



PR#025-24

PRESS RELEASE

Government of Belize Initiates Comprehensive Review and Modernization of Labour Act

Belmopan, February 15, 2024.

In response to the evolving dynamics of the labour market and the pressing need to address contemporary challenges, the Government of Belize announces a comprehensive review and modernization initiative of the Labour Act, Chapter 297, Revised Edition 2020. The Labour Act has essentially remained unchanged since its inception on August 1, 1960.

The overarching objective of this review is to align the legislation with the current and future realities of the labour market. Notably, the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated legislative changes, prompting the government to reevaluate and update existing laws that may impact workers' and employers' rights and obligations.

The Government of Belize is committed to undertaking a comprehensive and inclusive review process, recognizing the need for clarity on certain provisions and the imperative to address emerging issues such as migrant labour, advancements in information and communications technology, and the evolving nature of work. The government will collaborate closely with representatives from employers and workers' organizations throughout the exercise.

To facilitate this initiative, the government has engaged the services of Reyes Retreage LLP, a local legal consultancy firm. Providing support and technical expertise to the project's primary consultant, DLA Piper UK LLP, a leading global law firm, the consultant will play a pivotal role in researching, analyzing, and formulating key recommendations. Additionally, they will be responsible for the legislative drafting essential for the review and modernization of the Labour Act, while actively supporting the consultation process with relevant stakeholders.

DLA Piper UK LLP has generously offered pro bono services for this initiative, underlining their commitment to supporting Belize in creating a robust legal framework that addresses contemporary labour challenges. This initiative has the full support and endorsement of the International Labour Organization. The government reiterates its dedication to ensuring that the revised Labour Act reflects international best practices and standards in labour law. The aim is to foster an environment that promotes decent work for all Belizeans, considering the diverse needs of both employers and workers.

The Government of Belize invites active participation and input from all stakeholders in this crucial process, fostering collaboration for the betterment of the Belizean workforce and the nation's economic landscape.

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