



PR#106-23

## PRESS RELEASE

### **PCC Meets for Orientation Workshop**

*Belmopan, May 4, 2023*

On April 25 and 26, members of the People's Constitution Commission (PCC) participated in an orientation workshop at the Best Western Belize Biltmore Plaza Hotel in Belize City.

The main objective of the workshop was to orient members of the PCC with the knowledge and conceptual frameworks, and provide access to additional resources on constitution-making and constitutional design necessary for the commission to be able to:

- (a) engage constructively on the substantive issues of constitutional review in Belize in order to conduct useful deliberations and reach a consensus on constitutional reforms; and
- (b) engage with and educate the Belizean public so that they are able to meaningfully contribute to the constitutional reform process.

Local presenters/experts and international constitutional experts presented to and engaged with commissioners on various topics affecting their respective sectors and Belizeans in general.

The first day of the workshop was divided into four sessions: Constitution & Democracy, Government, Good Governance and Accountability, and Human Rights. Professor Cynthia Barrow-Giles, distinguished senior fellow and professor of Constitutional Governance and Politics at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, presented on constitutions as legal, political and social covenants, the relationship between constitutions and democracy, and recent developments in constitutional thought and practice. Attorney Dickie Bradley and Dr. Elliot Bulmer, international constitutional expert, presented on topics such as the Belize Constitution and Systems of

Government (parliamentary vs republic, and separation of powers). Attorney Darrel Bradley, Mr. Ray Davis and Mr. Sumit Bisarya, constitutional expert, presented on Good Governance and the Public Service, Gaps in the Belize Constitution and How a Constitution promotes Good Governance and Accountability. Justice Lisa Shoman and Jason Gluck, constitutional expert, focused on topics such as the Human Rights Provisions in the Belize Constitution and Gaps: “Is there a need for more “inalienable” political, economic and environmental rights?”

Day two of the workshop focused on the Judiciary, the National Assembly and Senate Reform, and Challenges and Lessons on Constitutional Reform Processes in the Caribbean. Judge Antoinette Moore, presented on Ensuring Judicial Neutrality and Independence and the Senior Courts Act. Hon. Carolyn Trench-Sandiford, President of the Senate, presented on Structures/Functions and Standing Orders, Independence and Structure of Parliamentary Committees and Roles, and the Composition of the Senate.

The workshop culminated with Professor Cynthia Barrow-Giles presenting an examination of constitutional reform processes around the Caribbean as well as challenges that have arisen and lessons that have been learnt.

The commissioners are now well-oriented on Belize's Constitution and its gaps, and can better lead discussions with the Belizean public on the constitutional reform process.

**Ends**