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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Ministry of Investment and Corozal Think Tank Implement Projects with Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College**

*Corozal, May 10, 2024.*

The Ministry of Investment, through its Investment Policy and Compliance Unit (IPCU), joined the Corozal Think Tank to implement two projects at the Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College in San Roman Village, Corozal District. They are known as "Phase 2 - Training of women and youth farmers in Belize to cultivate vanilla" and "CEMJC hatchery & poultry production project."

The culmination of "Phase 2 - Training of women and youth farmers in Belize to cultivate vanilla" was presented by highlighting its deliverables, which included selection of vanilla species and procurement of cuttings, site preparation for the construction of a nursery to produce vanilla beans and cuttings at the CEMJC, practical training by Belize Permaculture and Renewable Energy Limited in vanilla cultivation including fertilization, irrigation and pest and disease management, and distribution of cuttings to 30 trainees. The Ministry is excited to share that the first plantings of flavourful vanilla have been established in the nursery. The Ministry is very grateful for the kind contribution of 105 vanilla cuttings that Copal Tree Distillery Ltd. made to the school.

The second project is "the hatchery & poultry production project" with its deliverables: i) training on poultry production, quality, nutrition, and marketing, ii) provide one dozen chicks to each of the 30 trainees, iii) provide a chicken egg incubator, chicken feed, and other material for rearing chickens at CEMJC to promote local chicken sales in the northern districts.

The Think Tank and Masterplan project aims to diversify export-led economic activity in the district by enhancing skills and the entrepreneurial spirit among the school's agriculture and agro-processing students.

Mrs. Thea Garcia-Ramirez, Chair of the Corozal Think Tank, and Mr. Hugo Gonzalez, Dean of the CEMJC, were present at the launch. Also present was Mr. Lincoln Blake, Director of the Investment Policy and Compliance Unit, representing the Chief Executive Officer in the Office of the Prime Minister and Investment.

The Chair of the Corozal Think Tank invites other high schools and junior colleges in the Corozal District to collaborate by submitting project concepts that would foster economic growth, skills development, and entrepreneurship in the district.

The Corozal Think Tank acts as the Steering Committee for the Regional Economic Development Masterplan for the Corozal District, which was realigned with the priorities of the Plan Belize Medium-Term Development Strategy. The group of professionals from the Corozal District are tasked with identifying and implementing projects and policy recommendations that will generate economic activity and prosperity for residents.

## **Ends**

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