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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Ministry of Agriculture Holds Validation Workshop for the Draft National Agriculture and Food Policy**

*Belmopan, August 4, 2023.*

Today, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, held a validation workshop for the draft National Agriculture and Food Policy. The event was held at Kiki Witz Resort, Belmopan. It was attended by public and private sector representatives and technical personnel from various ministries.

The National Agriculture and Food Policy aims to guide the ministry and other stakeholders in addressing the main challenges faced by the agriculture sector. The policy seeks to promote sector development and generate public revenue for the national economy. The policy stems from the PlanBelize Medium-Term Development Strategy 2022-2026. This national development strategy focuses on increasing, diversifying and sustaining agricultural production while ensuring food security, income generation, employment opportunities, and improvement of livelihoods and well-being in rural communities.

The policy outlines several strategic initiatives to achieve the sector goal. These include:

- diversifying agriculture through the Blue Economy, new growth industries, and micro, small, and medium enterprises for food security and sovereignty, working towards import replacement and substitution as well as expanding export opportunities to enhance economic competitiveness; and
- focusing on rural transformation through infrastructure development, providing affordable and accessible financing options, improving essential services, and implementing climate-smart alternatives and natural resource conservation.

Overall, this comprehensive policy approach indicates a commitment to fostering sustainable and inclusive growth of the agriculture sector in Belize. It focuses on innovation, technology and regional competitiveness, with an emphasis on supporting rural communities and promoting environmentally responsible practices.

### **Ends**

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