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PRESS RELEASE

Prime Minister Announces Interim Board of Directors for Port of Belize Ltd and Confirms Release of Frozen Stevedore Monies

Belmopan, December 11, 2023.

The Office of the Prime Minister announces the new interim Board of Directors membership for the Port of Belize Ltd. This company is to be taken over by the government this week.

Mr. Gilbert Canton Sr. will serve as chairman of the interim board. Mr. Canton has decades of business experience in agriculture and commodities and is specifically familiar with port operations. He is a past chairman of the Public Utilities Commission, among other previous public roles.

Board members will be Mrs. Elena Smith, former president of the Belize National Teachers' Union; Ms. Pricilla Banner, attorney-at-law; Mr. Warren Coye, accountant; Ms. Leidi Urbina, business professional; Mr. Carlton Young, engineer; and Major Lloyd Jones (Retired), chairman, Belize Port Authority. The Ministry of Finance will appoint a non-voting observer to the board.

Regarding the \$400,000 payment pending to stevedores, frozen by the court injunction of the former Port owners, the government confirms that those monies should be available shortly for distribution by the Christian Workers Union. The funds, already in the union's account, were paid out by the government last year.

The House of Representatives debated and approved the Port Acquisition & Settlement Deeds Bill 2023 on December 7. That Bill, if approved by the Senate today and signed into law by the Governor General, will enable the

immediate takeover of the Port of Belize's assets and operations by the government.

In his presentation to the House, Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño pledged that urgent attention would be given by the new Port Board and Management to engaging with staff and labor representatives and commencing a program of improvements to the Port facilities. No interruptions to the ongoing operations of the Port are expected as the ownership transition unfolds later this week.

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