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## PRESS RELEASE

### **RRB Program Continues to Support Small Farmers in Belize**

Belmopan. December 14, 2022.

On December 13, 2022, the Government of Belize (GOB), through the Resilient Rural Belize (RRB) Program of the Ministry of Economic Development, signed Matching Grant Fund Agreements (MGA) with Concepcion Vegetable Farmers' Cooperative Society Limited, the Northern Sustainable Agro-Producers Cooperative Society Limited, both of the Corozal District, and the Seven Miles Farmers' Association of the Cayo District.

This program is in partnership with the MED and the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government. The main objective of the MGAs is to provide resources and technical assistance to improve, in volume and quality, the three producer organizations' agricultural productions, organizational capacities and marketing/value-added strategies, while also safeguarding food security in the context of existing and projected climate change effects.

Each organization will be receiving 85% financing from RRB while contributing 10% in cash and 5% in kind. The Concepcion Vegetable Farmers' Cooperative Society will receive a total of BZ\$240,000, the Northern Sustainable Agro-Producers Cooperative Society Limited will receive BZ\$262,393.13, and the Seven Miles Farmers' Association will receive BZ\$231,880. In total, the government, through the RRB Project, will be financing BZ\$657,823.13 in resources, while the organizations will contribute BZ\$113,777.

Hon. Ramiro Ramirez, Minister of State in the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government, in his address, highlighted that these types of projects benefit new generations as climate change and the effects of pandemics have caused

these farmers to unlearn, learn and relearn techniques. As a result of the impacts of climate change and the pandemic, farmers have been forced to change techniques and they had to adapt new modalities to sustain their livelihoods and the industry as a whole. He assured the organizations that the government is committed to continuing to support the agricultural sector.

In his remarks, Dr. Osmond Martinez, CEO in the Ministry of Economic Development, congratulated the farmers as they are the ones on the ground ensuring that there is quality control to safeguard food security for the country. He mentioned that other than building capacities and marketing strategies, the funds provided will be used to construct storage facilities for the organizations, as well as to purchase greenhouses, solar water pumps and irrigation equipment to enhance their productive capacities.

Signing on behalf of GOB were Hon. Ramiro Ramirez; Dr. Osmond Martinez and Dr. Geraldo Flowers, Program Manager for RRB. Signing on behalf of the Conception Vegetable Farmers' Cooperative Society Limited was Mr. Orlando Ek, chairperson; Ms. Maria Yam, chairperson, signed on behalf of the Northern Sustainable Agro-Producers Cooperative Society; and signing on behalf of the Seven Miles Farmers' Association was Mr. Juan Lara, president.

## **Ends**

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