaborative initiative of the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Transport that is being executed by Department of Youth Services.

The program was started two months ago in April with 26 male challengers. It presently has 22 challengers ages 14 to 17.

The challengers are mainly youths who are a) out of school b) experiencing behavior problems, or 3) losing focus in their lives due to the use of unlawful substances.

The camp training is for two years. The first nine months is for behavior

modification. That is a crucial training, because to learn a person has to listen, and many of the challengers were accustomed to doing as they please, before they entered the training facility. After nine months of training, challengers will get the opportunity to visit their families for three months. On their return to camp they will commence a one-year apprenticeship program with the Belize Police Department, The Belize Coast Guard, and the Belize Defense Force.

At the conclusion of the apprenticeship program challengers, who meet the qualifications to be a member of any of the uniform services, will be given a recommendation to join a particular uniform force if they so choose, or they will be given recommendations to further their education or seek employment with businesses in the private or public sector.

The Challengers at Mountain Pine Ridge are from a city, town, or a village in each district. They are given three balanced meals daily that are similar to the family pot.

Ten challengers occupy a dorm in the company of two members of the BDF. That is a necessity to ensure the challengers practice orderliness, respect, cooperation, self-control and other life skills they are taught in behavior modification classes at all times. The Challengers are also taught math, English, and reading among other basic subjects.

While members of the BDF are the instructors at the mountain Pine Ridge Youth Challenge, they are not allowed to physically or emotionally abuse any of the challengers. Similarly, challengers are not allowed to abuse each other or any of the instructors or other members of staff. Challengers are encouraged to report any case of physical or



emotional abuse and anyone found guilty of any such infraction is immediately transferred from the program without exception.

For the time the Mountain Pine Ridge Youth Challenge is supplied with electricity by two generators. Plans are presently underway however to provide the facility with electricity 24/7 using a solar system.

For entertainment on the compound, challengers participate in football, basketball, and other sports, and on weekends they are given the opportunity to know their country with visits to Rio Hon Pond, Caracol Maya Ruin, the Fire Department, or other noteworthy places.

Saturday June 24th will be Family Day at the Mountain Pine Ridge Youth Challenge. On June 24th parents and challenges will have opportunity to interact with each other. Challengers will also have the opportunity entertain their parents with sporting events and drills among other things.

One of the most important things of the Mountain Pine Ridge Youth Challenge is that the Challengers appreciate the work that is being done to give them an opportunity to live happy and fruitful lives.

To make the program beneficial to more at risk youths across the country especially in Belize City and the nearby villages, all ministries of Government, members of the private sector and concerned Belizeans are encouraged to support the Mountain Pine Ridge Youth Challenge in every possible way.

**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.**

You're Invited!

FORTIS BELIZE

Fortis Belize Public Information Session

At this quarterly community meeting, attendees will hear the latest health and environment information from Fortis Belize Limited, the National Emergency Management Organization, the Department of Environment, and the Ministry of Health.

Where	When
Cristo Rey Village Community Center	June 20 @ 7:00pm
Santa Familia Village Water Board Office	June 21 @ 7:00pm
Bullet Tree Village Community Center	June 22 @ 7:00pm
Calla Creek Village Iglesia de Dios Septimo Dia	June 27 @ 7:00pm
San Ignacio/Santa Elena Cayo CET	June 28 @ 7:00pm

Light refreshments will be served.

Visit us at [www.fortisbelize.com](http://www.fortisbelize.com) or follow us on Facebook.



## Rastafarians in St Kitts & Nevis gain legal right to use marijuana

St Kitts and Nevis has moved one step closer to becoming one of the most marijuana-friendly places in the Caribbean as parliamentarians approved four bills regarding its use and possession.

The Smoking (designated Areas) Bill, 2023, Drugs (Prevention and Abatement of

the Misuse and Abuse of Drugs) (Amendment) Bill, 2023, the Rastafari Rights Recognition Bill, 2023 and the Freedom of Conscience (Cannabis) Bill, 2023 were unanimously approved by Members of Parliament during yesterday's National Assembly Sitting.

The Smoking (des-

ignated Areas) Bill, 2023, which was presented in Parliament by Prime Minister Terrance Drew, designates certain specified public places as smoking areas, to prohibit smoking outside of a designated area in public places, to better provide for protection from exposure to certain types of

smoke and for related or incidental matters.

In his opening presentation on the Bill, Drew stated: "It is not for me to judge who should smoke or who should not smoke, however, I think it is imperative that we seek to create a situation where both those who smoke and those who don't smoke can

exist in harmony".

Drew said he believes creating specific places for smoking is the best scenario for St Kitts and Nevis.

"You wouldn't want people to just be in a crowd or down the street just smoking because not everybody around might want to partake in it and that is ok as well, but you don't want people to not have an opportunity to express themselves. So, if we have ... an environment that enables all to exist, while we upkeep the law, I really think that it is the best scenario that we can have," Drew added.

Opposition Leader Mark Brantley said he was concerned the bill would encourage islanders to operate vehicles while under the influence of marijuana.

He highlighted the government's move to make the upcoming St Kitts Music Festival marijuana friendly as a potential risk for motorists and pedestrians.

"I'm simply saying now that we are taking this formal step, what happens when the festival is over and people take to our roads? I think it is a legitimate concern. It is no different to when people drink

alcohol excessively and what happens when they get on our roads," he said.

Brantley said the issue goes beyond separating smokers from non-smokers.

"We have come here time and time again and tinkered with the law but I have not seen the [educational program] roll out to say to our people these are the possible impacts," Brantley stated while questioning whether police officers have tools to detect if a motorist is driving high on marijuana.

People's Action Movement Leader, Shawn Richards, called on the government to educate the public about the effects of smoking and drug abuse.

Richards said there are many persons in St Kitts and Nevis who have developed mental issues from smoking marijuana and other drugs.

He highlighted that people have resorted to adding other drugs to their marijuana cigarettes to give the joint a "different flavour".

Richards, a former Education Minister, also expressed concerns about the long-term effects on the healthcare system.

- Loop

## An 'unprecedented drought' is affecting the Panama Canal. El Niño could make it worse.

An "unprecedented drought" is affecting the Panama Canal's water supply and leading authorities to impose surcharges and weight limits on ships traversing the key global trade route, according to the Panama Canal Authority.

Ships move through the Panama Canal through a lock system, which uses water from several freshwater reservoirs to float the massive cargo vessels overland.

But Panama is currently gripped by drought, and water levels at least one of those reservoirs – Gatun Lake – are dropping.

Lake levels are forecasted to hit historic lows in July, prompting authorities to implement water saving measures as well

imposing strict draft restrictions, which is the distance between the waterline and the lowest point of the hull, in the last few months.

The lake's dwindling water also supplies the nearby region, including Panama City.

"The climatic emergency decreed by the Panamanian National Government reinforces what the Panama Canal has been stating regarding the reality of a shortage of fresh water," the statement read.

Much of Central America, including Panama, has been in significant drought in recent months. But the start of El Niño "could worsen" conditions, the Panama Canal authority also warned.

El Niño, a natural

phenomenon in the tropical Pacific Ocean, typically brings warmer-than-average temperatures. This year, El Niño is expected to increase global temperatures, and could push 2023 or 2024 to be the warmest year on record.

The Panama Canal is a vital conduit for shipping between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, helping vessels bypass the treacherous journey around the tip of South America, known as Cape Horn, as they largely move goods and commodities from Asia to ports on the United States' east coast.

The canal was built from 1904 to 1914 by the United States, which had sole control over the channel across the Panamanian

isthmus until 1979. The Panamanian government fully took control of the channel at the end of 1999.

Regional neighbors have sought opportunities to compete with the lucrative Panama Canal.

Nicaragua in 2014 announced the start of work on a multi-billion dollar shipping canal that aimed to rival Panama's waterway – which has yet to materialize.

And this year, the Mexican government announced a plan to develop a corridor straddling a narrow isthmus in southern Mexico. Dubbed the Interoceanic Corridor, the plan would include a freight rail train stretching from the Pacific to the Gulf of Mexico.

- BBC

## Death toll rises to 46 in Honduran women's prison

The number of people killed during a spate of rioting and fires at a Honduran women's prison this week has risen to 46 with dozens of families waiting for the bodies of their loved ones to be released.

A government spokesperson said on Wednesday that the death toll had increased from 41 to 46. It is not clear if all of the victims were inmates.

Yuri Mora, a spokesperson for the prose-

curator's office, said the number of dead has ticked up as authorities have identified the remains of victims, some of which were "charred or reduced" to ash after a group of gang members entered a rival faction's area, shooting people and setting it on fire in a prison that holds 900 women.

The shooting and burning of dozens of people, one of the deadliest instances of prison violence in modern Honduran

history, have underscored the substantial power held by gangs and raised questions regarding corruption within the prison system and law enforcement.

Sections of the prison, located about 20km (12 miles) from the capital, Tegucigalpa, were destroyed during the violence on Tuesday, according to Delma Ordonez, who is representing the families of the victims.

A spokeswoman for the Forensic Medi-

cine Directorate, Issa Alvarado, said 23 of the bodies have been identified and handed over to families.

Julissa Villanueva, head of the penal system, said on Tuesday that the attack could have been linked to recent efforts by the government to crack down on corruption within the prison system.

On Tuesday, President Xiomara Castro said she was "shocked" by the "monstrous murder of women ...

by gangs in full view and tolerance of security authorities".

Castro dismissed Security Minister Ramon Sabillon and is expected to announce new efforts to combat organised crime later on Wednesday.

Since December, the Honduran government has operated under a "state of exception", which has suspended key civil liberties and given police wide discretion to make arrests in the name of combating crime.

In neighbouring El Salvador, President Nayib Bukele has used similar measures for more than a year to strike a blow against gangs that have extorted the population for years, winning substantial popularity in the process.

However, human rights groups have criticised the measures as a bid to consolidate power, crack down on dissent, and sanction crimes such as torture and extrajudicial killings.

- CNN

# Government of Belize and UNICEF Launch State of the World's Children 2023

**BELIZE**, 22 June 2023 – UNICEF Belize in partnership with the Ministry of Health & Wellness held a ceremony on June 19 to launch the State of the World's Children 2023: For Every Child, Vaccination, and handover critical cold chain equipment to strengthen primary health care in Belize.

The State of the World's Children 2023 is UNICEF's flagship report and was first launched globally in April of this year. The 2023 edition is the first edition of the report solely dedicated to routine immunization. It sounds the alarm that there is a growing global immunization crisis

resulting in 67 million children missing out on vaccinations between 2019 and 2021, with vaccination coverage levels decreasing in 112 countries.

The report reveals public perception of the importance of vaccines for children declined during the COVID-19 pandemic in 52 out of 55 countries studied. The children who are missing out live in the poorest, most remote, and marginalized communities, at times, impacted by conflict. New data produced for the report by the International Center for Equity in Health found that in the poorest households, 1 in 5 children are zero-dose

while in the wealthiest, it is just 1 in 20.

It found unvaccinated children often live in hard-to-reach communities such as rural areas or urban slums. They often have mothers who have not been able to go to school and who are given little say in family decisions. These challenges are greatest in low- and middle-income countries, where about 1 in 10 children in urban areas are zero-dose and 1 in 6 in rural areas. In upper-middle-income countries, there is almost no gap between urban and rural children. Comparable to other countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, Belize



(Left) Hon. Kevin Bernard at launch

has also reported a decline in immunization coverage from over 95% to less than 70% in the last two years.

To address this child survival crisis, UNICEF is calling on governments to double down on their commitment to

increase financing for immunization and to work with stakeholders to unlock available resources, including leftover COVID-19 funds, to urgently implement and accelerate catch-up vaccination efforts to protect children and prevent disease outbreaks.

The report is urging governments to:

Urgently identify and reach all children, especially those who missed vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic

Strengthen demand for vaccines, including by building confidence

Prioritize funding for immunization services and primary health care

Build resilient health systems through investment in female health workers, innovation, and local manufacturing.

UNICEF Belize has been partnering with the Ministry of Health & Wellness providing critical support to the pandemic response and the subsequent recovery efforts to "build back better" reversing the pandemic's impact on the health system. The ceremony provided an opportunity to reflect on this partnership and the progress made to date to increase national routine immunization rates and optimize health facilities nationwide.

The ceremony took place at the August Pine Ridge Health Center in Orange Walk and included the ceremonial handover of health equipment to the Minister of Health & Wellness, Hon. Kevin Bernard. These included walk-in cold rooms, temperature monitoring devices, oxygen concentrators, oximeters, transport incubators, vaccine app, generators, and vehicle to be used to support the

national immunization programme and maternal and child health services.

Minister of Health & Wellness, Hon. Kevin Bernard, spoke of the past and ongoing technical assistance received from UNICEF and how the collaboration has strengthened, most significantly, our expanded program on Immunization.

"Immunization is a priority program of the Ministry of Health & Wellness. I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to UNICEF headquarters and to the UNICEF country office for the strong support provided to the Ministry for the strengthening of the Expanded Program on Immunization as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic."

UNICEF Representative for Belize, Alison Parker, shared on the significance of the ceremony and reaffirmed UNICEF's commitment through an expanded health programme in Belize.

Dr. Ralph Midy, UNICEF's Regional Immunization Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean, attended the ceremony to share an overview of the report and its implications for Belize. He lauded the government for prioritizing immunization services to "catch up" to pre-pandemic immunization rates and for investing in the strengthening of primary health care.

Ambassador H.E. Nobuyuki Shirakata of the Embassy of Japan in Belize also spoke at the ceremony pledging his government's support to advance short and long-term health goals.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of the winners of a poster competition held at the August Pine Ridge RC School.

The students of the upper division of the primary school designed posters depicting the importance of vaccinations. First place winners were Meidelyn Ramos and Ameidy Mendoza were the first-place winners with their poster and slogan: "A vaccine today; keeps the virus away."



## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) invites applicants for the function of National Consultant to support the Strengthening Climate Resilient Health Systems Project

**Duty station:** Belize City

**Qualifications:** *Essential:* A bachelor's degree in Environment Science or Public Health from a recognized university

*Desirable:* A master's degree in environmental studies, Climate, or related field

**Experience:** *Essential:* At least 5 years of national experience in public health, environmental health, climate change or related field

### Skills:

- Evidence of experience in climate change and health-related issues
- Experience in data collection and analysis
- Strong research, problem-solving and organizational skills.
- Ability to work collaboratively (in person or virtually) with other team players.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills and sensitivity to political and cultural issues
- Ability to work in multisectoral teams and under pressure.
- Ability to meet deadlines.
- Strong professional oral and writing skills, including the development of reports, oral presentations, and technical/persuasive documents for consideration at the highest levels of the Organization.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively use a computer and utilize software programs such as Microsoft Office Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SharePoint, and Outlook. Other IT skills and knowledge of other software programs for Statistical Analysis, Data Exploratory Analysis and Project Management would be an asset.

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

**Deadline:** Letter of application, Curriculum Vitae, and two current letters of recommendation should be sent to [blzmail@paho.org](mailto:blzmail@paho.org) or to P.O. Box 1834, Belize City no later than **June 30, 2023**

For further details visit our website <https://www.paho.org/en/vacancies> An interview will be held for this position and only candidates under serious consideration will be contacted. PAHO/WHO has a smoke-free environment and does not recruit smokers or users of any form of tobacco.

# People's Constitution Commission launches public education campaign

By William Ysaguirre

Belizeans will come to better understand their rights as protected by the Constitution of Belize, through a public education campaign which the People's Constitution Commission (PCC) launched at the Best Western Biltmore Plaza Hotel in Belize City on Wednesday afternoon, June 21.

Presently very few Belizeans, about two percent of the electorate, have read the Constitution, PCC chairman Anthony Chanona admitted, and even trained attorneys acknowledge that the language of the Constitution may be difficult for the layman to understand.

The Constitution is the supreme law of the land; however, after 42 years of nationhood, it is felt that it is time for Belizeans to have a say in how they are governed and to examine the Constitution critically to see in what ways it might be changed for the better.

With some 62 percent of the population under the age of 25, the PCC seeks to encourage greater participation in the public dialogue about Belizeans' rights as protected under the Constitution, to harness the creativity and fresh insights of these young minds to suggest ways in which the Constitution might be improved.

The PCC enlisted the help of a law professor Robert Destro of the Columbus School of Law in Washington DC, who drafted a simplified, outline of the Constitution, "A Guide to the Belize Constitution", which is still 50 pages long.

Belizean attorney-at-law Dickie Bradley further simplified the Constitution to a 20-page booklet "A Brief Summary of The Belize Constitution" Volume 1.

From this, the PCC has prepared a 16-page précis, "The

Fundamental Rights of the People of Belize", and these three books were introduced to the public at Wednesday's launch.

The members of the PCC also discussed the ways how they planned to reach out to the public to inform and educate them about the Constitution, and to get them involved in the reform process, at a two-day workshop that began on Tuesday at the Biltmore. As former mayor Darrel Bradley, a practicing attorney, explained, it is equally important to get the public's feedback after they have had the Constitution explained to them.

Belize National Teachers Union President Ruth Shoman is the Northern Zone leader for commissioners from Corozal and Orange Walk, and she proposed that young people in schools be engaged through various essay and poster competitions, possibly to design apps to facilitate the survey process.

Chanona said the PCC will prepare questionnaires to conduct online surveys, and will enlist the help of the Statistical Institute of Belize to validate the data collected by these surveys. Each zone will develop their own citizens' survey, but the questions will be the same across all zones, for the electorate to receive a uniform message.

The public education campaign was enacted with the signing of several memorandums of understanding (MOU): one with The Reporter Newspaper which will provide a free page each week for a public education message about the Constitution. Another MOU is with the Ministry of Education which will be implementing the outreach message in the schools. There is also an agreement

with the SIB for their technical support, and with Belizeans in the Diaspora to hear their contributions to the discourse.

The Education ministry's participation is crucial as they have access to about 6,000 teachers who can help to get the message out to the 100,000 children who are in high school, and in this way the word will also reach their parents.

The PCC invited the media to the opening of their education workshop, as the media will



**PCC chairman  
Anthony Chanona**



**Attorney  
Darrel Bradley**



**Professor Robert  
Destro - Columbus  
School of Law**

be instrumental in getting the word out.

At this forum, Attorney Dickie Bradley gave the press short shrift, lamenting the virtual media blackout of reports about the PCC's activities over the past seven months since the Commission

was sworn on the steps of the National Assembly in last November.

He said the media stand to gain from the process, but chairman Chanona admitted the PCC's budget of \$1.5 million is limited and must be wisely spent. As it is, the

commissioners have been devoting their time and travelling hundreds of miles at their own cost to attend the Commission's meetings. He said the PCC had submitted a proposed budget of \$7.2 million, but only \$1.5 million has been approved so far.



## GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE

### TENDER NOTICE

The Government of Belize invites tenders for the provision of service of Master Agent for the sale of lottery tickets for the Belize Government Lottery (Boledo, Jackpot Lottery and Ordinary Lottery). One Master Agent is needed for each of the respective geographic zones (Northern Zone- Corozal District and Orange Walk District; Eastern Zone- Belize District; Western Zone- Cayo District; Southern Zone- Stann Creek District and Toledo District). Disclaimer: Applicants cannot apply to be a Master Agent for more than one zone.

The tender procedure has two rounds. The first round will consist of the review of the technical proposal and short listing of the applicants. In the second round, the financial proposals of the short-listed applicants will be reviewed and the most suitable proposals will be selected.

**Who can apply:** A company with fit and proper personnel who have a minimum of five years' experience in management and sales can apply and submit proposals. Marketing and sales experience in lotteries will be an asset. All shareholders of the company applying shall be "fit and proper" persons. Any applicant who was previously a license holder must have a history of full compliance with the Lotteries Control Act and Regulations.

**How to apply:** The Government would like interested parties to submit applications, Technical Proposals and Financial Proposals to be Master Agent for the sale of lottery tickets for the Belize Government Lotteries. The application requirements, the application form and the terms of reference can be downloaded from our website: <https://www.invest.gov.bz> requested from the Investment Policy & Compliance Unit, Office of the Prime Minister, and Ministry of Investment. All costs related to the preparation and presentation of the documents shall be borne by the applicant, therefore no claim shall be enforced against the Selection of Tenders Panel. Technical proposals and financial proposals should be sealed separately.

**Deadline:** All tender applications shall be enclosed in a sealed package and hand delivered to: No. 3 Mango Street, Belmopan City, between June 20, 2023, and July 7, 2023, during business hours (9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.) and (1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.). For more details, please reference the Call for Applications Document on our website.

#### **For more information contact:**

**Investment, Policy & Compliance Unit**

Office of the Prime Minister and Ministry of Investment

No. 3 Mango Street, City of Belmopan

Cayo District

BELIZE, C.A.

**Website:** <https://www.invest.gov.bz>

**Telephone:** 880-4728/ 880-4729

**Email:** [BelizeInvestment@invest.gov.bz](mailto:BelizeInvestment@invest.gov.bz)



# Preventing Alzheimer's: Here's six Ways You May Reduce Your Risk

Alzheimer's robs its victims of their memories and there is no cure, but there are things you can do to prevent Alzheimer's disease.

With Alzheimer's, two types of brain proteins, called tau tangles and beta-amyloid plaques, grow out of control. According to Harvard Health, these proteins destroy brain cells and cause symptoms like confusion, memory loss and personality changes.

Yet, there are many preventive measures that can be taken to reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer's. Here are six ways you can help prevent this debilitating condition and protect your brain health.

## Exercise

According to Alzheimer's Society UK, the results of 11 studies revealed that Alzheimer's risk was reduced by 45% for middle-aged people who exercised regularly. Older people have also been scientifically shown to benefit from exercise, which helps improve memory and thinking.

While the reasons exercise is so beneficial for reducing Alzheimer's risk are still being researched, one study published in Nature Metabolism points to a hormone called irisin that's released during physical activity. The researchers showed that this hormone has positive effects on cognition and nerve inflammation in the brain.

"The most convincing evidence is that physical exercise helps prevent the development of Alzheimer's or slow the progression in people who have symptoms," Dr. Gad Marshall, director of clinical trials at Brigham & Women's Center for Alzheimer Research and Treatment, said in a recent article.

"The recommendation is 30 minutes of moderately vigorous aerobic exercise, three to four days per week," he advised.

## Stop smoking

There are chemical toxins in cigarettes that can increase brain inflammation, cause vascular bleeding and add stress to cells, which are all tied to Alzheimer's disease development. In fact, the Alzheimer's Society UK notes that a series of systematic reviews found smoking may increase Alzheimer's risk by 30% to 50%.

To help you quit smoking, the National Institute on Aging (NIA) offers the following tips:

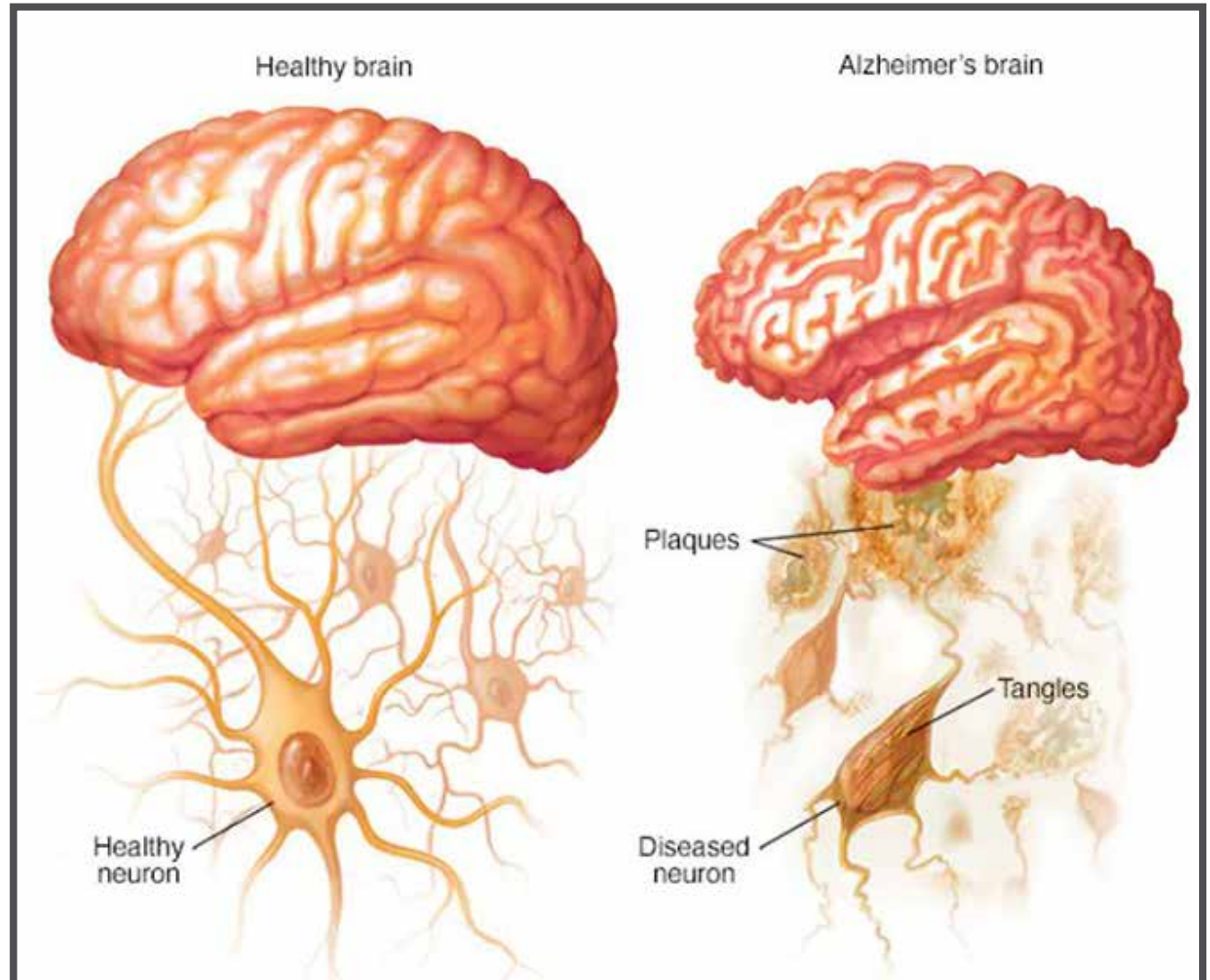
- Use support products like nicotine replacement patches or doctor-prescribed medications
- Make an exercise plan
- Use the money you save on quitting on a rewards system
- Ask for help from loved ones
- Try individual or group therapy
- Download quit-smoking apps for motivation and educational tips
- Eat a healthy diet

Marshall said that eating a Mediterranean diet "has been shown to help thwart Alzheimer's or slow its progression."

One NIA-funded study published recently in the journal Neurology revealed that both the Mediterranean and MIND diets (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) helped reduce the signs of Alzheimer's disease and lowered amyloid plaque levels in the brain.

These diets consist of foods like:

- Whole grains
- Green leafy vegetables
- Fish



- Beans
- Olive oil
- Nuts

## Manage your heart health

Both the Alzheimer's Association and the NIA point out that factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes, which increase your risk of developing cardiovascular disease, also increase your Alzheimer's risk.

In fact, a recent meta-analysis of six studies published in The Lancet Neurology showed that people taking low blood pressure medication cut their Alzheimer's disease risk by one-third.

To control your blood pressure, try these tips from the NIA:

- Create a heart-healthy diet plan
- Reduce your salt intake because blood pressure becomes more salt-sensitive with age
- Drink alcohol in moderation (no more than one drink a day for women and two drinks a day for men)

Avoid smoking  
Exercise about 150 minutes per week  
Stay socially connected  
"We think that greater social contact helps prevent Alzheimer's, [but right now] there is only information from observational studies," said Marshall.

While the reasons why socializing helps cut your risk are still unclear, the Alzheimer's Association says that social connections may shore up nerve cell connections in the brain, making memory and thinking flow more smoothly.

Need some suggestions for staying connected? The NIA has a few ideas:

- Reach out to family, friends, or other trusted community members at least once a day
- Check out volunteer opportunities in your area
- Take a class in an area that interests you
- Adopt a pet
- Start up a hobby again that you've set aside

## Get a good night's rest

"Growing evidence suggests that improved sleep can help prevent Alzheimer's and is linked to greater amyloid clearance from the brain," Marshall explained.

A study in Britain published recently in the journal Nature Communications tracked the behavior of almost 8,000 people over the course of 20 years, starting when they were 50. Compared with people who slept seven hours a night in their 50s and 60s, those who slept six hours or less a night were 30% more likely to be diagnosed with dementia.

The Sleep Foundation offers some great tips on getting more sleep, such as:

- Shut off technology an hour before bed
- Follow a consistent bedtime routine
- Reduce caffeine intake



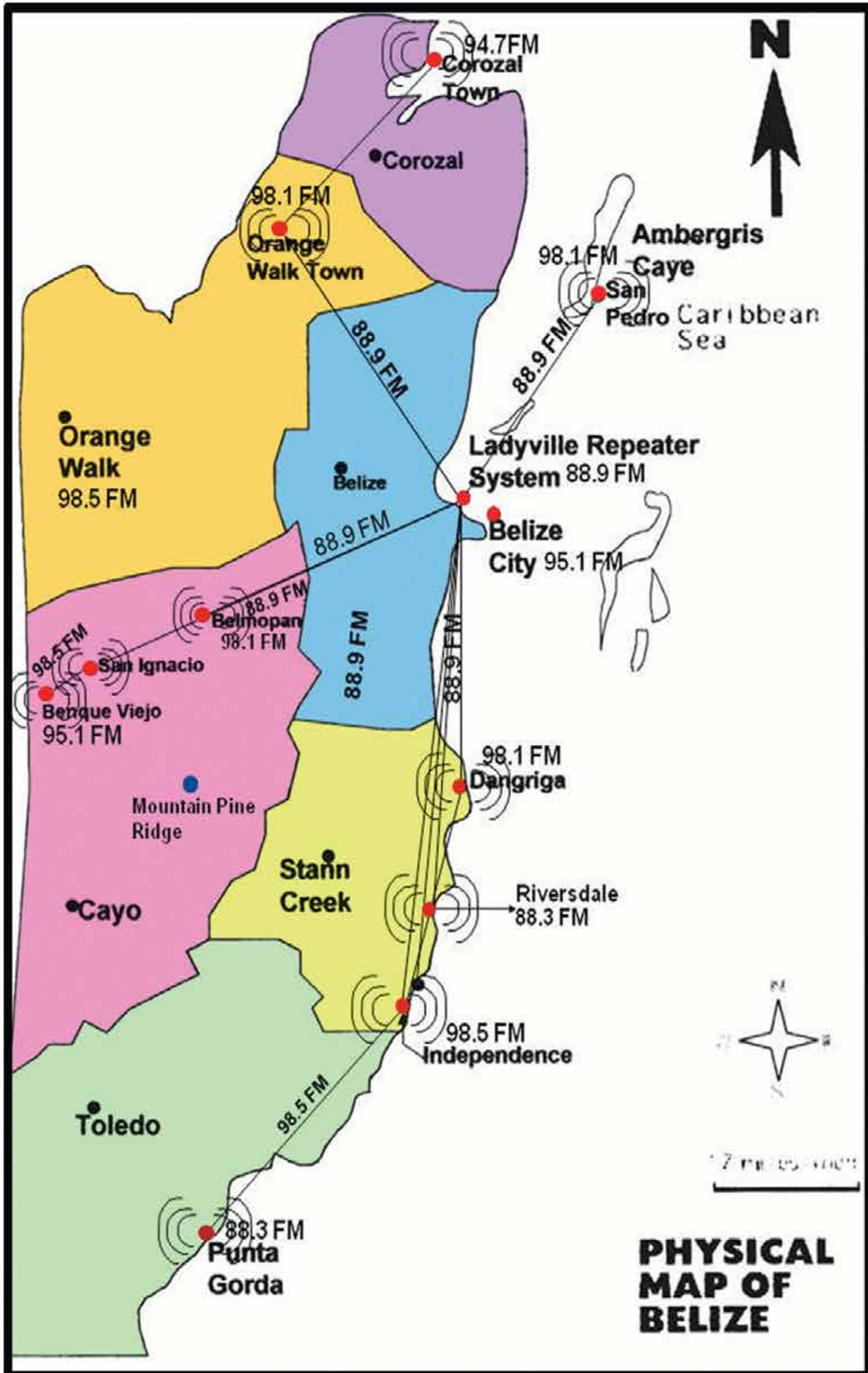
## Oración al Espíritu Santo

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 conmigo 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.

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