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PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan. 16th June 2022. 2:00 p.m.

The Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 14th June 2022.

Cabinet gave its approval for the Ministry of Home Affairs & New Growth Industries to proceed with Intake Squad 96. This would increase the strength of the Belize Police Department by an additional 150 police officers. Persons wishing to apply to join the Police Department must have completed a minimum of high school education. A recommendation from their area representative is no longer a requirement.

Cabinet approved a request for funding by the Ministry of National Defence & Border Security to conduct the 2022 Battle Camp for the Belize Defence Force Volunteer Element and the Belize Defence Force Youth Cadet Corps. In addition, Cabinet gave its support for the Belize Security Services to look into the possibility of having their members participate in United Nations Peace Keeping Operations as military observers or staff officers.

Cabinet endorsed the establishment of a National Quality Policy (NQP) to provide for cooperation and collaboration across a network of quality infrastructure institutions that serve alongside the Belize Bureau of Standards to protect the interest of consumers. This NQP will also serve to strengthen existing quality infrastructure institutions to improve the competitiveness of Belizean products and services, creating greater integration opportunities in regional and international markets.

In an effort to have sanctions lifted against Belize for nonpayment of its mandatory contributions to the Universal Postal Union (UPU), as far back as 2015, Cabinet gave its approval for the Ministry of the Public Utilities, Energy,

Logistics and E-Governance to sign a debt rescheduling agreement with the UPU. This will allow for sanctions to be lifted against the Belize Postal Service thereby making it easier to communicate and transact with postal couriers regionally and internationally.

Cabinet supported a request from the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations to work with the Attorney General's Ministry to introduce amendments to the Hotels and Tourist Accommodation Act that would allow for the variation in the rates of tax for different categories of guests for specified periods. Additionally, approval was given to make amendments to the regulations to streamline the existing minimum requirements for hotels and incorporate health and emergency preparedness into the minimum standards.

Cabinet approved the proposed Peoples' Constitutional Commission Bill, 2022, to allow for the establishment of the Peoples' Constitutional Commission, its composition, and other related matters which will be presented to the National Assembly for consideration and approval.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration informed Cabinet of the increase in requests for permits to allow charter flights from Haiti to Belize with Haitians. The ministry has carefully assessed these applications and is satisfied that they are not genuine tourist flights. Accordingly, in consultation with the Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation, permission to land will not be granted. The minister is considering revoking visa-free travel to Belize for Haitians.

Cabinet was provided with a written update on the status of vaccinations. Currently, there are more than 245,000 vaccines on hand. As of 14th June 2022, 24489 persons or 52.1 percent had received at least one dose of the vaccine and 212,174 or 49.3 percent have been fully vaccinated. Of the population ages 12 to 17 years, 26,708 have received two doses of the vaccines. To date, 49,636 booster shots have been issued.

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