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PRESS RELEASE

Prime Minister Wraps Up His First Full Day of Working Visit to Berlin, Germany

Berlin, Germany, September 2, 2022. 3:30 p.m.

Today Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño met with Martin Lugmayr, Sustainable Energy Expert from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and executives from Variodin AG, a German company that specializes in renewable energy, to discuss the future of renewable energy in Belize.

Sargassum seaweed has invaded Belize's coastline causing substantial loss of livelihoods and economic opportunities in the fisheries and tourism industries. Therefore, seeking solutions to mitigate the threat of the sargassum surge has become a top priority for the Government of Belize. The excessive accumulation of sargassum on the shores contributes to coastal erosion and harms marine ecosystems. The collection and disposal of sargassum has proven to be a costly necessity for the local governments of Belize's top beach destinations.

To address this urgent concern, the Prime Minister has been leading a delegation of technical experts to Berlin, Germany, to explore modern technologies and cooperation opportunities in the fields of waste management and renewable energy. The delegation met with Variodin AG, a Hamburg-based company, to explore technological solutions in managing waste, particularly, sargassum. The mission allowed the delegation to better understand the waste-to-energy technology involved with converting sargassum seaweed into an energy mix capable of contributing to the country's power grid.

During his visit to Berlin, the Prime Minister also met with several German Federal Government officials to discuss cooperation opportunities and climate-related priorities. Prime Minister Briceño met with the Minister of State Dr. Tobias Lindner of the Foreign Federal Office, State Secretary Christiane Rohleder of the Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, and the Leader of the German Green Party Mr. Omar Nouripour. Prime Minister Briceño thanked Germany for their continued development cooperation support provided to Belize both through bilateral and European Union programs. He shared with the German counterparts Belize's recent experiences with torrential rains and stressed the need for developed countries to increase financial support for climate adaptation in small-island and low-lying coastal developing states. He also underscored the need to address loss and damage at the upcoming COP27, among other related priorities. He further impressed on Germany the importance Belize attaches to a UN-developed Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index that will assist small and vulnerable economies in accessing grant and concessional financing at international financial institutions.

Prime Minister Briceño's delegation included Ambassador Stuart Leslie, Cabinet Secretary; Raineldo Urbina, Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. from the Embassy of Belize in Brussels; Mr. Raymond Mossiah, Chief Tourism Officer from the Ministry of Tourism & Diaspora Relations; and Mr. Wolf Kahles, Belize's Honorary Consul to Stuttgart, Germany. The delegation was further supported by technical experts from the SIDS DOCK Secretariat.

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