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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Nago Bank Farmers Receive Enhanced Solar Powered Collection Centre**

*Belmopan, August 25, 2023.*

Today, the Resilient Rural Belize (RRB) Programme, under the Ministry of Economic Development, held an official ceremony to open the improved Nago Bank Collection Center in the Belize District.

The Nago Bank community is identified as one of the most productive farming communities in the Belize District. However, they have always been severely limited in their ability to efficiently store and traverse their agricultural products from the farms to the markets. Through the RRB Program, three miles of road were upgraded, and the collection center has been enhanced through a partnership with Now Construction Limited.

The completion of this center was identified as part of the strategy to improve production capacity, resilience to climatic events, and overall profitability of the Los Pequeños Agricultores y Ganaderos de Nago Bank Co-operative Society Limited. The completed solar-powered collection center, which will also serve as a hurricane shelter, will primarily be used as a location to consolidate members' harvest and to select, grade, wash, and package produce for market consumption. It is anticipated to improve the quality of produce and increase the volume sold at the farm gates.

Mr. Alex Pineda, Chairman of the Los Pequeños Agricultores y Ganaderos de Nago Bank Co-operative Society Limited, expressed the members' gratitude and the plans they have for the center.

"We want to clean and landscape the grounds immediately around the building – plant a few mahogany trees on the perimeter and maybe some fruit trees," Mr. Pineda said. "That way, customers can come in and have sufficient space to park and walk around. We'll probably take out the wooden

window by the office and replace it with a nice office window where customers can walk up to place their orders. In the future, we can always expand the building toward the road to accommodate a higher volume of produce. I'm already thinking about the next steps for the future.”

Funding for the enhanced Collection Centre was provided by the Government of Belize, the Green Climate Fund, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the beneficiaries.

Present were the Hon. Marconi Leal, Sr., Area Representative of Belize Rural North; Dr. Osmond Martinez, Chief Executive Officer for the Ministry of Economic Development; Dr. Victoriano Pascual, Chief Agricultural Officer for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise; and representatives of the Los Pequeños Agricultores y Ganaderos de Nago Bank Co-operative Society Limited.

## **Ends**

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