



PR#285

## PRESS RELEASE

### Launch of the National Trade Negotiating Commission

*Belmopan. May 13, 2021. 6:05 p.m.*

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration today held its inaugural meeting of the National Trade Negotiating Commission (NTNC) at the Best Western Plus Belize Biltmore Plaza in Belize City.

In February 2021, Cabinet approved the establishment of the NTNC, a tripartite commission of government, private sector and civil society actors to inform Cabinet's decision-making process for relevant national trade and trade-related issues, and where appropriate to participate in negotiations.

The introductory meeting provided an overview of the current trade negotiating agenda and laid the foundation for the first meeting scheduled for June 2021 to address trade and trade-related challenges as well as identifying opportunities. The NTNC adopted the Terms of Reference for the Commission and received presentations on the current situation with respect to Belize's trade negotiating agenda and an overview of the National Trade Policy. The Private Sector was invited to express their concerns on trade and development and voice their expectations of the NTNC.

Hon. Ramon Cervantes, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration, delivered the keynote address; introductory remarks were delivered by the co-chairs, Mr. Andy Sutherland, director general of the Directorate General for Foreign Trade, and Mr. Emile Mena, private sector representative; and closing remarks were delivered by Ms. Marissa Longsworth, president of the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

**Ends**