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PRESS RELEASE

Inauguration of the First Round of Negotiations for Belize-El Salvador Partial Scope Agreement

Belmopan, December 11, 2023.

Today, the First Round of Negotiations for a Partial Scope Agreement between Belize and El Salvador was launched during a ceremony in Belmopan.

The event highlighted the historical ties between both nations, emphasizing a commitment to a deeper diplomatic, economic, and socio-cultural alliance. Participants recognized the role of trade agreements beyond words on paper, focusing on laying a foundation for mutual prosperity.

Textual negotiations were underscored as the framework guiding trade facilitation, promotion, and diversification. Objectives included granting preferential margins on tariffs, eliminating non-tariff barriers, and ensuring clear regulations on technical measures.

Key objectives aimed at reducing financial burdens on businesses and fostering a dynamic economic relationship. The agreement also seeks to confer legal certainty to investments and promote trust for collaboration and innovation. Technical activities will strengthen bilateral cooperation, setting the stage for a comprehensive economic partnership.

A commitment to an efficient dispute resolution system was made, reflecting dedication to fostering a healthy economic partnership. Emphasis was placed on the profound importance of bilateral relationships, moving beyond economic transactions to building bridges of understanding and cooperation.

In conclusion, participants expressed optimism for fruitful negotiations, calling for an open-minded, collaborative approach. They also voiced

confidence in achieving an agreement meeting economic objectives and further strengthening the bonds of friendship between Belize and El Salvador.

Among those present were Hon. Jose Abelardo Mai, Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise; Ambassador Emil Mena, Co-chair of the National Trade Negotiation Commission; Ms. Raquel Martinez, Trade Policy Director at El Salvador's Ministry of Economy; and Mr. Andy Sutherland, Director General for Foreign Trade.

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