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PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan. 12th January 2023.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 10th January 2023.

- Cabinet welcomed a presentation from members of the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association on their ongoing negotiations with the Belize Sugar Cane Industry/American Sugar Refinery over the current situation in the industry, including an agreement on revenue sharing.
- In enhancing efforts to improve the quality and delivery of health services in Belize, a *PlanBelize* commitment, Cabinet gave its approval for the Ministry of Health & Wellness to upgrade its fleet of ambulances starting with the purchase of three ambulances.
- Cabinet was briefed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration on the work program as Belize assumes the Presidency Pro Tempore of the Central American Integration System (SICA). During its six-month chairmanship of SICA, Belize will focus on the following priorities: migration, climate change and food security.
- Cabinet gave its approval for Belize to ratify the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (ESCAZU Agreement). This Agreement will uphold and strengthen the values of democracy in the region, foster more inclusive community-oriented actions and set the foundation for improved policy and decision-making.
- Cabinet gave its approval for the tabling of amendments to the Immigration Act and the Caribbean Community Free Movement of

Skilled Persons Act with a view to allow for the free movement of economically active citizens who can contribute to stimulating a robust economy with greater employment and productivity.

- Cabinet approved the presentation of two proposed loan motions at the next sitting of the House of Representatives - one for US\$15 million in support of the competitiveness of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), particularly in the agriculture and tourism sectors, and the second for US\$8 million for Trade and Investment Facilitation to promote investment and trade through simplification, standardization, and automation of key procedures including the establishment of a single investment window and a single trade window. Both loans are being facilitated through the Inter-American Development Bank on favourable terms.
- Cabinet gave its approval for the Attorney General's Ministry to bring into force the Caribbean Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Serious Criminal Matters.
- Finally, Cabinet wishes all Belizeans a safe and happy George Price Day.

Ends