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## PRESS RELEASE

### Cabinet Brief

Belmopan, 24th August 2023.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met on 22nd August 2023.

- Cabinet continued its discussion on the cost of living and the introduction of price controls on a number of products, noting that this is a temporary measure designed to alleviate the cost of living. The government's intention is to bring relief to the most disadvantaged members in our country who have been bearing a disproportionate burden caused by the dramatic increases in the cost of basic products. This policy measure has become necessary because of widespread price gouging. Despite the reduction in costs of goods internationally, there has been very little price reduction on many imported goods. Cabinet has noted that this applies to goods imported recently, after a reduction in acquisition costs.
- Cabinet considered and determined that there is a need to standardize the titles, roles and functions of the staff within the Pharmacy and Drug Inspectorate Units in the Ministry of Health & Wellness and gave its approval to update the structure of the units to ensure better monitoring and evaluation of the pharmaceuticals and supplies and to adjust the salary scale for all categories of pharmacists and drug inspectors.
- Cabinet welcomed the announcement of the visit of Mr. Carlos Felipe Jaramillo, the World Bank's Regional Vice President for Latin America and the Caribbean, who will be here from 27th to 30th August. During his visit, the vice president will have an opportunity to learn more about Belize's vulnerability to the impacts of climate challenge and the multidimensional development challenges. This will strengthen Belize's application for eligibility to join the International Development Association, a World Bank

group that provides development assistance at highly concessionary financing.

- Mr. Jaime Diaz, Vice President of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), was in Belize from August 22 to 24. During his visit, he met with Prime Minister Briceño, Minister Abelardo Mai, Minister Louis Zabaneh, and other officials from the public and private sectors. The purpose of the visit was to discuss ongoing and future initiatives, which included assistance for a Municipal Climate Resilience Initiative that will address erosion and drainage.

Mr. Diaz visited the Belize Defence Force quarters and the state-of-the-art kitchen being built at Price Barracks and potential sites for construction of a tourism park in Dangriga Town. Additionally, he visited ANRI and Citrus Products of Belize Ltd. to assist them with technical and financial support to overcome challenges.

During Mr. Diaz's meeting with the Prime Minister, two agreements were signed to support the following:

1. Feasibility study and design for three hospitals, one in Belize City, Orange Walk and Punta Gorda.
  2. Non-refundable technical assistance to assist in addressing coastal erosion in the Corozal District.
- Finally, Cabinet reminds Belizeans to remain alert and prepared as we enter the more active portion of the hurricane season.

**Ends**

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