



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **World Water Day 2022**

#### ***March 22, 2022***

The Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining and its partner agencies join the world in celebrating World Water Day, observed annually on March 22. Established by the United Nations in 1993, World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the two billion people currently living without access to safe water. A core focus of the day is to inspire action towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.

This year's theme is "Groundwater – Making the Invisible, Visible." Out of sight and under our feet, groundwater is a hidden treasure that enriches our lives. While it is invisible, the impact of is visible in Belize and around the world.

It is important to note that almost all the liquid freshwater in the world is groundwater, supporting drinking water supplies, sanitation systems, farming, industry, and ecosystems. However, in Belize and many other places, human activities have led to overuse and pollution of groundwater.

Belize is considered rich in surface and groundwater resources; however, like many other low-lying coastal nations, it remains vulnerable to the effects of climate change, the risk of rising sea levels causing salinization of groundwater supplies that threaten the country's water resources. Groundwater will, therefore, play a critical role in adapting to climate change, as it accounts for approximately 99% of all liquid freshwater on Earth and is distributed over the entire globe, albeit unequally. Furthermore, it has the potential to provide societies with tremendous social, economic, and environmental benefits.

To celebrate this year's World Water Day, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining and its partners engaged in several activities to bring awareness to the critical importance of groundwater. These activities included:

1. Media Appearances on morning talk shows countrywide
2. The World Water Day Award

3. One-Minute video challenge
4. World Water Day Mini-Fair at Battlefield Park in Belize City.

**Members of the World Water Day Planning Committee and sponsors** include the National Hydrological Service in the Ministry of Natural Resources, Mining and Petroleum; Ministry of Health and Wellness; Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government; Department of the Environment in the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management; Public Utilities Commission; Belize Water Services Limited; Belize Electric Company Limited; Crystal Water Limited; the University of Belize; RW Water Solutions; and Crystal Water.

The Government of Belize is committed to protecting its groundwater resources from pollution and using it sustainably, to balance the needs of our people and the planet. The ministry invites and encourages all stakeholders to work together to sustainably manage this precious resource.

The ministry has embarked on various Integrated Water Resources Management and groundwater management actions with an estimated value of US\$1.4 million to execute policy and hydrological investigations with a focus on groundwater management such as updating the National Water Policy.

This World Water Day, let us take some time to reflect on what we can each do to protect and preserve water.

**End**