



PR#277-23

PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Youth Commends Belize's CARICOM Youth Ambassador

Belmopan, December 8, 2023.

The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Transport commends Ms. Marissa Cervantes, Belize's female CARICOM Youth Ambassador, and the youth delegation for proudly representing Belize at the Caribbean Youth Summit (CYS) 2023 held in Kingston, Jamaica from November 22 to 25.

This year's CYS provided a platform for youth to secure the involvement of other community youth leaders in promoting the prevention of gender-based violence. It also fostered a socioemotional capacity to address challenges associated with violence and sexual, reproductive and mental health issues.

Ms. Cervantes emphasized the importance of being socially aware when advocating for those that are vulnerable. She drew attention to the need for changing inter-generational social norms that perpetuate traditional concepts of femininity and masculinity. Ms. Dominga Cucul, a Belizean youth advocate, also engaged in a panel discussion to address areas such as universal access to reproductive health from an indigenous standpoint.

Ms. Cervantes received a Training of Trainers Certificate on Social and Emotional Learning. This training allowed her to enhance her skills as a youth leader who continues to advocate for increased youth and women's political participation. She also had the privilege of attending the launch of 'YUTE CHATZ,' a messaging service created by the National Family Planning Board in Jamaica on November 24, 2023. This youth-friendly messaging service provides information to students and the wider youth population on various topics, including sex, contraceptives, STIs, family life, and mental health.

As Belize's CARICOM Youth Ambassador, Ms. Cervantes also received an invitation to visit the SOS Children's Village in Kingston, Jamaica. This organization employs a rights-based approach to assist children who have lost parental care, adhering to the principles outlined in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and Jamaica's Childcare and Protection Act. There, she served as a session moderator to empower the children through goal-setting techniques and life skills.

Ms. Cervantes' participation in the Summit was funded by the United National Population Fund.

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