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PRESS RELEASE

Belize Represented at the Ninth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Culture and Highest Appropriate Authorities

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Dr. Hon. Louis Zabaneh, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, led a delegation of officials from Belize at the Ninth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Culture and Highest Appropriate Authorities, which took place on October 27 and 28, 2022, in Antigua, Guatemala.

The delegation included H.E. José Alpuche, Ambassador of Belize to the Republic of Guatemala, and Mr. Idelso Leslie, Counsellor at the Embassy of Belize in Guatemala.

The meeting, hosted by the Inter-American Council for Integral Development and the Government of Guatemala, was held under the theme, “Technology, creativity, and innovation as an opportunity for developing and strengthening culture.”

The event was set against the backdrop of the impact of COVID-19 on key sectors and drivers of economic activity in the Americas, specifically on culture and creative industries. It offered member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) the opportunity to explore how artists and cultural practitioners managed to maintain their livelihoods during the pandemic, including their adaptation to new circumstances, use of technology tools and support from government during this time. Delegations also shared information and experiences on how technologies have been used in the collection, preservation, and dissemination efforts of arts and cultural heritage, and how to strengthen tangible and intangible heritage through innovation and use of new technologies.

In his presentation entitled, “The Causality between Culture Development, and Science, Technology, and Innovation,” Minister Zabaneh noted that Belize shared most of the impacts to its society caused by the pandemic and that the country observed the resiliency of its creatives through the adaptation of digital technology to survive the evaporation of their markets. He explained that the government provided support where possible to help micro and small enterprises, including the creative sector, to understand how technology could be used to improve their businesses. Minister Zabaneh added that the region could benefit from further applied research to help identify the factors that could contribute to cultural development and to science, technology and innovation, and to better understand the relationship between both. The results could guide the creation of better policies for culture and ensure a path to sustainable human development.

Distinguished presenters at the event included the President of Guatemala H.E. Dr. Alejandro Giammattei; Mr. Felipe Aguilar Marroquin, Minister of Culture and Sports of Guatemala; H.E. Nestor Mendez, Assistant Secretary General of the OAS; and Mrs. Kim Osbourne, OAS Executive Secretary for Integral Development.

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