



PR#046-24

PRESS RELEASE

Government Hosts Stakeholder Engagement for Development of the Escazú Agreement Implementation Roadmap

Belmopan, March 21, 2024.

Today, the Government of Belize, through the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the World Bank, hosted a one-day Stakeholder Engagement Event at the San Ignacio Resort Hotel, for the development of a roadmap for implementation of the Escazú Agreement.

Belize became a Party to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Escazú Agreement, on March 7, 2023. The Escazú Agreement represents a historic milestone for Latin America and the Caribbean. It offers a pioneering platform for advancing access rights in the region, while including specific provisions that ensure a safe and enabling environment for environmental human rights defenders.

The event brought together a diverse group of stakeholders from government agencies, civil society organizations, environmental NGOs, academia and the private sector. It provided a platform for stakeholders to exchange insights, share best practices and experiences, and identify priority actions for effective implementation of the Escazú Agreement in Belize. The event highlights Belize's unwavering commitment to advancing environmental democracy and sustainable development.

Among the distinguished speakers was Hon. Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, who explained the intent of the roadmap and stakeholder engagement

session. He said, “The development of this roadmap is a first step toward the development of Belize’s implementation plan for the Escazú Agreement and today’s stakeholder engagement marks the commencement of a consultation process and public awareness campaign geared toward Belize’s implementation of the agreement.”

Other speakers included Bastian Pasten, Senior Counsel at the World Bank; Andrea Sanhueza, representative of the Escazú Secretariat; and Nicole Leotaud, elected representative of the public for the Escazú from Trinidad and Tobago.

Upon completion of the implementation roadmap, the Government of Belize will conduct an awareness campaign and nationwide consultations to create Belize’s National Implementation Plan for the Escazú Agreement. Through continued collaboration and collective actions between all stakeholders and the state, Belize is poised to be a leader in the region, advancing the principles enshrined within the agreement.

The public is welcome to access a copy of the baseline assessment and stakeholder recommendation sheet via the following link: <https://shorturl.at/mnKPQ>. Feedback on priority actions can be provided by April 5, to policy@environment.gov.bz or tunio@gobmail.gov.bz or dandrade.law@gmail.com. A survey can also be accessed at <https://forms.gle/XLUBJbKWz2jysikR6>.

The Stakeholder Engagement Event was organized by the Ministry of Sustainable Development through assistance from the ECLAC and the World Bank.

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For more information, please contact:
Vanessa Figueroa-Wade
Policy Coordinator
Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk
Management
828-9122
policy@environment.gov.bz