



PR#148

## PRESS RELEASE

### Cabinet Brief

*Belmopan February 17, 2021. 5:00 p.m.*

The Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on Tuesday, February 16, 2021.

- Cabinet received a full report from the Hon. Francis Fonseca, Minister of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, on the consultations held with the unions from February 10 to 12, 2021. Cabinet discussed thoroughly the recommendations and requests for information made by the unions and agreed to urgently provide a comprehensive response and to have follow-up discussions.
- Cabinet received an update on the COVID-19 pandemic and reviewed the plan from the Ministry of Health and Wellness on the rollout of the vaccine. Of special note was the overall decline in COVID-19 cases, which has fallen from an average of 182 positive cases per day to a daily average of 22, bringing the daily positivity rate from 20 percent in November and December to the current average daily positivity rate of 4.5 percent.

With respect to the vaccine, a four-phase rollout plan, which should start by the end of March, was presented to Cabinet. The plan seeks to vaccinate over 200,000 Belizeans in 120 days and will start with healthcare workers, the elderly, vulnerable citizens with mental and physical disabilities, teachers and other frontline persons.

- Cabinet gave its approval for the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations to introduce a long-stay visitor program to allow for extended visitor permits for targeted visitors and nationalities. This program is aimed at encouraging tourists to stay longer through a “Work Where You Vacation” Program. In addition, Cabinet gave its approval for the Ministry of Tourism to expand and improve the Qualified Retired Persons Incentive Program.
- Finally, Government will procure that the stipends paid by public utilities and statutory bodies to non-executive directors be cut by 50% effective March 2021.

**Ends**