



PR#441

PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan. September 1, 2021. 5:45 p.m.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 31st August 2021.

- Cabinet was updated on the status of vaccines and the number of vaccines available in Belize. As of 31st August 2021, 167,596 persons or 38.9 percent of the population had received at least one dose of the vaccine. This represents an increase of 18,168 new vaccinations over last week's numbers. As of 31st August 2021, 69,924 persons or 16.2 percent of the population has been fully vaccinated, an increase of 8,357 more Belizeans have been fully vaccinated over last week's 61,567.
- Since the roll out of the Pfizer vaccines, 10,638 Belizeans between the ages of 12 to 17 have received their first shot of the vaccine.
- For the health and wellness of Belizeans, Cabinet directed that all persons wishing to enter Belize through the land borders must be tested for COVID-19 at the points of entry.
- The Minister of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government informed Cabinet that negotiations between the Christian Workers Union and the Port of Belize over the collective bargaining agreement between the staff of the Port of Belize continue to progress. A draft of the agreement is currently being finalized between the parties. In relation to stevedores, the meeting with the Labour Tribunal is scheduled to take place on 6th September 2021.
- Cabinet gave its approval to introduce a bill at Sitting of the House of Representatives on September 3, 2021, to amend the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act Chapter 98 of the Substantive Laws of Belize to increase the

penalty for the offence of spreading or publishing false news from a penalty of up to \$300 or imprisonment of up to six months to \$3000 or imprisonment of up to six months in the first instance.

- Cabinet gave its approval to amend the Court of Appeal Act and Court Rules to allow the Court to exercise its discretion as the Justice of the case requires on applications to extend time for appeals.
- Cabinet approved the restructuring and updating of the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) regulations to address the removal of outdated technical terms; restructuring of regulations to ensure easy interpretation and applications; addition of regulation of new services fees; updating of fees to reflect the real cost of doing business and increasing rate of fines and penalties to foster compliance.
- Cabinet approved an extension of the Kolbe Foundation's Management contract for the Hattieville Prison.
- Finally, Cabinet requested that the Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise instructs the Bureau of Standards to investigate the issue of price gouging at stores across Belize.

Ends