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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Belize Hosts Joint AGM on Restoring Degraded Lands in Latin America and the Caribbean**

*Belmopan, February 8, 2023*

The Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management is hosting the Joint Annual Meeting of the Initiative 20x20, Bonn Challenge, and the Agriculture, Forest, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) 2040 in San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, from February 8 to 9, 2023.

Country leaders, private investors, and technical partners from across Latin America and the Caribbean have convened to connect on converging agendas and pursue the objective of presenting areas of collaboration between Initiative 20x20 – Bonn Challenge – AFOLU 2040 under the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration; streamline intersectoral cooperation between environment and agriculture for restoration; and mobilize finance to support restoration efforts.

The Bonn Challenge is a global goal to bring 350 million hectares of land into restoration by 2030. Launched by the Government of Germany and IUCN in 2011, the Challenge encompasses more than 75 entities from 61 countries including governments, civil society organizations and private companies. The Initiative 20x20 is a country-led effort seeking to change the dynamics of land degradation in Latin America and the Caribbean by protecting and restoring 350 million hectares of forests, farms, pasture, and other landscapes by 2030. The initiative was launched at the 20<sup>th</sup> Climate Change Conference of Parties held in Lima, Peru, in 2014 and is the Caribbean and Latin American regions' response to the Bonn Challenge, the United Nations Forum on Forests and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. Furthermore, the initiative serves as a platform where multiple partners can contribute to the UN Decade on Ecosystems Restoration, which is a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems worldwide for the benefit of people and nature. It aims to halt the degradation of ecosystems and restore them to achieve global goals.

In response to the Bonn Challenge, Initiative 20x20, and UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, Belize crafted its National Landscape Restoration Strategy in which 382,592 hectares have been identified for restoration opportunities. Of this, a total of 130,000 hectares have been prioritized for restoration actions by 2030. The goal is to implement reforestation practices for 44,000 hectares in forest areas inside and outside protected areas, and 6,000 hectares of degraded and deforested riparian forests. In addition, restoration efforts will improve the management of 80,000 hectares of the agro-productive landscape through improved agricultural and agroforestry practices.

**Ends**