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PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan, 30th March 2023.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met on 28th March 2023.

- Cabinet discussed the effects of global inflation on Belize and ways to address the matter of the rising cost of living due to inflation. Following the discussion, Cabinet agreed to the following measures:
 - set up meetings with wholesalers and retailers to ensure that ALL understand the urgency of the situation with a view to price control of goods and services;
 - establish the practice of store inspections and monitoring as offered by the unions;
 - revisit the list of basic commodities to expand the number of goods which are price-controlled; and
 - review the grocery bag program to ensure that the Belizeans who need help the most are those benefitting.
- Cabinet reviewed the new \$264-million master plan for the Philip Goldson International Airport (PGIA), an expansion plan, requested by the government and prepared by UK-based INFRATA Airport Consultants, for the Belize Airports Concession Company. Phase 1 improvements have already commenced with the construction of a new airport access road. Other works in this phase include the expansion of the terminal building, the construction of a larger aircraft apron, a new eastern taxiway and new parking facility, and new airport safety equipment.

To finance the new investments, Cabinet approved adjustments to the non-Belizean airport development fee and the funding period in accordance with existing provisions of the public/private sectors partnership agreement. The new master plan, announced by the Prime Minister in his New Year's address, is based on projected growth in passenger and aircraft movements at the PGIA through 2045.

- After a thorough discussion on the increasing number of visitors who are using Belize as a transit country to reach the United States, Cabinet determined that Belize will invoke Article 226 (a) of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, which will allow for the Minister of Immigration to immediately impose a visa requirement for Haitians wishing to visit Belize and to require Jamaican nationals to provide evidence of fully paid non-refundable hotel reservations prior to boarding flights to Belize. In addition, a ministerial task force was set up to address the rampant smuggling occurring in this regard. The ministerial

subcommittee will be chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration and will include the Minister of Home Affairs & New Growth Industries and the Minister of Tourism & Diaspora Relations.

- Cabinet discussed the development of a passenger port and marina at the Commerce Bight Port in the Stann Creek District and set up a ministerial subcommittee to study the feasibility of developing a passenger, port and marina at the existing Port at Commerce Bight. The ministerial subcommittee will include the Minister of Tourism & Diaspora Relations and the Minister of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics & E-Governance.
- To update and modernize regulations for those involved in pilotage, Cabinet gave its approval for the repeal and replacement of the present Pilotage Regulation. Additionally, through a new statutory instrument, new regulations will be introduced to provide that only pilots registered and licensed with the Belize Port Authority will be able to engage and conduct pilotage services in Belizean waters. It will also address other matters related to the modernization of the regulation of the industry.
- Cabinet gave its approval for Belize to accede to an amendment to the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer. The amendment, known as the Kigali Amendment, commits to a healthy environment and greener climate that supports peoples' well-being and the economy and is rooted in Belize's sustainable development principles. In addition, Cabinet approved the ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury through its life cycle.
- Cabinet gave its approval for Belize to sign and ratify the Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency Convention, which will help the region to enhance its capacity in Earth observation systems for use in important areas such as agriculture, natural disasters, security surveillance, and other important areas.
- Cabinet is pleased to announce the State Visit of Her Excellency Dr. Tsai Ing-Wen, President of the Republic of China (Taiwan), who arrives in Belize on Sunday, 2nd April. As a part of her visit, President Tsai will be making an address at a joint sitting of the House of Representatives in Belmopan on Monday, 3rd April.
- Finally, Cabinet announces that government offices will close at midday on 6th April (Holy Thursday) through 10th April (Easter Monday) for the Easter Break. Cabinet wishes Belizeans a safe and blessed Easter.

Ends