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PRESS RELEASE

Belize Participates in Virtual Roundtable with US Secretary of State

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Hon. Eamon Courtenay, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration and Chairman of the Council for Foreign and Community Relations of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), participated in the first CARICOM-USA high-level engagement under the Biden-Harris Administration.

CARICOM foreign ministers met virtually this morning with Antony J. Blinken, the U.S. Secretary of State. The roundtable afforded the opportunity for an exchange of views on a range of regional challenges of paramount importance in the present complex international environment inclusive of the dual crises of COVID-19 recovery and climate change.

During his remarks, Minister Courtenay recognized the historic ties and shared foundational values of the CARICOM-USA relationship. He emphasized the multifaceted challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, inclusive of the devastating economic fallout, and advocated for a multi-dimensional vulnerability index to give effect to the special case of small island developing states in the international financial system. In welcoming the renewed international engagement and leadership of the U.S. to address the impacts of climate change and adaptation, Minister Courtenay called for urgent action to address the climate emergency at the upcoming COP26.

Secretary of State Blinken acknowledged the strong and diverse relations between the U.S. and the Caribbean and reiterated their nation's commitment to engage with the region to end the pandemic and rebuild our economies through collective effort. Secretary Blinken also pledged to work with the region to tackle the existential threat of climate change and strengthen democracy, rule of law and security partnerships through the USA-Caribbean Resilience Partnership and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, respectively.

Minister Courtenay was accompanied by H.E. Lawrence Sylvester, ambassador of Belize to CARICOM; Ms. Ayesha Borland, director of International Affairs (Policy); Mr. Idelso Leslie and Mrs. Amaris Leal, foreign service officers.

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