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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Ministry of Economic Development Continues to Implement Science and Technology in Rural Farming**

*Belmopan, November 15, 2022. 3:15 p.m.*

Today, the Ministry of Economic Development, through the Resilient Rural Belize (RRB) Program, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the National Meteorological Service (MET) of Belize for subcomponent 2.3 of the RRB – Investment in Territorial Climate Resilient Assets. This calls for the procurement of a Climate Information System (CIS) that will be housed at the MET Office in Ladyville and used as the principal mechanism through which information about climate will be archived, analysed, modelled, exchanged and processed.

The main goal of the RRB Program is to increase farmers' resilience and adaptation to climatic changes by allowing smallholder farmers to operate sustainable production processes, even under the pressure of climate change and extreme climatic events. The CIS will, therefore, provide farmers with timely and accurate climate information, allowing them to plan their activities accordingly and minimize climate-related losses to their crops. Farmers will be able to access information on (i) irrigation and crop monitoring, (ii) pest risk, (iii) weather forecasts, and (iv) real-time weather monitoring via a mobile application.

Valued at US\$256,300.00, the system will be financed through a grant from the Green Climate Fund, contributing US\$225,544.00 of the total cost with the remaining US\$30,756.00 financed by the Government of Belize.

CEO Martinez expressed that introducing science and technology to farmers is essential as agriculture is a driving sector for Belize and these advances will lead to a more efficient cultivation of farmed lands and expand the scale, speed, and productivity of farmers and their yields. He also shared that the CIS will be a driving force as its capacities are enormous. This system will also be able to authenticate and communicate monthly and seasonal

weather predictions at a national level and for those farmers with limited access to information and communications technology. Tailored messages that can easily be understood and trusted will be developed and shared through targeted information channels within the farming communities.

Furthermore, CEO Martinez reiterated his ministry's commitment to ensuring the continued growth and development of all MSMEs in Belize as well as equal opportunities for all.

Signing on behalf of the Ministry of Economic Development were CEO Dr. Osmond Martinez and Dr. Geraldo Flowers, RRB Programme Manager, while representatives of the MET, Mr. Ronald Gordon, Chief Meteorologist, and Ms. Shanea Young, Senior Climatologist, signed on behalf of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management.

## **Ends**

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