

Reporter

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Prime Minister: ‘Yes, we will have a referendum’



Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño

By Michelle Sutherland

“Yes we will have a referendum.”

This is how Prime Minister John Briceño answered The Reporter when asked whether he will be yielding to the collective voices of over 20,000 Belizeans who signed on to a petition requesting a referendum



BELIZE

**REFERENDUM ACT
CHAPTER 10**

REVISED EDITION 2020

**SHOWING THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS AS AT
31ST DECEMBER, 2020**

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Churches deliver 20k petition signatures to the Governor General



The petitioners delivered over 20,000 signatures to the Governor General

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UDP calls for Police Commissioner to resign



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UDP Chairman Michael Peyrefitte



MAHMIE

Last week the Government of Belize announced that it had put in place a Working Committee to study and report on the implications and effects of a free trade agreement with Mexico. Mexico has made it clear that she prefers a Free trade agreement instead of a partial scope agreement covering specified items.

The move was greeted with cautious enthusiasm by the business sector as well as the wider community in Belize, which already has extensive trans-border interactions with Mexico. The Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) for its part—as a member of the National Trade Negotiating Committee—had underscored the importance of conducting thorough analyses to ensure the best outcomes from the negotiation process with Mexico.

Via press release, the BCCI commended the government for “engaging with the United Nation’s Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to carry out a computable general equilibrium analysis (CGE) to assist Belize to examine the likely impacts of a Belize-Mexico Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on all economic agents, including firms, consumers, workers, and more.”

The BCCI’s release also applauded the government for forming an “Interagency Task Force to conduct an Economic Impact Assessment” of such an FTA. There is wisdom Belize has much to gain from such analyses informing the way forward.

If done well, Free Trade with Mexico could help protect Belize from such external shocks as those generated by the Russia-Ukraine war in Europe which has already impacted shipping and fuel and food. It will give to Belize a viable alternative to unreliable and increasingly expensive shipping.

It could help ease the burden of US foreign exchange. International trade will still need Forex, but traders who have links to Chetumal will be able to use pesos for their purchases. Of course, our banks will have to become more cosmopolitan and accept the Mexican peso as a valid medium for trade.

Corozal could become a commercial hub with a need for adequate trucking infrastructure and vastly improved warehouse facilities, and this could easily extend to Orange Walk as well. Belize will also need to develop her export potential to go beyond primary agriculture and fisheries products to include things like computer technology, programming, engineering, construction, translation, banking, and finance.

In other words, the pressure will be on Belize to grow and perform on an international level. The challenge for Belize will be how to replace revenue that will be lost from Customs duties when free trade kicks in. One of the key advantages of free trade is that imports become inevitably cheaper. This is of super importance because our biggest financial threat comes from inflation. And in a war environment, inflation will become an imminent problem.

There will have to be a quid pro quo, and the General Sales Tax may need to be revisited. But if Belize can cut down on inflation and achieve full employment, the economy should have no trouble absorbing a modest hike in some selective taxes that do not further oppress working class Belizeans.

This is where the Working Committee comes in. Its job will be to find inventive ways to stimulate new revenue streams.

It’s going to be exciting, stressful perhaps, but. Eminently do-able!

Dear Editor,

In an age that is so often described as GODLESS I dare to talk about ORIGINAL SIN.

Even today when some think that it is good military strategy to wantonly destroy property and to kill the most vulnerable and innocent defenseless women and children, we squint and then open our eyes.

Indeed, every act against NATURAL LAW is evil, because it is, really a rejection of truth. When God first created man and formed woman from the very substance of him, they intercoursed. That was a spectacular ecstasy, both agreeing: we need nothing more but ourselves to be joyful. What man and woman really did was to declare their independence from God.

In our COLONIAL experience, we naturally developed our own way of being and expressing it aloud. When the British Lady, fresh from Shakespeare’s land asked the African girl: where is your mommy? The answer was Mahmie jus di get up. Yes “Mahmie”, not “mommy” is what she heard.

Without stretching reality too far, that young girl, upon first beholding a big luscious fruit for the first time, in a moment of nakedness realized that the beautiful mounds on her chest looked

every bit like that fruit – MAHMIE!

For MOTHER’S DAY I thought I should greet Belize with a significant insight. Sometimes my imagination is pure: I remembered the time when JESUS was walking in a crowd, and a lady called out at HIM: BLESSED is the womb that bore you and the teats that suckled you. Those breasts, that woman, that body has been preserved by the Almighty for all eternity. This is how it could have happened.

They say that John the Beloved was the last to die. They tried to kill him. Exiling him to a barren waste called Patmos, after he was boiled in a cauldron of steamy, smoking oil, but refusing to be cooked. His mother given to him by Jesus when dying on the cross went with him. He, John, had gone out one day to procure something to eat. Upon returning he looked high and low for mother Miriam. Even today people still search for her remains...

In the last book of the Bible John wrote: “The woman herself fled into the desert where she had a place prepared by God.”

Was Mary assumed becoming the first to escape from the TRIBULATION?

Happy MAHMIE’S DAY!

Signed: Paul Rodriguez OBE

Prime Minister: ‘Yes, we will have a referendum’

Cont’d from pg. 1

On the legalization of cannabis in Belize.

On Thursday, the Prime Minister told The Reporter, “The request and signatures have been sent to Chief Elections Officer for them to verify,” and once that process is finished, then, “yes there will be a referendum.”

The PM’s comments to The Reporter come on the heels of the churches’ visit to the Governor General’s office in Belmopan on Tuesday, in which they delivered the 20,108 signed petitions from Belizean’s, thereby, surpassing the 10 percent threshold that they need to trigger a referendum under Section 2 of the Referendum Act.

Prior to the PM’s comment, a Cabinet briefing had also acknowledged the submission of the petitions to the Governor General to commence the process of issuing a Writ of Referendum in relation to the passage of the Cannabis and Industrial Hemp Control and Licensing Bill. Cabinet also informed that the petitions are currently being vetted by the Elections and Boundaries Department.

Cabinet reiterated that they also remain “committed to continuing to shepherd the process with respect for all concerned and considers this an inspiring and encouraging part of Belize’s democratic system. Cabinet remains confident that in the end the right

and best decisions will be made as a country.”

The Government added that it has remained committed to the consultation process in relation to the controversial bill and that while it has already received support from both the government and opposition in the National Assembly, they will hold off on asking the Governor General to assent to the bill.

While we asked the Prime Minister about whether he and his government are prepared to honor the outcome of the referendum, he held off on that comment. However, it must be noted that while under the Referendum Act the Government is required by law to host a referendum once the 10% threshold has been met, they are not legally required to honor the results of the referendum, as it is consultative and, therefore, not binding on Government. The only cost, of course, would

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Churches deliver 20k petition signatures to the Governor General

By Michelle Sutherland

Church leaders from across several denomination lines traveled to the Governor General's House on Tuesday to deliver 20,108 petition signatures of Belizeans who support the call a referendum on the legalization of marijuana.

The coalition of churches led by Senator Bishop Moses Benguche met the media outside shortly after delivering the signed petition to Governor-General

Froyla Tzalam and noted that they were well received by Her Excellency. According to Benguche, "She accepted the fact that we operate in an open democracy. And it is for her office to receive these petitions. She assured us that certainly, this will be going on. Her office will take it to the next level."

Benguche was referring to section 2 of the Referendum Act which specifies that in order for a

referendum to be triggered the petitioners must be able to secure signatures from at least 10% of the voting population. Once that is completed then it is to be turned over to the Governor-General who is then required to present the petition to the Chief Elections Officer whose job is to vet the signatures and confirm that the 10% threshold has been met. The Chief Elections Officer must complete that process within two

months, after which she must present a certificate to the Governor-General indicating that the petition meets the threshold of signatures necessary to trigger the referendum. The Governor-General is then required to issue a writ of referendum within 30 days, signaling when the referendum is to be held.

Bishop Benguche told the media that the churches decided to present the petitions seeking to trigger

a referendum on the Cannabis and Industrial Hemp Control and Licensing Bill, 2022 because they believed that it is a backward and retrograde step undertaken in the name of New Growth Industries. Benguche further stressed that while the process began with the churches, the twenty thousand signatures indicate that Belizeans from all walks of life support the referendum; therefore, it is no longer solely a church issue but a collective voice of the Belizean people.

"We have done our scrutiny. We have had enough people vetting

the petitions, cross-vetting the petitions. And so, as far as we are concerned, having all those processes in place, we can be sure without a shadow of a doubt that those petitions can cross any border," said Benguche when asked about the legitimacy of the signatures.

But the churches say that they are already looking ahead to the outcome of the referendum, and whether that be a "yes" to legalizing marijuana or a "no," the churches say that the outcome will represent the will of the people and that they will respect and accept whatever outcome there is.

UDP calls for Police Commissioner to resign

By Michelle Sutherland

"You need to have a shaking up of the Police Department leadership," stated Micheal Peyrefitte, Shadow Minister for the Ministry of National Security, during the United Democratic Party's press conference, which was held on Wednesday of this week in Belize City.

Among several topics that were discussed during the one hour and a half press briefing Peyrefitte once more called for the Minister of National Security and New Growth Industry Kareem Musa and his CEO Kevin Arthurs to resign. Peyrefitte also held

nothing back when he went as far as to call on the current Commissioner of Police Chester Williams to also step down from his post and to "give someone else a chance."

"The department is top-heavy, and nobody is feeling that level of leadership from the police department; changes have to be made, this is not personal, but it is not working and the numbers don't lie," said Peyrefitte as he went on to list out murder figures from last year January to April 2021, which stood at 30 murders as compared to the same period this year where a total of 42 murders were

recorded. Twenty-three, according to Peyrefitte, occurred in Belize City. "There is just a sense of lawlessness and a lack of control," reiterated Peyrefitte.

Peyrefitte said that the main reason why he has repeatedly called for the resignation of Musa and his CEO is that under the Briceño Administration, Musa only has responsibility for one Ministry as opposed to him when he held the reigns of Attorney General Minister of Police, Belize Defence Force, and Coast Guard, all of which he did himself. With that, Peyrefitte claimed that Musa should be doing an exceptional job at

being the head of the Police Department and, therefore, addressing crime which has been increasing.

"So we are looking at a situation where a person has only one portfolio and can't perform, has not the respect of the police department, has not the respect of the citizenry nor those people who should fear the national security apparatus," exclaimed the shadow minister.

Peyrefitte's comments aimed at Commissioner Williams. He said that while Williams is a hard worker he is simply not getting the job done. "He is not cutting it, in my view, the police

department needs a new commissioner; it needs to be shaken up, he has never claimed that the job was easy. He has never claimed that it could be done in the blink of an eye but let us be frank it's not working; the morale is at an all-time low and we are not getting results from the Police Department."

Peyrefitte's comments were met by a brisk response by the Commissioner who at the same time happened to be in a meeting along with his minister as well as stakeholders and representatives from the Leadership Intervention Unit.

Williams said that while "Some people stay in a corner and pray for crime to increase with the hope that they can get

on board a political tide to take them where they want to be" he is of the opinion that the loss of lives should never be taken for political mileage. Williams said that policing a younger generation that has a propensity for more violence is a more complex issue. He explained that his department and Minister Musa have teamed up with other ministries and departments to form a multi-sectoral approach to fighting the issue. He stressed that while this new approach will take some time to become fully effective, the department will continue to do what it can to address the situation and prevent it from getting out of control.

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COVID-19 killed 15 million people globally in 2020 and 2021



By Javan Flowers

New estimates, released this week from the World Health Organization (WHO), depict that the total death toll associated directly or indirectly with COVID-19 between January 1st, 2020, and December 31st, 2021, was approximately 15,000,000.

At a press conference following the release, WHO's Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom noted that "this sobering data not only points to the impact of the pandemic but also to the need for all countries to invest in more resilient health systems that can sustain essential health services during crises, including stronger health information systems."

The estimates detailed that the total death toll associated directly or indirectly with COVID-19

is termed "excess mortality," which is found by calculating the difference between the number of deaths that have occurred and the number expected in the absence of the pandemic based on data from earlier years.

Furthermore, it adds that excess mortality includes deaths associated with COVID-19 directly or indirectly. Deaths linked indirectly to COVID-19 are attributable to other health conditions and the lack of access to preventative measures and treatment because of overburdened health systems.

According to WHO, 84% of the excess deaths are concentrated in South-East Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Some 68% of excess deaths are concentrated in just 10 countries globally. Middle-income countries account for

81% of the 15 million excess deaths -- 53% in lower-middle-income countries and 28% in upper-middle-income countries -- over the 24 months, with high-income and low-income countries each accounting for 15% and 4%, respectively.

The production of these estimates results from a global collaboration supported by the work of the Technical Advisory Group for COVID-19 Mortality Assessment and country consultations.

This group, convened jointly by the WHO and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), consists of many of the world's leading experts who developed an innovative methodology to generate comparable mortality estimates even where data are incomplete or unavailable.

To the world you are a mother, but to your family you are the world.



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U.S. Embassy Belmopan, Belize
Office of Public Affairs

For Immediate Release

April 12, 2022

Press Release

Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI)
2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

The U.S. Embassy in Belmopan, Belize announces a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for Strengthening Government through Civil Society Engagement. For more information and eligibility requirements, please visit www.grants.gov and search for "Belmopan." All grant proposals MUST be submitted on the grants.gov website. **Closing date for proposal submission: June 2nd, 2022.**

Contingent upon the availability of funds and quality of proposals, U.S. Embassy Belmopan intends to issue two to three awards in an amount not to exceed \$500,000 USD in total funding. Each award will be for an amount between \$100,000 and \$250,000. Project periods should not exceed two years, and the anticipated start date for successful proposals is September 30th, 2022.

This funding will support U.S. Government objectives under the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) to support democracy and good governance efforts in Belize and is part of the Economic Support Funds (ESF) grants program. Project proposals should address **one or more** of the following project objectives:

- 1) To develop and strengthen mechanisms that improve coordination and cooperation among key stakeholders to curb human trafficking and improve services to vulnerable and marginalized populations especially women and children. Proposals should focus on increased public awareness about the social impacts of human trafficking and building the capacity of individuals such as civilian frontline personnel and institutions to identify, respond to, and serve victims of human trafficking.
- 2) To support civil society efforts in working with government to institute reforms to reduce corruption and impunity. Proposals should support the reduction of corruption and the promotion of transparency and accountability across all levels to create strong, capable, and accountable governments.
- 3) To strengthen civil society and government collaboration to improve service delivery at the local, municipal, or national levels. Proposals should focus on activities by civil society organizations leveraging government, private and civil society resources, and network opportunities to jointly strengthen, expand or complement service delivery particularly in areas related to COVID response.

View the full 2022 CARSI-ESF NOFO under the "Related Documents" tab at www.grants.gov.

The U.S. Embassy in Belmopan will host a CARSI-ESF Grants Question & Answer Session on Facebook Live **Wednesday, May 4th, 2021 at 10:30 a.m.** Interested applicants are also encouraged to send any related questions or queries to BelmopanCARSI@state.gov.



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As inflation accelerates in the US, so does the probability of a recession

By Alex Domash and Lawrence H. Summers

With US inflation reaching 7.9% in February 2022, the Federal Reserve moved to increase the federal funds rate by 0.25 percentage points at its March meeting. The Federal Open Market Committee's (FOMC) latest Summary of Economic Projections (2022), released at the same meeting, projects interest rates to reach 1.9% by the end of 2022. In response, there has been much discussion over the plausibility that the central bank can achieve a soft landing without pushing the US economy into a recession.

While engineering a soft landing is historically very rare, Fed Chair Jerome Powell told lawmakers in

early March that he believes achieving a soft landing is "more likely than not" (Powell 2022).

The FOMC's March forecast (FOMC 2022), as well as the consensus forecast from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia's Survey

of Professional Forecasters (FRBP 2022), supports this claim: in both forecasts, inflation recedes to below 3% by 2023 and

unemployment remains below 4%.

To examine the plausibility of the Fed's forecasts, we look at quarterly data going back to the 1950s and calculate the probability that the economy goes into a recession within the next 12 and 24 months, conditioning on alternative measures of inflation and unemployment. Our analysis is motivated by the fact that overheating conditions like low unemployment and high inflation are usually followed by recessions in the near-term. For example, Fatas (2021) shows how the US economy has never displayed significant periods of low and stable unemployment, such as those predicted by the FOMC.

Our central finding is that given the current inflation

of nearly 8% and unemployment below 4%, historical evidence suggests a very substantial likelihood of recession over the next 12 to 24 months.

High inflation increases the probability of recession

Table 1 shows the historical probability of a recession occurring within the next one and two years, conditional on contemporaneous measures of CPI inflation and the unemployment rate. The results indicate that lower unemployment and higher inflation significantly increase the probability of a subsequent recession. Historically, when average quarterly inflation rises above 5%, the probability of a recession over

Cont'd on pg 6

Table 1

	Average quarterly inflation above:	Avg quarterly UR below:	Probability of recession over next 4-quarters	Probability of recession over next 8-quarters	Number of quarters	When did US economy most recently cross threshold?
Inflation only	3%	#N/A	27%	48%	95	Q2 2021
	4%	#N/A	37%	59%	51	Q2 2021
	5%	#N/A	45%	62%	29	Q3 2021
Unemployment only	#N/A	6%	25%	47%	142	Q2 2021
	#N/A	5%	31%	57%	83	Q4 2021
	#N/A	4%	42%	69%	26	Q1 2022
Inflation and Unemployment	3%	6%	43%	75%	53	Q2 2021
	3%	5%	54%	85%	26	Q4 2021
	3%	4%	54%	85%	13	Q1 2022
	4%	6%	59%	89%	27	Q2 2021
	4%	5%	73%	100%	11	Q4 2021
	4%	4%	57%	100%	7	Q1 2022
	5%	6%	83%	100%	12	Q3 2021
	5%	5%	100%	100%	5	Q4 2021
	5%	4%	100%	100%	3	Q1 2022

Table 2

Model used:	Inflation and unemployment only	W/ time trend	W/ post-1982 dummy	W/ expansion dummy	W/ time trend + expansion dummy
Predicted probability of recession over next 4 quarters	67%	61%	62%	66%	62%
Predicted probability of recession over next 8 quarters	95%	89%	92%	96%	91%

Predicted probabilities of a recession occurring over the next 12 and 24 months. Image: Voxeu



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PRESS RELEASE

Appointment of Director Customer Relations of Heritage Bank

Heritage Bank is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Oscar Salazar as the Director of Customer Relations of Heritage Bank Limited effective 3rd May 2022. He has served in the banking sector for the past 18 years. His extensive experience and career began with Scotiabank (Belize) in 2003 where he held multiple positions, namely Assistant Manager Credit, Account Officer, Account Manager, and Client Relationship Manager. In 2017, Mr. Salazar served as Director Corporate & Commercial Banking of Scotiabank (Belize) until its acquisition. Thereafter, he remained in this role with the Belize Bank Corporation up until March 2022.

Mr. Salazar holds a Master's of Business Administration from Murray State University, a Bachelor's of Business Administration from the University of Belize, and a Bachelor's of Law from the University of London. During his career he has garnered numerous trainings in the areas of AML, strategic thinking, coaching and leadership. He has served on several Boards of community organizations including the Rotary Club of Belize Sunrise, Cayo Volleyball Association, and Crime Stoppers Belize.

The Board of Directors, Management, and Staff of Heritage Bank welcomes the addition of Mr. Salazar to the Executive Management Team. We look forward to working with him in realizing Heritage Bank's vision within the context of three underlying tenets, SECURITY, INTEGRITY and STABILITY which continue to be the prescribed framework for how we conduct the business of the Bank.



Oscar Salazar
 DIRECTOR CUSTOMER RELATIONS

As inflation accelerates in the US, so does the probability of a recession

Cont'd from pg 5

the next two years is above 60%, and when the unemployment rate drops below 4%, the probability of a recession over the next two years approaches 70%.

Since 1955, there has never been a quarter with average inflation above 4% and unemployment below 5% that was not followed by a recession within the next two years.

The above results do not reflect our use of the CPI rather than alternative inflation measures, or the use of the unemployment rate rather than alternative labour market

our probit models, showing the predicted probabilities of a recession occurring over the next 12 and 24 months for five different model specifications. In our baseline model, we use a four-quarter trailing average of inflation and a one-quarter lag of unemployment as our main explanatory variables. To allow for the possibility that recession probabilities have declined over time, we also have specifications that include a time trend (column 2) and a dummy for years after 1982 (column 3). We

unemployment rate with the vacancy rate (which we believe to be a better tightness indicator) also yields higher predicted probabilities of a recession over the next years.

Overall, the evidence we present suggests that engineering a soft landing is a very difficult thing to do in a rapidly growing, inflation economy.

Soft landings are historically unprecedented in the US

Some have argued that there are grounds for optimism on the basis that softish landings have occurred several times in the post-war period

	1965	1984	1994	Today
Unemployment rate	4.9%	7.9%	6.6%	3.9%
Vacancy-to-unemployment ratio	0.7	0.5	0.5	1.7
Wage inflation	3.6%	3.8%	2.5%	6.5%
Interest rate > inflation rate?	YES	YES	YES	NO

labour market conditions today compared to past periods. Image: Voxeu

tightness measures. Measuring labour market tightness with the job vacancy rate, which we have advocated for in our prior work (Domash and Summers 2022), suggests an even higher probability of recession over the next 12 and 24 months. Similarly, using Core PCE inflation or wage inflation rather than the CPI also yields the same conclusions.

Some may argue that the historical data presented in these tables overstate the probability of recession, since there has been a trend towards greater business cycle stability in recent decades. Motivated by this concern, and to make maximum use of available information, we use a probit model to predict the probability of a future recession based on current economic conditions and controlling for a time trend.

Table 2 presents the results from

find in our regressions that a trend towards greater business cycle stability does not appear in any significant way once one controls for economic conditions. Finally, we include a specification with a dummy for whether the economy is more than six-quarters into an economic expansion (column 4), and with the time trend and expansion dummy (column 5).

These results suggest a very high likelihood of recession in the coming years and are robust across many model specifications. Moreover, the findings do not reflect our choice to use the CPI as the inflation measure or the unemployment rate as the slack measure. Using wage inflation, rather than the CPI, results in higher predictions of the probability of recession, and using Core PCE inflation results in similar predictions. Replacing the

– including in 1965, 1984, and 1994. We show, however, that inflation and labour market tightness in each of these periods had little resemblance to the current moment. Table 3 summarises the labour market conditions during these alleged soft landings.

In all three episodes, the Federal Reserve was operating in an economy with an unemployment rate significantly higher than today, a vacancy-to-unemployment ratio significantly lower than today, and wage inflation still below 4%. In these historical examples, the Federal Reserve also raised interest rates well above the inflation rate – unlike today – and explicitly acted early to pre-empt inflation from spiralling, rather than waiting for inflation to already be excessive. These periods also did not involve major supply shocks such as those currently experienced in the US.



VACANCY NOTICE

OMBUDSMAN

Applications are invited from suitable qualified persons to fill the vacant position of OMBUDSMAN.

Under section 3 of the Ombudsman Act, Chapter 5 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, the Ombudsman is a Parliamentary Commissioner who is appointed by the Governor-General, acting on the recommendations of both Houses of the National Assembly contained in resolutions passed in that behalf. The Office of the Ombudsman is not deemed to be an office in the public service.

Functions

The main functions of the Ombudsman are the following: -

- To investigate complaints received from the public under the Ombudsman Act about the administrative acts and decisions of the Central Government departments (including the Belize Police Department), local authorities, and other public statutory bodies and State-owned enterprises, involving official corruption or other wrongdoing;
- To make recommendations to the competent authorities for appropriate action against the person (s) responsible, where there is evidence of a breach of duty, or misconduct or the commission of a criminal offence;
- To review the decisions of the authorities in accordance with Part V of the Freedom of Information Act, where access to a document has been refused by a Government Department, or other prescribed authority;
- To perform all other functions assigned to the Ombudsman under the Ombudsman Act or any other law.

Minimum Qualifications and Skills

The candidates should possess the following qualifications and skills:

- Bachelor's degree in law, business or public administration or other related discipline;
- Experience in complaint investigation and resolution in the public sector;
- Ability to deal with persons from a wide variety of backgrounds and to maintain an objective understating of different perspectives;
- Professional demeanour and impeccable credentials;
- A thorough knowledge of the Ombudsman Act of Belize and the procedure prescribed therein for the investigation of complaints;
- If possible, familiarity with the workings of Ombudsman in other jurisdictions.

The Ombudsman must be non-partisan and a person of integrity and high national standing.

Disqualifications

Under section 5 of the Ombudsman Act, no person is qualified for appointment as Ombudsman if he (a) is a member of the House of Representatives or the Senate; or (b) is a member of a local authority; or (c) is an undischarged bankrupt; or (d) has at any time been convicted of any offence involving dishonesty or moral turpitude.

Age Limit

Candidates should be between 30 and 62 years of age.

Salary

Subject to negotiation and subsequent confirmation by the National Assembly.

Deadline for applications

Interested persons in possession of the requisite qualifications and experience should submit their applications to the Clerk, National Assembly, Belmopan, no later than **31st May 2022**.

Mexico's Folkloric Ballet of Q.Roo delights Belize

By William Ysaguirre

Belizean music fans enjoyed the rare treat of Mexico's cultural folk dances and music, performed by the Folkloric Ballet Company of Quintana Roo at the Institute of Mexico in Belize City, celebrating International Day of Dance last Friday, April 29.

The dances offered a cultural tour of states of Mexico, of which Belizeans may have only heard. Led by director Lic. Rafael Romero Poot, the ballet troupe performed "La Negra", "El Zanate" and "Sones de Imitación" from the state of Guerrero. From the State of Hidalgo, they danced the "Xochipitzahuatl", "La Muerte" and "La Llorona". From the Gulf port of Veracruz, they brought "El Canelo", "La Bruja", "La Bamba" and "El Coco". The performances were made more visually appealing, as the dancers wore the cultural costume of that



The ballet company is one of the principal artistic projects of the Institute of Culture and Arts of Quintana Roo

state.

The Folkloric Ballet Company of Quintana Roo was first established in 2006 to promote the development of the arts and culture among young people of the

state. It comprises over 50 dance students and ballerinas of Quintana Roo, most of whom hail from Chetumal.

The ballet company is one of the principal artistic projects of the Institute of Culture

and Arts of Quintana Roo, and over the past 15 years, its director Lic. Rafael Romero Poot has strengthened its repertoire through recruitment of dancers and hours of dance practice. The process

has also benefited the Quintana Roo community, and the company has become a repository of traditional customs and practices of the Mestizos and the indigenous peoples of the state, which are

part of the intrinsic and irreplaceable cultural heritage of the state.

They have performed at various cultural fairs and festivals in different states of Mexico and internationally in Cuba and Belize.



Magistrate's Office

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VACANCY NOTICE

Suitable qualified applicants are invited to fill position of:

MAGISTRATES

Applicants Must:

- Be in possession of Bachelor's in Law (LLB)
- Be in possession of Continuing Legal Education (CLE)

Salary: Pay Scale 23 (LLB and CLE)
\$40,615 x 1,644 - \$71,851

Age Limit: 25 - 49

Analysis of the Position:

- Tries persons charged with committing summary offences;
- Conducts preliminary inquiries into indictable charges;
- Hears and determines applications made under the Domestic Violence Act;
- Hears and determines applications made under the Family and Children's Act;
- Hears applications made by the Belize Tax Service and Fisheries Department;
- Hears applications for Liquor Licenses;
- Serves as Coroner and conducts inquests into unnatural deaths;
- Can be assigned to any judicial district within Belize;
- Attends conferences, workshops and training in relation to capacity building of the Magistracy;
- Prepare Memorandum of Reasons for Decisions in a timely manner;
- Assists with the training needs of the department as required
- Prepares appeals as required;
- Prepares statistics and reports as required
- Must be computer literate with word processing proficiency
- Is accountable to the Chief Justice, Chief Magistrate and the Judicial and Legal Services Commission.

Interested persons are asked to apply in writing to:

The Secretary
Judicial and Legal Services Commission
Treasury Lane
P.O. Box 399
Belize City, Belize

Deadline for receipt of applications: May 15th, 2022

Note: Only suitable qualified applicants will be acknowledged.



Belize Family Court

P.O. Box 1185

Telephone Numbers: 501-227-4114, 4107, 6021

VACANCY NOTICE

Suitably qualified applicants are invited to fill the position of: **DIRECTOR OF THE BELIZE FAMILY COURT-ATTORNEY GENERAL'S MINISTRY**

The Director is responsible for the overall supervision of the operations of the Family Court. The Director shall be answerable to and supervised by the Chief Justice.

Applicant Must:

- Be a qualified Solicitor/ Lawyer, or Attorney at law and have been call to the bar in a Commonwealth jurisdiction; and
- Be in possession of Bachelor's in Law (LLB)
- Be in possession of a Certificate in Legal Education (CLE)

Pay Scale 25 (\$42,862 x 1,480 - \$70,982)
Ministry/Department/Unit: Belize Family Court

Position Title: Director
Salary Pay Scale: 25
Age Limit: 30 years and above
Years of Experience in Related Field: 5 years

Analysis of position:

(a) Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Supervise the Magistrates and Coordinators.
- Establish operational policies for the day-to-day operations of the Court.
- Establish collaborative networks between the Court and other agencies.
- Sit as a Magistrate.
- Liaise with the Chief Magistrate to establish standardization of Family Court policies and practice in District Magistrate Courts.
- Conduct performance appraisals for senior staff, Magistrate, Coordinator and the Clerk of Court.
- Oversee the monitoring and evaluation of court services.
- Supervise the preparation and advocate for the annual budget for the Family Court.
- Develop continuous professional development training for Magistrates and Coordinators of the Family Court.
- Recommend the hiring and termination of staff.
- Facilitate the preparation of reports required by the Chief Justice.
- Address client's complaints where necessary.

Interested persons may applied in writing to:

The Secretary,
Judicial and Legal Services Commission
Ground Floor, Sir Edney Cain Building
Belmopan City, Cayo District
Belize, Central America
Telephone Number: 822-2204 or 822-2235
Email Address: ceo@mps.gov.bz

Deadline for receipt of applications: **May 15th, 2022**

Please Note: Only suitable qualified applicants will be acknowledged.

The Judicial and Legal Services Commission does not bind itself to make an appointment from among those persons who apply.

Japan donates first tranche of medical equipment valued \$800,000 to Belize



The first delivery is valued at more than BZ \$800,000

By Javan Flowers

This week, Belize received the first tranche of medical equipment donated by the Japanese Government as part of the "Project for Enhancing the Healthcare System through the Provision of Medical Equipment" facilitated by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), with a total budget of USD\$4.8 million.

This donation of medical supplies consists of 50 handheld pulse oximeters, 10 transport monitors with trolleys, eight blood gas analyzers, five ventilators, and three ambulances. The first delivery, valued at more than BZ\$800,000, will be distributed among nine public hospitals. Namely, Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital (KMH), Corozal Community Hospital, Northern Regional Hospital, Western Regional Hospital, Southern Regional Hospital, San Ignacio Community Hospital, Punta Gorda Hospital, Independence Polyclinic, and Mango Creek San Pedro Polyclinic.

During the handing over ceremony, Minister of Health and Wellness Kevin

Bernard expressed his gratitude and reiterated the Ministry's commitment to improving Belizean healthcare. "My Ministry is committed to ensuring that all Belizeans can access consistent, quality healthcare, and the nine facilities which will benefit from this donation are critical to us achieving that goal," Bernard said, adding, "We remain grateful to our regional and international partners who recognize our determination to serve our people and are always ready to assist when called upon."

The remaining medical equipment for Belize, which is expected to arrive in the coming months, includes intensive care hospital beds, electrocardiograms (ECG), volumetric infusion pumps, ultrasound scanning systems, emergency carts fully equipped, among others.

Also speaking at the ceremony was Kazuhiro Iryu, Ambassador of Japan to Belize. Iryu noted that "Japan hopes to continue strengthening relations of friendship and goodwill with Belize and the other Caribbean countries and contribute to the global response against COVID-19." Furthermore,

the Ambassador expressed Japan's continued interest in "collaborating closely to address the enormous health, economic and social challenge that COVID-19 has posed for humanity."

The agreement between the Japanese Government, UNOPS, and the four countries was signed in March 2021.

"It is an honor for UNOPS, as a member of the United Nations System, to work alongside the Health authorities of Belize and the Government of Japan to respond effectively to the pandemic, strengthening the national health systems to support the citizens of this country; all while committing to fair public management and contributing to the Agenda 2030" explained Mr. Alejandro Rossi, Director of the UNOPS Multi-Country Office for the English & Dutch Caribbean, Costa Rica and Panamá.

Belize is the last country in the region to receive its donation after the Ministry reviewed its health priorities. Overall, Belize, Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad & Tobago are expected to acquire 681 pieces of medical equipment.



Institution: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
Country: Belize
Project: Solid Waste Management Project II (SWMP II)
Sector: Waste Management
Abstract: Senior Accounts Clerk for the Solid Waste Management Project II (SWMP II).
Loan No.: 3684/OC-BL
Deadline: May 13th, 2022

The Government of Belize (GOB) has received financing from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), towards the cost of the Solid Waste Management Project II and intends to apply part of the proceeds towards hiring of a Senior Accounts Clerk.

The Objective of the consultancy is to assist the Financial Specialist in the overall financial and accounting management and administrative control functions for the Solid Waste Management Project II (SWMP II) Solid Waste Management Authority, the Technical Cooperation TC BL 1105 and the operations of the transfer stations.

The Belize Solid Waste Management Authority, the Executing Agency, now invites interested eligible individual to submit Expressions of Interest indicating qualification and experience required to provide these consultancy services listed below.

A) SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

The Senior Accounts Clerk shall:

- 1) Support the Financial Specialist in all aspects of financial- accounting management of the Project, Technical Cooperation TC BL 1105 and the operations of the transfer stations SWMP .
- 2) Monitor and report on expenditures against budget on a continuous basis.
- 3) Preparation of annual budget and quarterly requests for dereservation of funds for operations SWMP I & II,
- 4) Maintaining accurate Quick Books financial accounting records for the Project in line with the standard accounting principles and the financial reporting requirements of the IDB.
- 5) Keep an updated fixed assets inventory from the various sources of Project funding (IDB & counterpart funding), the Technical Cooperation TC BL 1105 and the operations of the transfer stations SWMP I & II
- 6) Prepare and submit a reconciliation of the accounts for IDB funds and Government of Belize counterpart funds monthly.
- 7) Ensuring that Social Security Contribution are paid on time.
- 8) Management of the inventory of all BSWaMA assets.
- 9) Provide all supporting documentation required for Bank disbursement requests.
- 10) Assist the Financial Specialist in facilitating external and internal audits.
- 11) Ensure that all financial documents and voucher copies are filed appropriately.
- 12) Responsible for verifying that tipping fees are being collected from all sites and paid in as revenues.
- 13) Preparation of wages for all operation personnel
- 14) Responsible for the monthly analysis of operation cost.
- 15) Upkeep of Income Tax Register and regular reconciliation with Income Tax Department. Provide any information required by the Income Tax Department.
- 16) Annual returns to the Contractor General on contracts/agreements signed during the year.
- 17) Preparation and submission of gratuity payment request for project staff.
- 18) Timely submission and follow-up of all payroll maintenance (new hire, contract renewal, deductions etc.) for project staff.
- 19) Preparation of all purchase orders.
- 20) Any other duties assigned from time to time.

B) QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The Person Engaged will have at least an associate degree in Accounting, Finance, Business Administration, Auditing or related discipline. A bachelor's degree will be an asset. At least five (5) years general work experience. Three (3) or more years demonstrated professional experience in financial – accounting management. Experience in financial reporting and disbursement procedures of the IDB, World Bank, or other international donor organization is preferred. The Person Engaged must be proficient in the use of QuickBooks. Ability to work well on a team and fluency in English are essential. Excellent oral and written communication skills.

The Belize Solid Waste Management Authority now invites eligible individual consultants to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested individual Consultants must provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualification and relevant experience to perform the Services.

Consultants will be selected in accordance with the Selection of Individual Consultants method and other procedures set out in the Inter-American Development Bank: [Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants financed by the Inter-American Development Bank - GN-2350-15](#), and is open to all eligible candidates as defined in the policies.

Further information can be obtained at the email address below during office hours: Monday to Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. local time.

Expressions of interest must be submitted electronically and must include a signed application letter, Curriculum Vitae (CV), copies of academic qualification, and the names and contact information of two professional references no later than **Friday May 13th, 2022, at 2:30 p.m. local time.**

Application must be submitted via one consolidated PDF document; only complete packages will be processed. Packages must be sent to the address below:

Solid Waste Management Authority
Attn: Procurement Officer
3013 Bougainvillea Street, Orchid Garden Area
City of Belmopan, Belize, C.A.
Tel: (501) 802 1527
PO Box 285
E-mail: GladdenM@gobmail.gov.bz

GOB Confirms Marijuana Referendum on the Horizon

By Michelle Sutherland

In a press release issued earlier this week the Government of Belize, informed that it would be yielding to the voices of over 20,000 Belizeans, who signed the petition distributed by the churches

which requested that the Briceño Administration hold a referendum to gauge the public's reaction to legalizing Marijuana in Belize. The release stated, "Under section 2 of the Referendum Act, signatures have been submitted to the

Governor-General to commence the process of issuing a writ of referendum." The release further stresses that in accordance with that same Act the petition will now undergo the process of vetting and verification by the Election



Church Leaders Deliver Signed Signatures to the GG

and Boundaries Department before it is to be officially approved.

On Tuesday morning, a team of church leaders from several denominations took the trip down to the Governor-General's office in Belmopan where they handed over the petitions signed members of the electorate to Governor-General Froyla Tzalam, seeking to trigger a referendum on the Cannabis and Industrial Hemp Control and Licensing Bill, 2022.

Shortly after, Church Senator Bishop Moses Benguche explained to the media that the Governor General was very receptive. "She listened, and she made her opinion but she was quite receptive, we spoke, not only on the issue of the petition and the referendum but like any other Belizean she is

concerned about where the country is going. We spoke a little bit about that and while she spoke also in a direct way on the petition and the referendum, she accepted the fact that we operate in an open democracy and it is for her office to receive these petitions. She assured us that certainly her office will be taking this to the next level."

According to Benguche, the churches decided that they would present the petition to trigger a referendum because they are of the belief that legalizing marijuana in Belize is a "backward and retrograde step," being taken in the name of New Growth Industries. Benguche reiterated that the signatures have already been vetted and passed by the churches and represent the voices of the Belizean people from all walks of life.

"We expect our government to respect the will of the people and call

a referendum and let the people of Belize decide," said Benguche. "They can listen to the voice of the people or they can choose to do otherwise. We would hope at this time that they would do the right thing," ended the Senator.

In their response, the Briceño Administration pledged that they would continue to "shepherd the process," with respect for all concerned, will be valuing all lawful input, and that they are confident that in the end the right and best decisions will be made as a country. They also maintained that over the past year, they have held consultations with the various stakeholders concerning the Bill and that while it had gotten the support of both the government and the opposition in the National Assembly they will hold off on signing the bill into law until the referendum process has run its course.

JUNE 4th 2022

Governor General Field (GG Field)
Belmopan City
Free entrance
10am - 6pm

Local Food
Local Drinks, Handicrafts
Soaps, Body Care products and much more

Sponsors:
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Find us on: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp

223-5330 | bcci@belize.org | 614-3138

MAP IS NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

Legend:
 - Commercial Booths (Orange)
 - Food Booths (Yellow)
 - Automobile Booths (Green)

122 EXHIBITORS

- Hella Body
- Women's Department
- Ahlee's Baked Creation
- Oilalah
- Sweetheart Studios
- Mecha's
- NSAA Bath and Body
- Meraki Belize
- Eco Bags
- Tropicann Foods Ltd.
- Country Food
- The Candle Shop
- Julie's Zucchini Salsa
- Crafted by Mama Eda
- Iloomaa
- Ale's Beach Treasures
- Jenari
- Zest Handcrafted
- Caribbean Creation
- Baby Earth
- Women's Department
- Women's Department
- Women's Department
- Balix
- ID Seven
- Nari Self Care
- Sangria Mia
- DirT & Us
- Leisa Belize Stained Glass Art
- Naturally Belize Cosmetics
- Women's Department
- Hoover Oilfield Supply (Bze) Ltd.
- Hoover Oilfield Supply (Bze) Ltd.
- Women's Department
- Green Care Products Ltd.
- Marie Sharp's Fine Foods Ltd.
- Marie Sharp's Fine Foods Ltd.
- Smart
- Smart
- Kroyal Coffee
- Sof Clay
- LI Collection
- TJ's Hair Clips
- Unique Handmade Jewelry
- Brain Freeze Margaritas
- 501 Properties
- Little Farmhouse Soap
- Blue 92 Fashion
- Dani and Dadi's
- Tom Sharp Art
- Hummingbird Furnishings
- Miss Debs2 Go
- Bamboo Tea
- Quality Poultry Products
- Quality Poultry Products
- Customized by Gigi
- Galen University
- Mama Rosa/Southern Queen Products
- Tropical Treasures
- Just Bows Bz
- Rugxury

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Study warns Climate Change could spark next pandemic

By Javan Flowers

A recent study found that wild animals may be forced to relocate to areas with large human populations, thereby, increasing the prospect of a “viral jump” that could cause future pandemics.

As a direct consequence of Climate Change, different mammals will encounter one another for the first time during these journeys, called “geographic range shifts,” and in doing so, they will also share thousands of viruses, according to the study published by researchers from Georgetown University in Washington DC.

The authors warned that such shifts would also pave the way for pathogens like Ebola or coronaviruses to thrive in new areas and new types of animals, making them more challenging to track as they traverse “steppingstone” species and then to humans.

This phenomenon will normalize the risks that people associate with the wildlife trade, according to lead author Colin Carlson, an assistant research professor at the Center for Global Health Science and Security at Georgetown University Medical Center.

Carlson noted, “We worry about markets because bringing unhealthy animals together in unnatural combinations creates opportunities for this stepwise process of

emergence, like how SARS jumped from bats to civets, then civets to people.”

The report simulated potential hotspots of future viral sharing, using a “phylogeographic” model of the mammal-virus network and projections of geographic range shifts for more than 3,000 mammal species under climate change and land-use scenarios projected to happen over 50 years.

The researchers predict that these mammal species will migrate to places of high elevation and in areas of high human population density, thus driving the novel cross-species transmission of their viruses an estimated 4,000 times.

Bats, which are thought to be the “steppingstone” specie that led to the current pandemic, are likely to share viruses along evolutionary pathways that will facilitate future emergence in humans.

Notably, as highlighted by the report, this ecological transition may already be underway, and “holding warming under 2°C within the century will not reduce future viral sharing.”

The authors closed by expressing an urgent need for governments and the relevant health authorities to pair viral surveillance and discovery efforts with biodiversity surveys tracking species’ range shifts, especially in tropical regions that are experiencing rapid warming.



Why Taiwan’s Participation in the World Health Assembly Is Important

By H.E. David Kuan-Chou Chien,
Ambassador of the Republic of China (Taiwan) to Belize

The **75th World Health Assembly (WHA)** will take place in Geneva from **May 22nd to 28th this year**. However, due to political considerations, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** has not extended invitation to the **Government of Taiwan**, and the exclusion of Taiwan in WHA is severely jeopardizing global health.

Since 2009 to 2016, Taiwan has been invited to the WHA as an observer and shared its remarkable experience in the field of healthcare as well as preventing the spread of various contagious diseases. Moreover, Taiwan has utilized digital technologies, such as apps, web-based tools and other information technologies to combat the pandemic, and has enhanced cooperation and exchanges with international research teams to contribute to the global fight against COVID-19.

For the past two years, Taiwan’s antipandemic efforts, and its cooperation with partners worldwide, including Belize, have demonstrated that Taiwan is a force for good. It has also shown that Taiwan is willing and able to join the global efforts to combat the pandemic and tackle the myriad challenges of the postpandemic era. The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded the world that disease knows no borders. Taiwan is an indispensable partner on the path to global postpandemic recovery and hopes to work with WHO and nations worldwide to jointly overcome this crisis. As a result, Taiwan calls on every nation to support its bid to attend the 75th WHA as an observer. Only the popularly elected government of Taiwan can represent 23.5 million people at the WHO and protect their right to health. Taiwan also urges our international friends and partners to continue to staunchly support our participation in the global health network to enable Taiwan to contribute even more in the postpandemic era.

Our voice has been echoed by the **Government of Belize** led by **Hon. John Briceño, Prime Minister, Hon. Kevin Bernard, Minister of Health and Wellness, Hon. Sen. Eamon Courtenay, Minister of Foreign Affairs**, and many other members in the Cabinet and the National Assembly, who have shown their support to us, urging WHO to invite Taiwan to participate in the WHA. On behalf of the Government and people of Taiwan, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all Taiwan’s precious friends in Belize for their staunch support. In addition, since the International Nurses Day is coming on May 12th, I would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to all frontline healthcare services providers in Belize for safeguarding our health.

In conclusion, we firmly believe that Taiwan’s involvement in the WHA can make the world a safer place to live. WHO must seek appropriate methods for Taiwan’s institutionalized and regular participation in all WHO meeting, mechanisms and activities. (E)



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 agradecerle 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.

Big Data in Belize

Big data is a huge topic in almost every business, subject area and country, and just means the data that you can analyse to turn it into meaningful information.

Way back in 2005, it was thought of as the 3Vs: volume, variety, and velocity. In terms of volume, the numbers themselves are mind blowing. In the US, there is a vast library of books called the US Library of Congress - and when I say vast, I mean vast - over 32 million books vast! That's over 838 miles of bookshelves - that's three and a half times the distance from Corozal to Punta Gorda.

Walmart, the US retail giant, processes 1 million purchases every hour. This is the same amount of information as in all those books, and they generate this every single hour. That is a lot of data to analyse!

The second V is variety, and refers to the huge range of data that we generate as individuals for example. Imagine writing down everywhere you go during the day, how long it takes to get to each place, and how long you stay there - things your Smartphone does for you automatically. Now combine that with the websites you visit, the calls you make, the text messages you send, the actions you take every time you open an email, and then combine this with your name, sex age etc... these are all things companies are doing right now. The third V is velocity - we are generating all of this data very quickly, and it's being recorded in real-time in a lot of cases, and organizations have to think about how they record this, store and analyse it in real time.

Now we don't have really big data in Belize, but we will soon have a lot more data than ever before. And that's because we will undertake the most complicated, expensive, and labour intensive data collection exercise in the history of Belize, including the time when we were British Honduras. Later this month, the Statistical Institute of Belize, will be conducting the 2022 Census - an incredibly important task, that requires each and every one of us to answer a series of questions honestly, anonymously, and with a smile on our faces. I urge everyone to welcome the interviewer when they call at your house, and provide answers to the questions they ask of you, and everyone living at your address.

This is big data in Belize! And I hope it's the last big census that we undertake. Not the last census, because it's critical to know

how many people live in Belize, where they live, how old they are, what their sex is, and what type of property they live in - these are fundamental to the exercise, which is officially known as the "Population and Housing Census". But in line with tradition, and every other Caribbean country, we use this opportunity to ask questions on a wide range of topics, such as crime, health,

be a critical source of data, and provide opportunities for efficiency and true big data here. The second reason is that surveys are a much better way of collecting data on topics, without the huge expense of a census. You don't have to eat all the soup to know if it tastes good. And you don't need to ask everyone in the country a question to find out the answer.



education, employment, and income.

The exact topics and questions have not been made public to date, and won't be released until after the census has been completed - for reasons which I cannot understand. And this is important - remember, we, the general public, are paying for this census (there are supporting agencies, but the vast percentage of the approximate Bz\$8 million comes from Government), and therefore I strongly believe we should be consulted long before the census comes along. One example of this comes from the UK (though there are many good practices around), where the public were first consulted 5 years before the planned census in 2020 (delayed to 2021 because of the pandemic). Further consultations were held, covering topics, questions, and publication of results. As far as I can tell, the public has been excluded from the census planning here.

So why do I think this should be the last big census? Well there are a number of reasons, the first of which is we have much better sources of data in between censuses. For instance, the Ministry of Education has electronic records now on all its students and teachers, extending to attendance, grades, and exam results. This will only improve in the next 9 years before the census in 2030. The plan for a national identification system was revived a few weeks ago, and if this is planned and executed well, will also

SIB does this all the time through the Labour Force Survey, by visiting about 2,500 households countrywide, and produce accurate data on how many people are working and not working, for example.

And this leads to the third reason, surveys can be much more detailed. In the 2010 census, there was a section on crime - but only 5 questions. It asked if anyone in the household had been a victim of crime in the last 12 months. But then the next 4 questions only asked about the most recent crime, and it didn't record who the victim was. So we still don't know anything about the number of crimes, not anything about the victims - were there more male or female victims of a particular crime for instance.

If we want to ask people about their experiences with crime, then I'd certainly want to ask a lot more questions - and this is a very important topic, especially as far as unreported crimes goes.

But we have the current census only days away now, and so we all have a duty to answer all the questions. Think of it this way, every questionnaire from each home is one small piece of the jigsaw puzzle called Belize - but we don't know what the full picture looks like, until each piece is in place.

And until we see the complete picture, we can plan the way forward. Without knowing where people live, we can't build adequate schools or hospitals, or ensure there is enough service capacity for everyone who needs it. The census should direct money and resources to place and communities based roughly on population, and once the data is finally published, we should review and analyse it critically, and then hold our government to account, and insist they use the results to make better and more informed decisions for the development of every single one of us here now, and who will be born in the next 9 years before census 2030.



Providence SDA High School
San Antonio, Toledo

VACANCY



Qualified applicants are invited to apply for the following post:

Position: PRINCIPAL ----- Full Time

Qualification:

- Bachelor's Degree in Higher in the subject area.
- Valid Teacher's License (**Secondary Level**).
- Must have excellent Christian values consistent with the Seventh Day Adventist goals, objective, mission and vision.

Salary is base on qualifications and in accordance with the government pay scale.

Interested person is asked to submit a letter of application, copy of their social security card, police record, resumé, two recommendation letter, certified copies of transcripts and diplomas to the email address providencesda21@gmail.com or call **613-7585** for more information.

Deadline for application is Tuesday, May 17th, 2022

"A Journey To Excellence"

Minster Usher signs MOU with UB

By Javan Flowers

This week, the Ministry of the Public Service, Constitutional and Political Reform and Religious Affairs and the University of Belize (UB) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to establish an institutional cooperation agreement between the two parties.

The established MOU will facilitate the collaborations, wherever possible, in their collective efforts to build capacity, share and promote knowledge, data, and information to strengthen the common interests and respective missions of the institutions involved.

"The cooperation will include sharing UB's Learning Management System



Minister Henry Charles Usher (center) and UB's Dr. Vincent Palacio

Platform that will offer induction and other in-service and professional courses to public officers," the government announced via press release. The

statement added that it will also provide program exchanges and interventions to be potentially utilized by either institution.

Speaking at the

signing ceremony Sandra Cadle, training and development coordinator, expressed that the expected outcome of the MOU is an improved capacity at the Ministry and for all public officers. She added that the online courses to be offered would increase public officers' access to information and make it possible for them to complete their education and improve competence among employees.

The release ends by underscoring that the MOU will be in effect for five years, with the option for renewal.

U.S. Congress passes bill to help Taiwan regain WHO status

By Javan Flowers

The U.S. Congress passed legislation calling on the State Department to submit a plan forthwith to aid Taiwan in regaining its observer status at the World Health Organization (WHO).



one of its provinces and not a "separate country."

This recent measure directs the Secretary of State to develop and implement a strategy for obtaining observer status at the World Health Assembly, the decision-making body of the WHO, which Taiwan was stripped of in 2017.

In Taipei, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its gratitude for the U.S.' support, saying that the government is ardently continuing its efforts

to participate in the WHO this year.

As a consequence of the unsolicited Russian invasion of Ukraine, Taiwan has since raised its alert level, wary that Beijing might make a similar move, although it has reported no signs that it is about to happen.

Similar concerns have fueled efforts in the U.S. to support Taiwan, such as increasing its participation in international organizations such as the WHO.

FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT(FIU) VACANCY FOR SENIOR COMPLIANCE OFFICER

The Senior Compliance Officer, under the direction of the Director and Deputy Director, will be responsible for the implementation and management of the Unit's anti-money laundering, countering the financing of terrorism, and countering the financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (AML/CFT/CFP), risk-based supervision of Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs) in accordance with the Money Laundering and Terrorism Prevention Act (MLTPA) and the Financial Action Task Force's Recommendations.

Qualifications/Experience/Skills:

- Master's or Bachelor's Degree in Business Management, Accounting, Finance or related discipline;
- Certification in AML/CFT/CFP compliance (ACAMS / FIBA) preferable;
- Knowledge of the domestic legal and regulatory framework related to anti-money laundering, terrorist financing, and financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (ML/TF/PF);
- Ability to conduct complete, efficient, thorough and ethical AML/CFT/CPF compliance examinations;
- Three to five years professional work experience in the financial services industry;
- In-depth knowledge of the FATF 40 Recommendations;
- Report writing skills;
- Strategic planning skills;
- Managerial and supervisory skills;
- Ability to develop and deliver training activities;
- Good interpersonal, multi-tasking, organizational, analytical and research skills;
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office suite;
- Audit experience would be an asset.

Core Duties:

- Lead the implementation and ongoing development of a sound risk-based supervisory framework for DNFBPs;
- Develop a good understanding of ML/TF/PF risks associated with the various DNFBP sectors as well as at entity level;
- Monitor the evolving ML/TF/PF risk environment, identify emerging risks and respond promptly with appropriate supervisory actions to mitigate risks as it relates to the DNFBP sectors;
- Implement a supervisory strategy that effectively directs supervisory focus to higher or emerging ML/TF/PF risks.
- Supervise the examination of entities in the DNFBP sectors to ensure that they have effective AML/CFT/CFP policies in place and where issues are identified, provide targeted guidance and feedback;
- Review and sign off on inspection reports and remedial action plans, and ensure the ongoing monitoring of deficiencies identified;
- Direct/and or oversee remedial actions and exercise of enforcement powers in a dissuasive and proportionate manner, based on the results of examination of DNFBPs;
- Prepare reports and decision papers to be presented to the Director including but not limited to progress reports based on agreed targets;
- Maintain statistics for example as it relates to measures adopted and sanctions imposed in the context of enforcing compliance guidelines for the DNFBP sectors;
- Supervise the pool of Compliance Officers and provide them with on-going training;
- Develop and execute training workshops and programs geared towards increasing the awareness of AML/CFT/CFP obligations amongst the DNFBP sectors;
- Provide advice and support to the Director on matters relating to the supervision of DNFBPs;
- Work along with the Legal Officer to develop and keep up to date guidelines for the DNFBP sectors;
- Assist with Strategic Planning for the Unit including preparation of an annual action plan;
- Assist in the activities of the National Risk Assessment exercise and ongoing assessment of national risks;
- Keep confidential the private, personal and corporate information at the FIU; and
- Carry out any other duties as may be assigned by the Director from time to time.

Salary and Benefits: Negotiable, depending on qualifications and experience. Further details of salary and benefits will be provided during the interview session.

Interested persons can submit their (a) letter of application, (b) resume, (c) copy of a valid ID, and (d) three letters of recommendations and (e) police record, to the **Human Resources Manager, Financial Intelligence Unit, P.O. Box 2197, Belize City, Belize** or email to secretary@fiubelize.org no later than **May 6th, 2022**.





INVITATION TO QUOTE – GOODS

Institution: Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing
Country: Belize
Project: Additional Financing for George Price Highway Rehabilitation Project
Sector: Transport
Abstract: Equipment for the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing
Loan No.: Loan 4616/OC-BL
Deadline: 2:00 p.m. (Belize Local Time) on May 20th, 2022

1. The Government of Belize has received loan financing from the **Inter-American Development Bank** toward the cost of the **additional Financing for George Price Highway Rehabilitation Project**, and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this financing to payments under the Contract for the Supply of **Additional communication Strategy -Road Safety signs** under the **Additional Financing for the George Price Highway Rehabilitation Project**.
2. The Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing now invites sealed quotation from eligible and qualified suppliers for the supply of the following item: **Additional communication Strategy-Road Safety signs**.
3. Bidding will be conducted through Shopping procedures specified in the Inter-American Development Bank's Policies for the Procurement of Works and Goods financed by the Inter-American Development Bank.
4. Interested eligible suppliers may obtain the full Invitation to Quote for the required **Road Safety Signs** from the **Program Management Unit, Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing**, located on the **First Floor of the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing Soils Lab Building, Power Lane, Belmopan** by emailing pmupcmow@gmail.com AND mow.project3344@gmail.com.
5. Quotation must utilize forms provided in the invitation to quote. One (1) Original and two (2) copies are to be submitted in sealed labelled envelopes to the address indicated below. Quotations by email **WILL NOT** be accepted.
6. Suppliers are informed that they can only quote for the type of **Road Safety Signs** specified, and quote for all items in this Invitation. Price quotations will be evaluated for all the items. Price quotations should be Inclusive of **General Sales Tax**.
7. Your quotation(s) should be submitted as per the following instructions and in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of supply in the attached Quote Submission Sheet.
 - (i) **VALIDITY OF THE OFFER:** Your quotation(s) should be valid for a period of 90 days from the date of receipt for quotation(s).
 - (ii) **SUBMISSION OF OFFERS:** Offers will be submitted on the Quote Submission Sheet including a description of specifications offered, Price Schedule for Goods and Related Services. These templates are annexed in the full Invitation to Quote. All documents must be completed without any alterations in format, and no substitutes shall be accepted. All blank spaces shall be filled in with the information requested.
8. The Purchaser shall award the Contract to the offer which complies substantially with the technical specifications and other requirements in these documents and represents the lowest price.
9. Quotation must be delivered to the address below at or before **2:00 pm (Local Belize Time) on May 20th, 2022**. Electronic quote **will not** be permitted. Late quote will be rejected. Your quotation should be in the English language in the required format or other similar, acceptable format should be addressed and submitted to:

Attention of (Name): Mr. Rolando Chan, Program Coordinator
 Program Management Unit

Address: Program Management Unit
 First Floor – Soils Lab
 Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing
 Power Lane, Belmopan
 Cayo District, Belize

Phone #: 822-1942/822-0100

Email: pmupcmow@gmail.com AND mow.project3344@gmail.com

Above-average hurricane season expected for 2022

By Javan Flowers

As the beginning of the hurricane season is rapidly approaching, researchers have forecasted that this season will once again be abnormally active.

The hurricane season officially begins June 1st, but storms have formed before that day in each of the past seven years.

As of this report, there has been no threat of another early storm forming in the near future, but forecasters are already urging those along the coast and low-lying areas to start getting prepared.

In lieu of a forecast outlook from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

(NOAA) that is expected to be released in the coming weeks, Colorado State University released its first extended-range forecast for the 2022 Atlantic hurricane season, in which researchers are anticipating “above-normal activity” with an estimated 19 named storms, nine hurricanes, and four major hurricanes.

This forecast was deduced due to “current weak La Niña conditions.” Additionally, the current sea surface temperatures across the eastern and central tropical Atlantic are near average, while the Caribbean and subtropical Atlantic Sea surface temperatures are warmer than usual.

It is simulated that there is an above-average

probability of major hurricanes making landfall along the continental United States coastline and the Caribbean.

La Nina was in place during the 2021 season, and it ended with 21 named storms, seven hurricanes, and four major hurricanes. An average season, according to NOAA, has 14 named storms, seven hurricanes, and three major hurricanes.

Notably, Forecasters used up all the storm names on their list for the Atlantic for the second year in a row in 2021, and at the end of the historic season, the regions affected saw, collectively, tens of billions of dollars worth of damage and caused more than 100 deaths.

Salvage Mission to Silk Caye Thwarted by Coast Guard

By Michelle Sutherland

A group of over 200 Placencia residents, who departed over the weekend, on a mission to salvage what is left of their beloved Silk Caye, were stopped by Coast Guard personnel, who informed them that their efforts through heroic were in fact in violation of Fisheries Regulations and as such they would not be permitted to carry out restoration efforts on the small cay.

The group which was led by local tour guide Eworth Garbutt consisted of locals, tour operators, environmentalists, and even business owners, the majority of whose livelihood depends on the small tourist attraction, said that over the years they have noticed that the small island which at one point boasted over ten full-grown coconut trees have shrunk to the point where only three coconut trees are left. The residents say that losing the small island to erosion, which is known to be one of the most popular diving and snorkeling destinations in that part of the country, would mean losing their livelihood since they will be forced to scrap that particular tour from off of their guest itinerary.

With the erosion threat to the island so imminent, and so real that it has

already claimed two sister islands the residents said that instead of waiting for the government to step in and save Silk Caye they decided that as a community they needed to band together and pool their resources in an effort to save the small island from being swallowed up completely by the sea. With this in mind on Saturday after wrapping up several weeks of logistic planning, the group set out in private and rented vessels and barges armed with water, food supplies, sandbags, and construction materials, to spend the day out at the popular diving site and donate their human muscles to the cause.

Garbutt told the press, “This wasn't just a kneejerk approach, we've been doing studies, we've been doing our consultation. We've been consulting, we've been talking and I'll tell you further if your video and see what we have, we have sandbags, that's just to form what we are doing. If you use a blanket to block in the sand, so it doesn't come in and waste whatever you bring goes back into the environment we so depend on.”

Garbutt and his crew constructed a rock wall which they reinforced with thousand of sandbags that were transported by barge to the island. That

was also reinforced with concrete, while efforts were also made to replant some coconut trees to further reinforce the materials.

But instead of being welcome, their heroic efforts were thwarted by members of the Belize Coast Guard. Garbutt explained, “I saw the coast guard boat coming and thought they would have put on a glove to and start help, only to know that they were there with a verbal warrant saying that I need to go in, I need to quit this project and go into Placencia and report to the police station and it was easy at least a hundred plus people there who said no man, if you carry worth, you carry all of us, because it's a community effort.”

While we have not been able to confirm whether Garbutt was in fact charged we are following up with both the Fisheries Department as well as the Department of the Environment for a comment on the situation. Best information is that following a heated confrontation with the gathering the Coast Guard officers did not detain Garbutt but instead retreated and told him to turn himself over to the Placencia Police so that charges for violating the fisheries law could be filed against him.

Sports minister announces \$250,000 national summer basketball tournament

By William Ysaguirre

The Ministry of Youth and Sports will be awarding 40 high school scholarships to the winners of a \$250,000 national youth basketball tournament, which the National Sports Council will be organizing during the schools summer vacation, Minister of Youth and Sports Hon. Rodwell Ferguson announced to the media at the Marion Jones Sports Complex in Belize city on Wednesday morning, May 4.

Now that the Ministry of Health and Wellness has given the green light for sports to open for fully vaccinated athletes, albeit with some health precautions, the Ministry of Sports wants to involve our youth in positive activities which will help them develop their career goals, and keep them away from crime and negative activities, Minister Ferguson said.

The sports council is now inviting teams to register in three categories: under 15, under 19, and open or seniors, sports coordinator Kaya Cattouse. There will be separate male and female competitions, with up to six teams to be registered in each municipality for each age group. Competitions will be played out in all district towns over a two-month period, with the district champions moving on to finals to be played in Belize City, and the championship finals will be played at the Belize Civic Center.

To keep the young people focused forward and upward towards their goals, the ministry is offering a total of 20 scholarships to be awarded to the male champions and 20 scholarships for the female champions of the two youth categories. There will also be a cash prize of \$10,000 for

the champions of the open category, with the same prizes for the female winners and champions.

The newly elected president Jacob Leslie of the Belize Basketball Federation said the tournament will help the young players hone their skills for upcoming international competitions. Belize has been invited to participate in the COCABA Under-16 championships to be held in Nicaragua in August, and federation is putting together a selection of the best Belizean players and some Belizean athletes who have been playing in high school competitions in the United States. Belize has always done well within the region at the Under-17 CODICADER level and at the university level, and Leslie said he is confident that the selection will represent the Jewel well.

Belize has held the presidency of the Central American Isthmus Council for Sports and Recreation (CODICADER) during the COVID pandemic when almost no sports was being played, Minister Ferguson explained, but Belize's term as president is coming to an end. Minister Ferguson will be travelling to Guatemala to pass over the CODICADER presidency to that country later this month. A technical meeting has already been held to decide the way forward for the CODICADER Games, at which it was decided that the next Games would be held in 2023. This will allow time for each member country to hold scholastic sports tournaments in the coming academic year, which will decide the national champions in each sport, who will represent their country at CODICADER Games.



Minister of Youth and Sports Hon. Rodwell Ferguson



**CAREER
OPPORTUNITY**



Belize Sugar Industries Ltd.
Invites qualified and self-motivated individuals
to submit applications for the post of:
Bulk Logistics Coordinator
at Big Creek, Stann Creek District

The **Bulk Logistics Coordinator** facilitates communication between Big Creek's bulk operations and Tower Hill's bulk operations to promote healthy and efficient Supply Chain. This position will be responsible for the coordination of all movements and logistics involving trucking and associated activities on a daily basis.

Qualifications and Experience:

- Associate's degree administration or engineering or related field
- 3+ years of experience in logistics
- Well-versed in supply management principles and practices

Skills and Competencies:

- Detail oriented / Cost Management / Planning
- Computer experience
- Effective communication skills
- Inventory management experience
- Exceptional work ethic
- Team work oriented
- Bilingual

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Coordinating the transportation of bulk product
- Analyzing and optimizing logistical procedures
- Managing inventory and storage levels at Tower Hill
- Planning and managing the schedule of truck drivers to ensure prompt and proper movement
- Overseeing truck maintenance and other operations machinery
- Monitoring transportation, costs, timelines and productivity and generating detail KPI reports
- Ensuring compliance of Environment, Health & Safety (EHS) and Quality Assurance (QA) policies at Tower Hill
- Actively participating and supporting EHS/ QA/ Audits /local regulation
- Responding to emergency situations as needed
- Any other duties/responsibilities as assigned

Letters of application accompanied by a résumé, police record and two reference letters should be submitted to:

Human Resources Manager
P.O. Box 29, Tower Hill, Orange Walk
Or email
HR.Belize@asr-group.com



DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FORM AND ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS IS MAY 9, 2022.

Lower Oil Reliance Insulates World From 1970s-Style Crude Shock

By Nico Valckx

The war in Ukraine and sanctions on Russia are causing substantial economic spillovers, notably for energy.

Oil prices have climbed, but increases have largely been contained thanks to spare production capacity in some countries and strategic petroleum reserves in others.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose to a seven-year high around \$100 before the invasion sent it surging to more than \$130. It has since pared gains amid pandemic lockdowns in China, the biggest oil importer, that may weigh on economic growth there.

For some, rising oil prices may echo the 1970s, when geopolitical tensions also caused fossil fuel prices to spike.

Memories of the high inflation and

slow growth that followed—known as stagflation—have fueled concerns about a possible repeat. Importantly, though, times have changed.

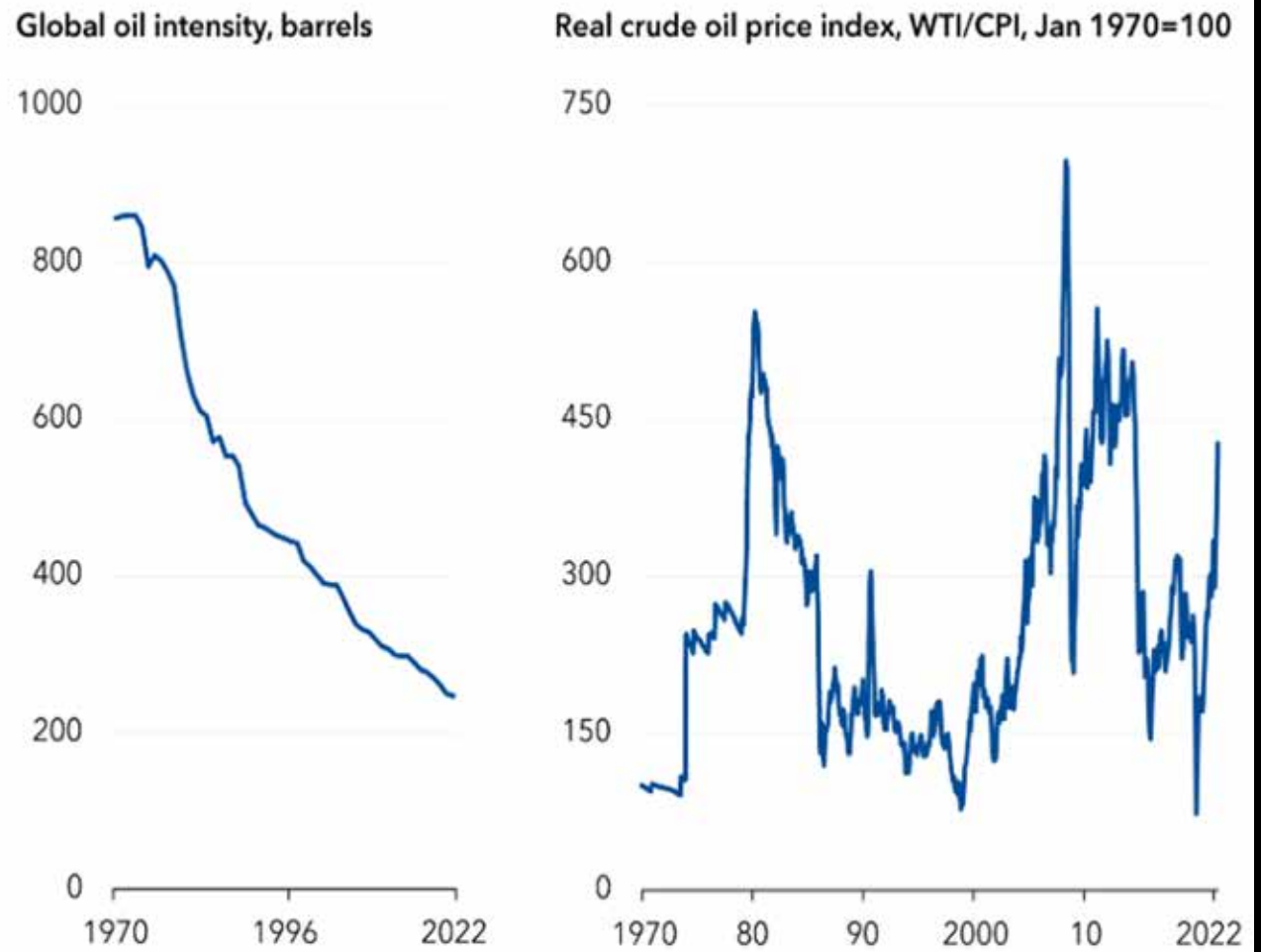
As the Chart of the Week shows, the world relies less on oil, easing any potential shocks. Economists track oil intensity by comparing how many barrels are needed to produce \$1 million in gross domestic product, and this measure was about 3.5 times higher than current levels when crude prices almost tripled between August 1973 and January 1974.

Another factor is today's generally lower prevalence of wage-setting mechanisms that automatically adjust worker pay based on inflation. This reduces upward pressure on prices.

Central banks, too, have changed since

More fossil-free

The world gets much more mileage per barrel of oil than in the 1970s, helping to insulate the global economy from price shocks.



Source: St. Louis Fed; BLS; and IMF staff calculations.

Note: Oil intensity is defined as barrels of oil needed to produce \$1 million in real GDP. Real GDP is based on constant 2017 purchasing-power-parity international dollars.

Right panel – spot crude oil price: West Texas Intermediate (WTI)/consumer price index for all urban consumers: all items in U.S. city average.



the 1970s. More are independent today, and the credibility of monetary policy has broadly strengthened over the intervening

decades. We expect global growth to be close to the pre-pandemic average of 3.5 percent, even after our April

World Economic Outlook lowered projections, but it still could slow more than forecast, and inflation could turn out higher

than expected. This may be most salient for parts of Europe, given their relatively higher reliance on Russian energy imports.

S U D O K U

Medium Puzzle

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

Answer to Puzzle

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

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.



How to improve your mood

When should you seek help and speak to your doctor about your low mood?

If you've been wondering how to improve your mood, rest assured, you're not alone. While all of us can experience bad days from time to time when we feel upset, sad or disheartened, for some of us, it can be more long term.

Recent figures, published in The Lancet Regional Health – Americas, show that the depression rates in the US have more than tripled during the COVID-19 pandemic and the World Health Organization says that depression is now the leading cause of disability globally. The good news is that there are several simple daily practices, as well as longer-term solutions, that science has shown may positively affect your mood.

Many people find that eating a healthy diet, interacting with others, exercising, investing in one of the best water bottles to ensure they stay hydrated and getting enough sleep all help when it comes to boosting mood. We spoke to the experts to get their take on how you can improve your mood and your health, and when you should speak to your doctor.

1. DO SOMETHING NICE FOR SOMEONE ELSE

Whether it's lending someone a book that you no longer need or offering to do someone's grocery shopping, doing something nice for someone else can go a long way to make you feel positive.

"Performing an act of kindness for someone else leads to the release of the 'cuddle hormone', oxytocin," Dr Deborah Lee of Dr Fox Online Pharmacy told Live Science. "This is the same hormone that's released when you cuddle a newborn baby or fall in love."

"There's also a surge in levels of the feel-good hormone, dopamine. Low levels of dopamine are linked to low mood and depression, so anything that boosts dopamine levels is likely to have the opposite effect," she said.

2. DRINK MORE WATER

"Dehydration can impact the balance of dopamine and serotonin in the brain – which in turn can increase feelings of low mood, anxiety or depression," explained Melissa Snover, nutritionist and Founder of Nourished. "Hydration is also needed for normal digestion, temperature control, brain function and encouraging good circulation – which is why it's imperative that we're fuelling our bodies with enough water throughout the day."

It's clear that hydration is important for health, but how much fluid should you be consuming? As a rule of thumb, try to drink 6-8 glasses of water a day. We recommend you keep a water bottle on your desk or close by as a visual reminder to drink up throughout the day.

3. TURN OFF YOUR GADGETS

Staring at your computer or smartphone screen for long periods is linked to an increased risk of mental health conditions, Dr Lee said.

Try turning your phone off for set periods each day. "Research has shown limiting mobile phone use to only 30 minutes a day, results in increased feelings of wellbeing, lower levels of depression and a reduction in loneliness. Switching your phone off overnight is also likely to help improve

your sleep," she said.

4. CONNECT TO OTHERS

"Human beings are social creatures. We need the company of other humans to feel happy, content, and valued. And loneliness is a killer. Did you know that being lonely can raise your blood pressure and increase your risk of heart disease? Lonely people are more likely to suffer from depression, poor sleep and general cognitive decline. Being lonely increases the mortality risk by 50%," Dr Lee explained.

One study, published in The American Journal of Psychiatry, found that social connection generally has a protective effect against depression. So, reach out to family and friends, join a club or



society or become a volunteer in your community.

5. GET MORE SUNLIGHT

Make sure you walk outside every day to raise your mood. "At work, ensure your desk is positioned by a window. If you suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD), you may benefit from the use of a lightbox," Dr Lee said.

Getting more daylight will help improve your mood, your immune system, your sleep and ultimately, your energy levels.

6. LAUGH

It sounds simple, but there's nothing better for you than to laugh, Dr Lee said.

"When you laugh, this leads to a surge in the brain neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin and lowers levels of the stress hormone, cortisol – making you feel happy and relaxed. Laughter is a great way to lower stress and make you feel calmer."

Try watching some funny movies or listening to some humorous podcasts regularly. This will help you to feel happier and more energetic.

7. TRY SOME CBT

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a type of talking therapy that can help you learn to develop coping strategies for a range of mental health conditions, including anxiety and depression. "Research into CBT has shown that it can be effective in elevating mood and improving energy levels," Dr Lee explained.

In one recent meta-analysis of 91 studies, published by Psychological Medicine, CBT interventions showed a larger decrease in depression compared with other treatments.

8. EAT A HEALTHY DIET

What you eat plays a vital role in how you feel. Eating a well-balanced diet is vital for good

mental wellbeing – by consuming a broad variety of vitamins, minerals and other essential nutrients, you're equipping your body, and therefore brain, with the fuel it needs to function properly – including mood regulation, Snover said. Several different nutrients have been shown to help improve brain health, and consequently our mood:

Vitamin B12 is important for producing serotonin, which is a chemical responsible for regulating mood. While our body can't produce B12 itself, it can be easily consumed through supplements or in foods such as fortified cereals, tempeh, and nutritional yeast, as well as eggs, fish or dairy.

Vitamin B6 (found in bananas, chickpeas and dark leafy greens) can stabilize our mood by creating neurotransmitters that help to minimize the harmful effects of stress.

Tryptophan, zinc and selenium all support healthy brain function – and are found in certain nuts and seeds such as Brazil nuts, pumpkin seeds and flaxseed.

9. GET A DECENT NIGHT'S SLEEP

Getting 7 – 8 hours of good quality sleep every night is crucial for both good physical and mental health, Dr Lee said. A lack of sleep can affect our mood, energy and concentration levels.

One study, published by JMIR Mental Health, found that there is a significant relationship between daily

sleep quality and mood.

10. REDUCE YOUR ALCOHOL INTAKE

"Drinking too much alcohol is associated with poor mental health, reduced satisfaction with life, and increased psychological distress," Dr Lee explained.

Cutting down on alcohol or stopping drinking altogether will help boost your energy levels.

11. INCORPORATE EXERCISE INTO EACH DAY

"Exercise is known to boost levels of feel-good neurotransmitters, such as dopamine, adrenaline and serotonin. In addition, exercise results in a surge of endorphins – substances in the brain which give a natural high," Dr Lee said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise each week.

WHEN SHOULD YOU SEEK HELP AND SPEAK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT YOUR LOW MOOD?

If your mood is causing noticeable problems in your day-to-day activities, make an appointment to see your doctor or mental health professional as soon as you can.

Symptoms of depression include:
 Feelings of emptiness, sadness and hopelessness
 Continuous low mood
 A loss of interest in normal activities
 Tiredness and lack of energy
 Sleep disturbances
 Changes in appetite and weight
 Moving and speaking slowly
 Trouble concentrating
 Feeling suicidal

- Live science

Four decades of friendship: Visit of the President Andrés Manuel López Obrador to Belize

Op Ed

Mexico was not only the first country to establish diplomatic relations with Belize when it declared its independence from the United Kingdom on September 21, 1981, but also, in the preceding years, it closely followed the process from a perspective attached to international law, honoring the principle of self-determination of peoples.

Throughout four decades, our countries have made substantial progress in building a bilateral relationship characterized by permanent dialogue and coordination of their positions in regional forums.

This is the third meeting between the Mexican president and Prime Minister Juan Antonio Briceño. During the visit, the signing of the Letter of In-

tent between both governments for the implementation of the Sembrando Vida project is planned. The project intends to train and offer support to producers in rural Belize to imple-

ment agrosilvopastoral production with a view to generating jobs and strengthen their food security. In terms of educational collaboration, Mexico will add three technically oriented campuses to the Escuelas México program that already operates in that country. Likewise, our governments are committed to exchanging experiences and good practices in infrastructure, particularly

around the Mayan Train, and the negotiations of the Agreement on Air Transport are resumed, which will facilitate the touristic ties.

In the commercial field, progress

In the commercial field, progress is anticipated in the Memorandum of Understanding for the Strengthening of Bilateral Economic Relations, which will promote the commercial relationship in order to take advantage of its potential as a border country that has an important dynamic of exchanges.

is anticipated in the Memorandum of Understanding for the Strengthening of Bilateral Economic Relations, which will promote the commercial relationship in order to take advantage of its potential as a border country that has an important dynamic of exchanges.

On the other hand, Belize joins the Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency (ALCE) which facilitates satellite ob-

servations of meteorological phenomena that affect us.

In the multilateral arena, the Belizean government actively supported Mexico's pro-tempore presidency in CELAC, 2020-2021. In the face of the health emergency resulting from the COVID pandemic, Mexico helped speed up regional access to vaccines and specialized medical equipment. As a result, Belize obtained ventilators and 200,000 doses of vaccines from our country.

Faced with the devastating effects of climate change, expressed in the tropical storms Eta and Iota of 2020 that affected the Mexican southeast and Central American countries, our government provided assistance relief to Belize. It should also be remembered that Belize is one of the main benefi-

ciaries of the Mesoamerica Hunger-Free program, dependent on the Mexico Fund and supported by the FAO.

At the regional level, Belize holds the presidency of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which coincided with Mexico's pro-tempore presidency of the Council of Ministers of the Association of the Caribbean States, which favored coordination between them.

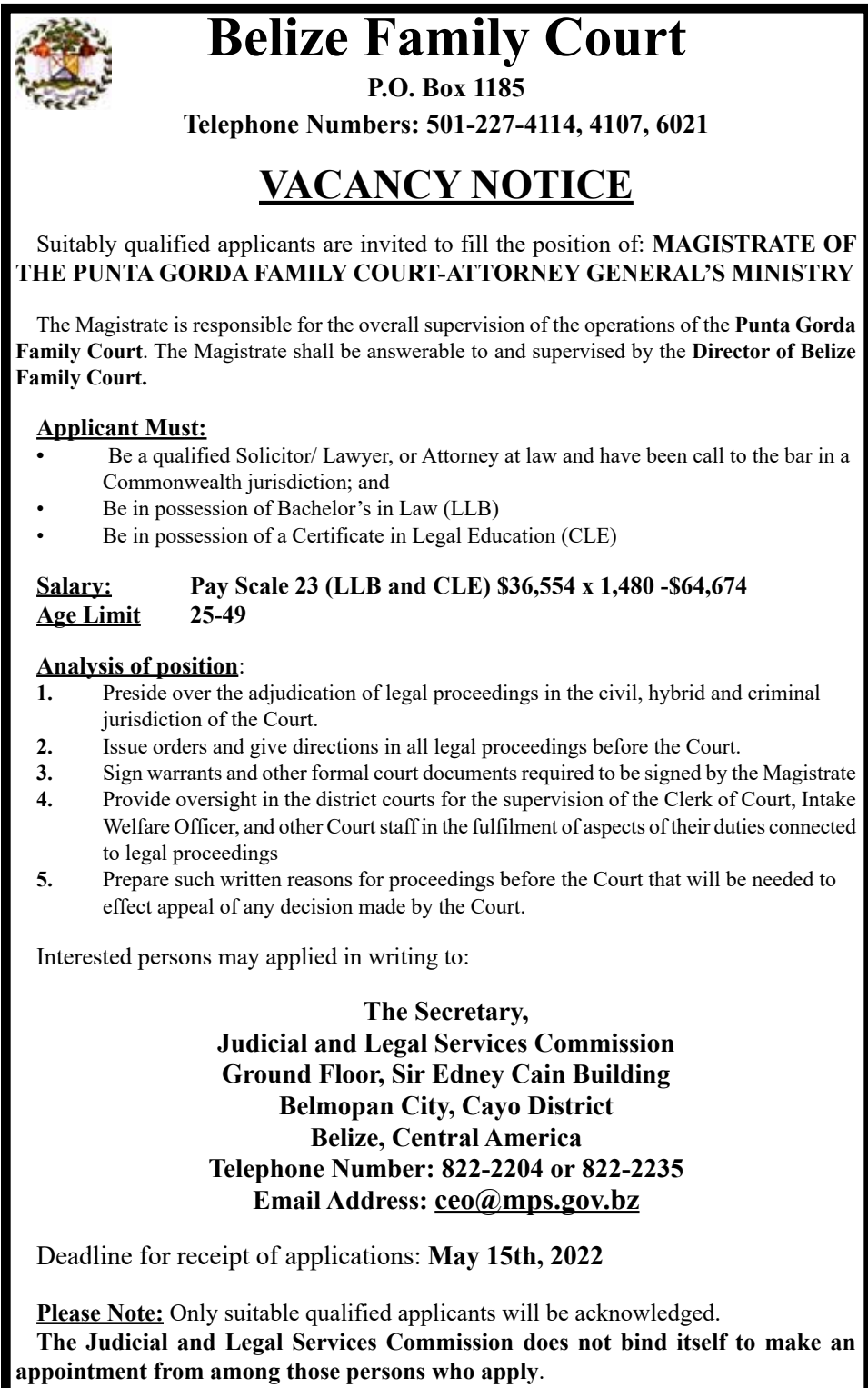
In September of last year, within the framework of the commemoration of the birth of José María Morelos y Pavón and the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the leaders held a productive meeting. With this visit, the friendship and good relationship and the will to advance on issues of common interest are endorsed.



Reporter

If you see news happening

Call us at: **227-2503**



Belize Family Court

P.O. Box 1185
Telephone Numbers: 501-227-4114, 4107, 6021

VACANCY NOTICE

Suitably qualified applicants are invited to fill the position of: **MAGISTRATE OF THE PUNTA GORDA FAMILY COURT-ATTORNEY GENERAL'S MINISTRY**

The Magistrate is responsible for the overall supervision of the operations of the **Punta Gorda Family Court**. The Magistrate shall be answerable to and supervised by the **Director of Belize Family Court**.

Applicant Must:

- Be a qualified Solicitor/ Lawyer, or Attorney at law and have been call to the bar in a Commonwealth jurisdiction; and
- Be in possession of Bachelor's in Law (LLB)
- Be in possession of a Certificate in Legal Education (CLE)

Salary: Pay Scale 23 (LLB and CLE) \$36,554 x 1,480 -\$64,674
Age Limit 25-49

Analysis of position:

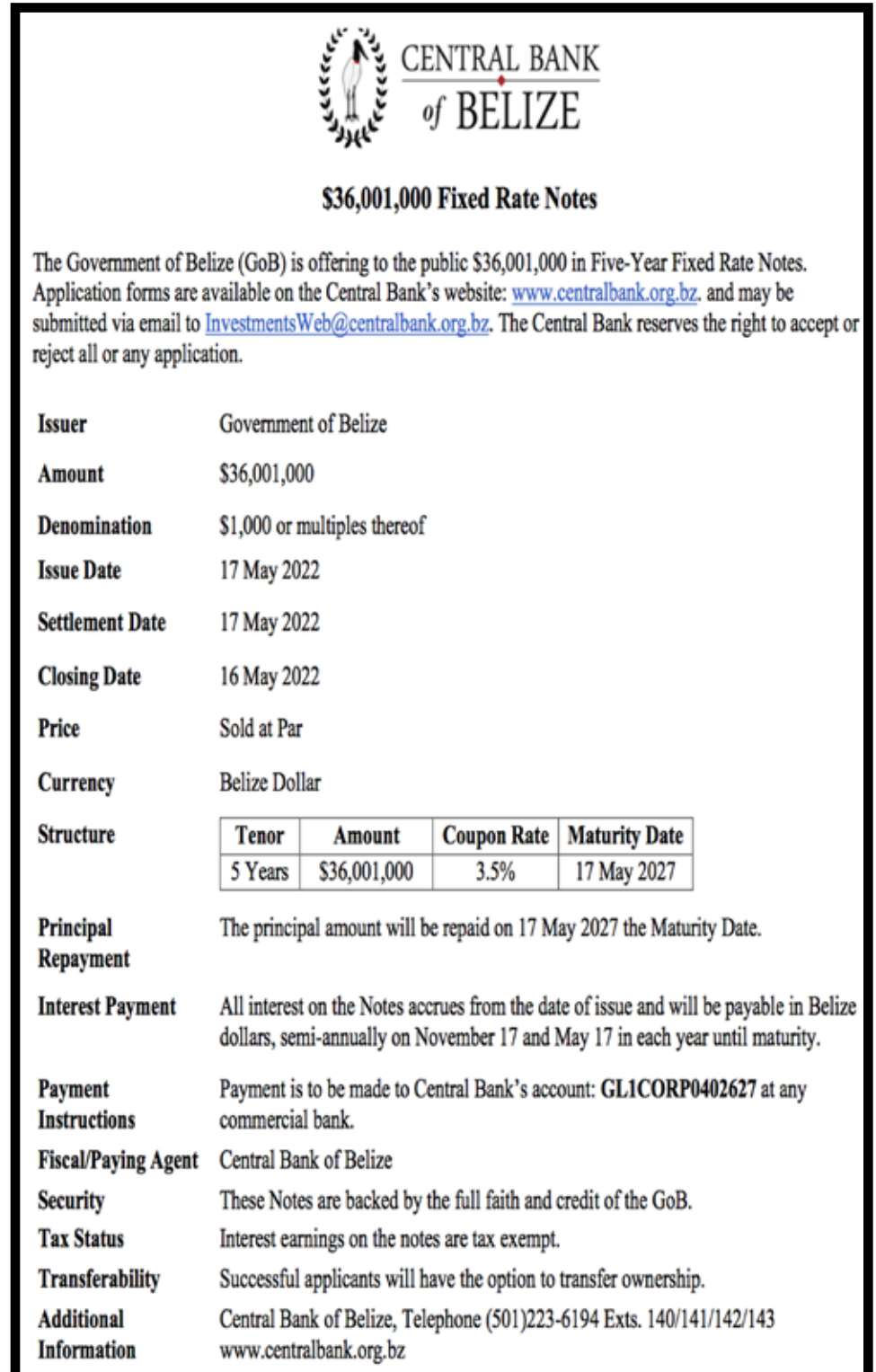
1. Preside over the adjudication of legal proceedings in the civil, hybrid and criminal jurisdiction of the Court.
2. Issue orders and give directions in all legal proceedings before the Court.
3. Sign warrants and other formal court documents required to be signed by the Magistrate
4. Provide oversight in the district courts for the supervision of the Clerk of Court, Intake Welfare Officer, and other Court staff in the fulfilment of aspects of their duties connected to legal proceedings
5. Prepare such written reasons for proceedings before the Court that will be needed to effect appeal of any decision made by the Court.

Interested persons may applied in writing to:

**The Secretary,
Judicial and Legal Services Commission
Ground Floor, Sir Edney Cain Building
Belmopan City, Cayo District
Belize, Central America
Telephone Number: 822-2204 or 822-2235
Email Address: ceo@mps.gov.bz**

Deadline for receipt of applications: **May 15th, 2022**

Please Note: Only suitable qualified applicants will be acknowledged.
The Judicial and Legal Services Commission does not bind itself to make an appointment from among those persons who apply.



CENTRAL BANK of BELIZE

\$36,001,000 Fixed Rate Notes

The Government of Belize (GoB) is offering to the public \$36,001,000 in Five-Year Fixed Rate Notes. Application forms are available on the Central Bank's website: www.centralbank.org.bz and may be submitted via email to InvestmentsWeb@centralbank.org.bz. The Central Bank reserves the right to accept or reject all or any application.

Issuer	Government of Belize		
Amount	\$36,001,000		
Denomination	\$1,000 or multiples thereof		
Issue Date	17 May 2022		
Settlement Date	17 May 2022		
Closing Date	16 May 2022		
Price	Sold at Par		
Currency	Belize Dollar		
Structure	Tenor	Amount	Coupon Rate
	5 Years	\$36,001,000	3.5%
			Maturity Date
			17 May 2027
Principal Repayment	The principal amount will be repaid on 17 May 2027 the Maturity Date.		
Interest Payment	All interest on the Notes accrues from the date of issue and will be payable in Belize dollars, semi-annually on November 17 and May 17 in each year until maturity.		
Payment Instructions	Payment is to be made to Central Bank's account: GL1CORP0402627 at any commercial bank.		
Fiscal/Paying Agent	Central Bank of Belize		
Security	These Notes are backed by the full faith and credit of the GoB.		
Tax Status	Interest earnings on the notes are tax exempt.		
Transferability	Successful applicants will have the option to transfer ownership.		
Additional Information	Central Bank of Belize, Telephone (501)223-6194 Exts. 140/141/142/143 www.centralbank.org.bz		

The Righters Write

World Press Freedom Day

Contributed by the Human Rights Commission

Readers may recall when over a decade ago, in 2010, December seventh to be exact, the then government imposed a ban on Channel 5 that lasted for just over two weeks. What that meant was that that channel was unable to get any interview from government ministers and employees. Over time, different media houses and individual journalists in Belize have in one way or another been censored or undermined by government or individual government representatives. There have even been a few confrontations between media personnel and authorities, with some media personnel ending up behind bars.

Thankfully, press freedom in Belize has not been under more serious threat. However, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the freedom of the press, is facing severe threat around the world, and with it the public's right to information. But where am I going with this?

May 3rd is observed as World Press Freedom Day, and it may not hold much significance in Belize but it's worth noting the state of press freedom around the world. It is an important day globally. And just for a little context, it was first proclaimed on December 1993 by the UN General Assembly upon the recommendation of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

UNESCO writes that "3 May acts as a reminder to governments of the need to respect their commitment to press freedom and is also a day of reflection among media professionals about issues of press freedom and professional ethics. Just as importantly, World Press Freedom Day is a day of support for media which are targets for the restraint, or abolition, of press

freedom. It is also a day of remembrance for those journalists who lost their lives in the pursuit of a story."

The Human Rights Commission of Belize finds it absolutely important to highlight this occasion as freedom of expression is one of the fundamental human rights of people, that includes the press. Back in 2019, the Director of Advocacy of the International Press Institute Ravi R. Prasad said, ahead of Human Rights Day, "Press freedom and freedom of expression are not only fundamental rights on their own, but they also guarantee all other rights. Human rights cannot be upheld, and the Sustainable Development Goals will not be achieved, unless all citizens enjoy the right to freedom of expression, which includes the right to receive and impart information. An independent press is essential to these rights."

On Tuesday, World Press Freedom Day 2022, USA's Secretary of State Anthony J. Blinken addressed the media from the USA and around the world at the Washington Foreign Press Centre on the state of world press freedom.

"A vibrant independent press is a cornerstone for any healthy democracy," he said, adding, "A free press is one of the most effective tools that we have for advancing human rights. Whether it's documenting unjust working conditions, corrupt or failing public services, discrimination against women and marginalized groups, abuse of security forces, accurate reporting shines a bright light on the parts of our societies that need fixing, that need to be illuminated. That brings pressure to change, to form, as we say in the United States, a more perfect union."

The Committee to Protect Journalist

reports that eleven journalists have been killed in Ukraine and another 293 are imprisoned by the end of 2021. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists' final data for 2021, at least 28 journalists were killed due to their work in that year, with India and Mexico topping the list of countries with the most media worker deaths. In 2022 alone, eight journalists have been killed in Mexico, more than in 2021. "This year is on track to be the deadliest ever for journalists in Mexico," said Tyler Mattiace, Americas researcher at Human Rights Watch. At least 33 have been killed since 2018 due to their work in that same country, and reports add that these killings are rarely investigated.

Secretary Blinken said, "When individual journalists are threatened, when they're attacked, when they're imprisoned, the chilling effects reach far beyond their targets. Some in the media start to self-censor. Others flee. Some stop reporting altogether. And when repressive governments come after journalists, human rights defenders, labor leaders, others in civil society are usually not far behind."

This year, World Press Freedom Day is observed under the theme, "Journalism under digital siege", highlighting surveillance and digitally-mediated attacks on journalists "and the consequences of all this on public trust in digital communications". Secretary Blinken mentioned that, "Technology is being used not only to block journalists, but to watch them. From 2020 to 2021, more than 30 reporters, editors, other media employees in El Salvador were hacked with the spyware Pegasus, according to an independent investigation – one of several countries where journalists, human rights defenders,

and others in civil society have been targeted with this spyware."

The latest UNESCO World Trends Report Insights discussion paper "Threats that Silence: Trends in the Safety of Journalists". The paper "highlights how surveillance and hacking are compromising journalism. Surveillance can expose information gathered by journalists including from whistle-blowers, and violates the principle of source protection, which is universally considered a prerequisite for freedom of the media and is enshrined in UN Resolutions. Surveillance may also harm the safety of journalists by disclosing sensitive private information, which could be used for arbitrary judicial harassment or attack."

UNESCO furthered the discussion at the annual World Press Freedom Day Global Conference that was held on May 2 – 5 in Uruguay with not only journalists but also with policymakers, journalists, media representatives, activists, cybersecurity managers and legal experts. The discussion focused on "the digital era's impact on freedom of expression, the safety of journalists, access to information and privacy". Part of the conference also sought to develop concrete solutions to address the threats posed by increased surveillance to press freedom and privacy.

The day may have passed us by without much buzz, but May 3 should be important to journalists, the pub-

lic and government in Belize. As UNESCO states, it's a reminder to respect their commitment to press freedom. It is also a day of reflection among media professionals about issues of press freedom and professional ethics." It's important to assess the state of press freedom globally and to assess freedom of expression, a fundamental human right for all.

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.

Weh Wi Ga Fi Seh

Vairos di eez dong,
bot kip op yu helt.

May ... Breez di Geh Haada Now!

Wel, rayni seezn wahn soon kon (Joon tu Novemba), bot rait now, wi stil di injai di May breez! Hmm...wid disya klaimit di chaynj op, wi don noa seh dat harikayn jos di wayt rong di kaanal Soh, wi seh welkohn tu May...ahn wi staat pripyaa shud-in-kays harikayn vizit wi dis yaal Bot stil wi luk faawad tu wi nais May weda, sotay di rayn dehn staat op. Wi laik wi Maypoal, ahn wi laik flai kait, sayka di breez oanli gud fi flai kait eena May! Tudeh, wi di shyaa moa sentens fahn di Kriol-English dikshineri bowt "breez." Dehnya ga fi du wid how di breez staat fi bloa lee haada!

Di breez mi bloa haad, bot ih noh afek wi hows ataal.

The breeze blew hard, but it didn't affect our house at all.

Haad breez nayli bloa dong mi hows.

A hard breeze nearly blew down my house.

Wahn bad skwaal midi bloa, bot bifo lang di breez jrap.

A bad squall was blowing, but before long the wind died down.

Di maas brok wen di haad breez bos di sayl.

The mast broke when the hard wind burst the sail.

Haad breez kohn ahn rip op di sayl pahn di boat.

A hard wind came and ripped up the sail on the boat.

Wi midi sleep til sodnwan wahn haad breez staat tu bloa.

We were sleeping until suddenly a hard wind started blowing.

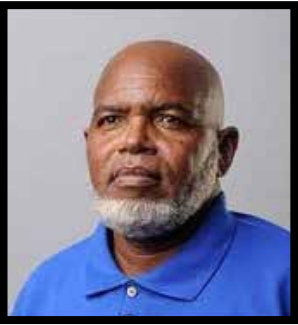
Di fishaman dehn midi fait gens wahn stif breez.

The fishermen were battling against a stiff wind.

Silvaana Udz, Ed.D. da fahn Bileez. If yu waahn tel shee bowt sohnting speshal fu put eena dis Kriol aatiki, eemayl: sudz142@gmail.com Vizit: www.nationalkriolcouncil.org

GRASSROOTS

Ensuring Success



By Hon. Gilroy Usher

“The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.”- **Phil Jackson**

The grand basketball marathon that this writer and Area Representative for Port Loyola held at the Jane

Usher basketball court on Sunday May 1st, 2022 was a tremendous success.

There were very exciting games with the eight teams from across Belize City. Those teams were Lake-I, Southside Warriors, Hard Rock, Boulevard Ballers, Savage Squad, Buttonwood Bay, One Side, and Back Pipe.

Hard Rock took the first prize of \$1,500.00. The second prize of \$1,000.00 and the third prize of \$500.00 were taken by Buttonwood Bay and Lake-I respectively.

One of the greatest joys of the marathon was seeing youths and scores of other persons from across the municipality enjoying competitive basketball together in the Port Loyola division which is deep on the southside of the old capital.

The event was also a day of brisk sales

for many small business in the Port Loyola Division.

Boys under fourteen years and females had great fun and excitement as the first person

After two years of lockdown due to Covid, Sunday’s marathon was the first major recreational activity in the division. Its success meant tremendous benefit for the entire community. Failure for whatever reason was not an option. The entire constituency was aware of that.

for each sex, who scored a three point shot at halftime in the playoffs, won \$50.00.

Scores of children had tremendous fun with the bouncing house and bouncing trampoline. Delicious food, music, and police presence enhanced the day of fun.

After two years of lockdown due to Covid, Sunday’s marathon was the first major recreational activity in the division. Its success meant tremendous benefit for the entire community. Failure for whatever reason was not an option. The entire constituency was aware of that.

Such negative result would have discouraged the hosting of another major sporting activity in the area for six months or longer.

Youths of the Jane Usher community thoroughly cleaned the entire playing area and painted the court.

The Belize City Council (BCC) removed all the discarded materials, and near the court the Ministry of Infrastructure Development & Housing (MID&H) cleared the drains, put in culverts, and upgraded the streets.

To ensure a successful day of family fun at the Jane Usher Basketball court on Sunday, May 1st, my brother and Chairman of the PUP Port Loyola Division Mr. Norman Usher and several members of his committee were at the basketball court from early in the morning making sure everything was ready for a day of memorable entertainment.

Individuals carried out their responsibilities wholeheartedly, while other persons voluntarily filled in for the few persons, who never made it fulfill their duties.

Two adults were always in attendance to ensure the children used the recreational facilities safely. Whenever body contact caused a player to fall, the player with whom he had contact readily pulled him up by the hand and apologized for the incident.

The Police kept a watchful eye on the entire area and took proactive steps to ensure the safety of every person. The lawmen were assisted in their duties when persons immediately informed them of the least misunderstanding between fans or when other individuals, persuaded their relatives to calm down and follow the advice of the police for the benefit of everyone.

With good time management the referees ensured that the marathon was completed at least an hour before darkness.

The wise decision made it possible for this writer and Area Representative for Port Loyola to deliver the cash prizes to the winning teams on the court amid shouts of joy from the players and their fans as policemen nearby observed the entire activity.

When the music stopped all the chairs, tents, and other supporting items for the sports day were accounted for in excellent condition. And when the peace officers left the area, the field and ball court were already cleaned.

From Sunday’s marathon the desire for other grand entertainment in Port Loyola with sporting activities was evident. Therefore, let the word go forth that in addition to the usual great cash prizes, the next basketball or football marathon this writer host in his division will also include trophies and medals for the winning teams.

Many thanks to the Most High for the excellent weather, great sunshine on the day of the marathon. Perfect weather on May 1st was indeed a blessing from Above. It had rained heavily for almost a week prior to two days before the major sporting event. The terrible weather had raised serious fear that the activity would be rained out.

For the fun filled day big thanks also to all the teams ,the referees ,the policemen ,the sponsors, BCC, MID&H, the scores of residents from Port Loyola and other divisions ,who were in attendance, and all others ,who assisted in any way to make the marathon the success it was.

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BE PART OF OUR VISION

Applications are invited for the position of Optometrist

The successful candidate will be responsible for examining eyes and visual system, diagnose problems or impairments, prescribe corrective lenses and provide treatment. The candidate will also be required to travel within Belize where Optometrist coverage is required.

Key Duties:

- Conduct eye exams, provide diagnosis, and prescribe corrective eye glasses, contact lenses or other treatment options.
- Tests for various eye diseases caused by systematic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure, and refer patients to an Ophthalmologist if necessary.
- Educate and counsel patients on related products and services.
- Educate and counsel patients on contact lens care, visual hygiene, lighting arrangements, safety factors, correct reading habits and good nutrition and hygiene.
- Schedule servicing, repairing, calibrating or regulating of devices and equipment to ensure that results are accurate.

Qualifications and Required Experience/Skills:

- A Graduate/Post Graduate degree in Optometry from an accredited school approved by the Medical Council.
- Minimum of three (3) years experience as Optometrist.
- Must be registered at the Ministry of Health.
- Proficient in the use of Optical Diagnostic Equipment and Devices.
- Working knowledge of current and emerging training tools and learning aids.
- Posses a valid driver’s license , class ‘A’, is an asset.
- Being bilingual would be an asset (English and Spanish).





Please send resume to:
 Director of Human Capital, Unicomer (Belize) Limited
 E-mail: human_resources_bz@unicomer.com

Closing date for applications: May 20th, 2022

RF&G LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY LTD.

Date: April 29, 2022

Marcos Edwardo Pop of #Big Falls, Toledo District, Belize C.A. having made written declaration that Policy G7596711 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.



FUN FACTS!

Antartica is a desert!

An incredible 60-90% of the world's fresh water is locked in Antarctica's vast ice sheet. The Antarctic ice sheet is the largest on Earth, covering an incredible 14 million km² (5.4 million square miles) of Antarctic mountain ranges, valleys and plateaus. This leaves only 1% of Antarctica permanently ice-free. Some areas are ice-free in the summer, including many of the areas we visit on the Antarctic Peninsula.



At its deepest, Antarctica's ice is 4.5km (2.7 miles) thick – that's half the height of Mt Everest! If it all melted, global sea levels would rise about 60 m (200 ft).

With all of that fresh water held in the ice sheet, how could Antarctica be a desert?

When most of us think of deserts we think of sand dunes and sizzling temperatures, but technically a desert doesn't have to be hot or sandy, it's more about how much precipitation

the area receives as rain, snow, mist or fog. A desert is any region that receives very little annual precipitation.

The average annual rainfall at the South Pole over the past 30 years was just over 10 mm (0.4 in). Although there is more precipitation towards the coast, the average across the continent is low enough to classify Antarctica as a polar desert.

So while Antarctica may be covered in

ice, it has taken an incredible 45 million years to grow to its current thickness, because so little rain falls there.

As well as being one of the driest continents on Earth, Antarctica is also the coldest, windiest and highest.

Given that the coldest ever land temperature was recorded in Antarctica of -89.2°C (-128.6°F), it can be hard to imagine Antarctica as a warm, temperate paradise.

But Antarctica hasn't always been an icy land locked in the grip of a massive ice sheet. In fact, Antarctica was once almost as warm as Melbourne is today.

Researchers have estimated that 40-50 million years ago, temperatures across Antarctica reached up to 17°C (62.6°F). Scientists have also found fossils showing that Antarctica was once covered with verdant green forests and inhabited by dinosaurs!



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"Hamster," from the German word "hamstern," means "hoard," which is a favorite pastime of our hamster friends..



The Syrian hamster is the most popular pet hamster. Often referred to as teddy bear, short hair or fancy hamsters they are known to be very docile and enjoy being held.

With proper care and attention, a hamster can live to be 2 to 3 years old. Since hamsters are nocturnal, they naturally sleep more during the day and are more active at twilight. Don't wake them up to play. Instead, plan your interactions for late afternoon or early evening after they've had their proper rest.

Hamsters generally enjoy the companionship of their pet parent and love to be let out of their habitat to play.

A hamster's teeth are constantly growing. To keep them at their healthy, length, provide plenty of chew toys and chew sticks to help naturally wear them down.

Hamsters tend to keep their habitats tidy, generally relieving themselves in one or two specific corners, making it easy to litter box train them or at least scoop out soiled bedding every day to keep their spaces clean.

DG Okonjo-Iweala: Members can deliver results at MC12 despite challenging circumstances

By WTO

Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala on 4 May called on WTO members to push as hard as they can to bridge differences and reach agreements in time for the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), to be held in Geneva on 12-15 June. While recognizing that the current geopolitical context means "we may not be able to achieve everything we want," she said members need to deliver concrete results in order to demonstrate that the WTO is fit for purpose and able to help them tackle current and future global challenges.

Speaking to heads of WTO member delegations, the Director-General observed that ministers would gather at WTO headquarters next month against

a backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising food and energy prices, debt distress, and war.

"This is not an ordinary Ministerial Conference," she said. The difficult context made reaching agreements both harder and more urgently necessary, she noted, urging delegations to be open-minded and flexible on substance and in how they engage with each other.

Describing her wish for a "streamlined, business-like" MC12, DG Okonjo-Iweala said delegations need to achieve clarity about how they want to use the meeting. She urged them to finalize outcomes ahead of time so that ministers can "bless" them and focus on providing guidance for future work. "MC12 should not simply be a talk



DG Okonjo-Iweala has called on members 'bridge differences' before the MC 12.

shop," she said.

One potential MC12 deliverable is a WTO response to the current and future pandemics, including intellectual property issues, where members will discuss possible elements of a compromise at a time to be determined by the Chair of the

TRIPS Council, she added. The DG said. Other potential deliverables include concluding an agreement on fisheries subsidies, achieving outcomes on agriculture and making progress on reforming the WTO in addition to various initiatives members are taking forward,

The Director-General pointed to the threat of a global crisis in food security, with prices for food, fertilizer and energy rising sharply from already high levels. She suggested members could use MC12 as a platform to take actions on these

issues separately from the ongoing agriculture negotiations.

The DG said she would be consulting with members in the days ahead as to what such actions could entail. In addition to the proposed exemption from export

Cont'd on pg. 22

NOTICE

GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE TREASURY BILLS ISSUE NUMBER 6/2022

Tenders are invited for an issue of Government of Belize Treasury Bills. The amount of the issue will be \$67,408,200.

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, 18 May 2022 and will be redeemed on Wednesday, 17 August 2022.

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 or at the designated drop off box no later than 12:00 noon on Friday, 13 May 2022.

The Auction in the Central Securities Depository System (CSD) will be opened from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on Wednesday, 18 May 2022.

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.

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DG Okonjo-Iweala: Members can deliver results at MC12 despite challenging circumstances

Cont'd from pg. 21

restrictions for World Food Programme humanitarian purchases, she added, some members have talked about sharing buffer stocks and were seeking assistance in getting grain to world markets, or directly assisting other members needing support in government-to-government transactions.

During the meeting, the Chair of the General Council, Ambassador Didier Chambovey (Switzerland), outlined how MC12 be organized. Members received an update on recent developments in the fisheries subsidies negotiations from Ambassador Santiago Wills (Colombia), Chair of the Negotiating Group on Rules; on the agriculture negotiations from Chair Ambassador Gloria Abraham Peralta (Costa Rica);

and on the services negotiations from Chair Ambassador Zhanar Aitzhanova (Kazakhstan). The three chairs outlined their respective roadmaps for taking talks forward in the coming weeks.

Ambassador Dacio Castillo (Honduras) in his capacity as the General Council Chair's Facilitator also reported to the members on his consultations on the WTO's response to the pandemic.

Over 40 WTO members took the floor to comment on the interventions of the Director-General, the Chairs and the Facilitator.

As part of her remarks to members, DG Okonjo-Iweala reported on her recent official visits to the United States and Brazil, where she met with top officials from both countries. In Washington DC, she joined the G20 finance ministers meeting

and participated in the International Monetary Fund and World Bank spring meetings, and also met with members of the US Congress. Support for the WTO was a clear theme in these discussions, she said, but this support came with the expectation that the WTO should produce results and continue to be active in helping to solve the multiple challenges facing the world.

Regarding MC12, the Director-General said, the goal "is to show we have an organisation that is part of the solution to the polycrisis we face," alluding to simultaneous global crises in the economy, the environment, public health, and security. She reiterated that in the five weeks before MC12, she stood ready to work with members to find compromises.

"Weekends, nights, whatever it takes," she said. "Let's get going."

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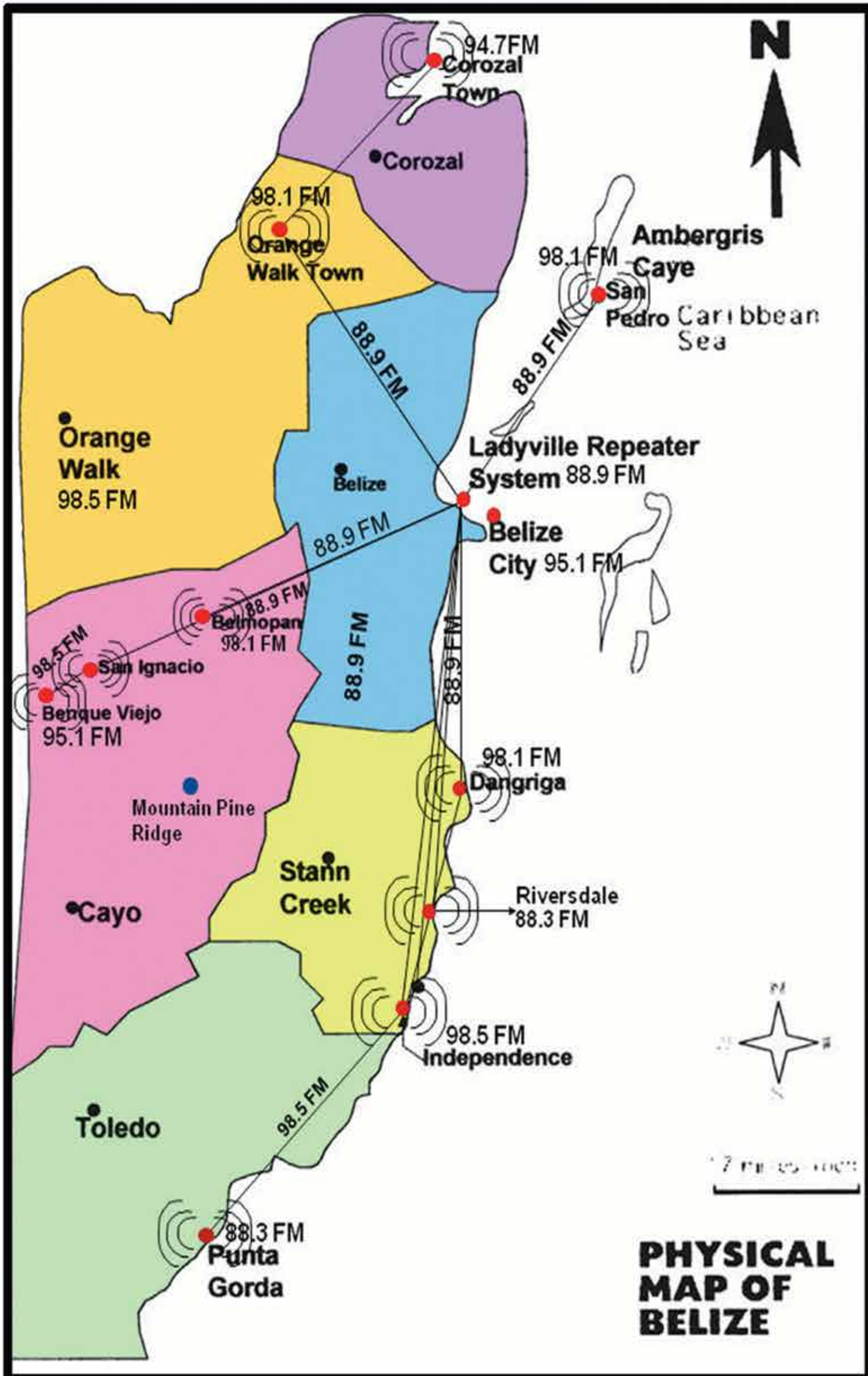
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Belize Water Services

Public Notice

BWSL ANNUAL REVIEW PROCEEDING SUBMISSION

On May 3, 2022, Belize Water Services Limited (BWSL) made its submission to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), following its announcement that it intended to request a review of the Decision made in its 2019|2020 Full Tariff Review Proceeding, based on Exceptional Circumstances as defined in the Public Utilities Commission Act.

If approved by the PUC, it would provide for additional funding for much needed improvement to the safety and reliability of Belize's water and sanitation systems and for the protection of the most vulnerable customers.

In 2019, BWSL submitted a Full Five-Year Business Plan (FFBP) for the current FTP to the PUC as part of the regulated review requirement for the FTP review. The business plan included a financial model and projections based on planned future activity and the expected financial results. That submission was prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In consideration of the financial hardships faced by our customers, particularly small businesses and residential consumers, BWS is proposing a minimal rate increase, in some cases, in order to make the necessary capital investments to expand its operations and maintain the usual customer service levels.

During the remainder of the FTP, BWS is planning to expend approximately BZD \$95 million of capital improvements including sewer collection and treatment systems, water expansion projects, water supply projects, meter replacement, capital renewal and replacement, and similar projects. These projects are funded from a blend of tariff revenue, available reserves, additional debt, and Government of Belize (GOB) assistance.

The new submission proposes, among other things, to implement a rate structure that will differentiate between residential and non-residential properties and will introduce a customer assistance programme for senior citizens.

BWSL proposes to keep rates the same or even lower for residential and low consumption non-residential customers. However, some increases are requested for non-residential customers. These are expected to provide an increase of 5% in overall revenue to help the utility maintain operations and perform some level of capital investment for the remaining three years of this Full Tariff Period.

Rate payers will have an opportunity to participate in the PUC's review of the submission, in the coming weeks, when the PUC will conduct public consultations.

The submission can be seen at the PUC's and BWS's offices and websites.

For more information regarding this or any other BWS
Release, please contact:
Corporate Communications at Tel: 222-4757 Ext. 1405
or 1408
or via e-mail at pr@bws.com.bz