



PR#590

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Ministers Lead Discussions on Agriculture, Trade and Development**

*Belmopan. December 21, 2021. 3:00 p.m.*

Hon. Eamon Courtenay, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration, and Hon. Jose Mai, Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise, and their respective teams met on December 20, 2021, to discuss greater cooperation and collaboration between the two ministries, with a view to further develop the country's agenda for trade and investment with Guatemala and Mexico.

Key among the discussions was the scope of the market access interest by Belize's side into Guatemala relating to the ongoing negotiations for the expansion of the Partial Scope Agreement; and the interests, constraints and concerns relating to the formalization of bilateral trade and investment between Belize and Mexico.

Discussions also included the state of Belize's export competitiveness covering production capacity for key exports, the import requirements to be met by local producers for export to Guatemala and Mexico, the companies currently capable of producing for export to these markets, the role of trade (market) intelligence in entering export markets, and the mobilization of resources for trade development.

Given the level of importance attached to agriculture, trade, and the current focus on securing preferential markets for Belize's exports, it was agreed that the group will meet on a quarterly basis going forward.

Joining the meeting were Hon. Ramon Cervantes, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration; Ambassador Amalia Mai, CEO for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade; and Servulo Baeza, CEO for Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise. Support was provided by senior technical officers in the respective ministries.

**Ends**