



PR#028-22

## PRESS RELEASE

### Cabinet Brief

*Belmopan. 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022. 9:00 a.m.*

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

- Cabinet was updated on the status of vaccinations and the number of vaccines available in Belize as of 24<sup>th</sup> January. Currently, there are more than 327,000 vaccines on hand. As of 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022, 212,480 persons or 49.3 percent of the total population had received at least one dose of the vaccine and 208,878 or 47.2 percent of the total population has been fully vaccinated. Additionally, over 28,628 booster shots have been issued since the start of the Booster Program. Also, 30,238 Belizeans aged 12 to 17 years old have received at least one dose of the vaccine.
- Cabinet approved the Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) Protocol that will guide consultations with Maya communities, whether by government or private entities, in keeping with government's commitment to the implementation of the 2015 Consent Order of the Caribbean Court of Justice.
- Cabinet approved the establishment of the Blue Bond and Project Finance for Permanence Unit within the Office of the Prime Minister, which will be responsible for ensuring that the government meets all its commitments in initiating and leading efforts geared towards the timely fulfillment of the agreement under this project.
- Cabinet gave its approval for the Minister of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government to present amendments to the Village Council Act, Chapter 88 of the Laws of Belize at the next sitting of the House of Representatives.
- Cabinet was updated on the increasing numbers of migrants arriving in Belize through the Phillip Goldson International Airport from Panama via COPA Airline flights and using Belize as a transit point to move northbound. In addition, the Minister responsible for Immigration informed Cabinet of the application for refugee status by the eight Venezuelans who were handed over to the UNHCR and later escaped while in the care of that organization. Cabinet gave its approval for the Ministry of Immigration to impose visa requirements for nationals of Venezuela, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic.
- Hon. Michel Chebat, Minister of Public Utilities, Energy & Logistics, updated Cabinet on the current industrial action by the stevedores at the

Port of Belize Limited, highlighting matters in contention and reported that the issues between Port of Belize Limited and the stevedores were currently before the Essential Services Tribunal for resolution. The Minister also expressed concern about the impact the industrial action was having on the stevedores, Port of Belize Limited and the country's economy.

- Finally, in the wake of the rising number of COVID-19 infections, the presence of the highly contagious Omicron variant and the continued presence of the Delta variant, Cabinet continues to encourage the public to wear masks in public, maintain physical distance, wash hands regularly, and for those not fully vaccinated, to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Vaccines save lives.

**Ends**