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PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan. 25th August 2021. 8:10 p.m.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 24th August 2021.

- Cabinet welcomed the news that Belizean Contractor M&M Ltd. was chosen for the construction of a new bridge across the Belize River to replace the Haulover Bridge at a cost of BZ\$30 million. This is BZ\$29 million less than the original bid of BZ\$59 under the past UDP Administration for the construction of the bridge.
- Cabinet was apprised by the Ministry of Health & Wellness on the roll-out of the Pfizer vaccination for Belizeans between the ages of 12 and 17. As of Tuesday morning, 24th August, which marked the nationwide vaccine roll-out for students, 1,492 Pfizer vaccines were administered to students in Belize, Corozal and Orange Walk districts.
- Cabinet was updated on the status of vaccines and the number of vaccines available in Belize. As of 16th August 2021, 153,225 persons or 35.6% of the population had received at least one dose of the vaccine. This represents an increase of 7,658 new vaccinations over last week's numbers. Additionally, 61,567 or 14.3% of the population has been fully vaccinated, an increase of 5,237 more persons over last week's 56,330.
- On 26th August 2021, Belize will receive 112,000 Johnson & Johnson vaccines through the African Platform. These vaccines will be added to the other vaccines currently being distributed across Belize. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a one-shot vaccine and will be available to Belizeans in the coming days. Vaccines save lives so all Belizeans are urged to get vaccinated.
- Cabinet endorsed the updated National Determined Contributions (NDC) to be presented by the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, which embodies Belize's efforts to reduce national greenhouse gas emissions while adapting to climate change. The updated NDC is the nation's plan to address climate change and partial fulfillment of Belize's commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- Cabinet gave its approval for Belize to accede to the agreement establishing the Caribbean Customs Organization and on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters. This agreement formally enables and fosters cooperation among its member Customs Departments for the exchange of sensitive information, customs

modernization and otherwise to achieve greater efficiencies in revenue collection, trade facilitation and law enforcement.

- Cabinet was updated on the current status in the implementation of the new ePassport system and ePassports and approved the base concept of the ePassport design proposal, which should pave the way for the new passport system to be introduced in July 2022.
- Cabinet endorsed signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Youth, Sports and E-Governance and Harvest Trading Cap Academy for the launch of a youth scholarship program in financial markets training in Belize for 5,000 youths to assist in fostering youth entrepreneurship. These scholarships will be funded by the Harvest Trading Cap Academy.
- Cabinet gave its full support and endorsement to the Belize Education Sector Strategy Plan 2021-2025 that was presented by the Hon. Francis Fonseca, Minister of Education, Culture, Science & Technology.
- Finally, Cabinet is asking all Belizeans to remain alert, as yet another system forms in the southwestern Caribbean and will move closer to our area over the next two days as a weak tropical depression. This system is expected to bring rains and flooding, especially in the northern part of the country over the course of the weekend. The National Emergency Management Organization continues to monitor the system and will provide timely updates to the nation.

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