



PR#134-22

PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan. 26th May 2022. 9:00 a.m.

The Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 24th May 2022.

- The Minister of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation informed Cabinet of a constructive meeting with the leaders of communities in southern Belize to address the issue of erosion on Silk Caye. After meeting with relevant stakeholders, a task force was established including the leaders of communities in southern Belize, technical advisors from the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation, Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining, Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, and the Belize Coast Guard. Based on the findings of the assessment, the Fisheries Department will be giving approval for the community to proceed with the work started to address the erosion with the support of the technical experts.
- Cabinet noted that at Monday's House Committee meeting, stakeholders presented their concerns regarding the Trade License Bill 2022. Noting the fragile state of the entertainment industry caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Cabinet agreed to defer any fee for local entertainers while consultations continue with stakeholders in the entertainment industry. In addition, Cabinet will consult to develop incentives for the creative sector. All other recommendations presented at Monday's House Committee Meeting will be duly considered before the revised bill is presented to the House of Representatives for consideration.

- Cabinet gave its recommendation for a motion to be presented at the next sitting of the National Assembly for a loan motion from the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) for US\$24 million to finance the upgrading and rehabilitation of 16 miles of the Phillip Goldson Highway, from mile 8 ½ to 24½. The rehabilitation of this 16-mile section of the Phillip Goldson Highway is expected to reduce transportation costs and accident rates, increase access to services, increase employment opportunities and improve climate resilience.
- With a view to fast-track private sector investment and further stimulate economic growth, Cabinet approved certain policy and legislative adjustments to reduce turn-around time and streamline processes and provide additional incentives for various investment incentives programs including the small business (MSME) enhancement program, the designated processing areas program used by BPO's, agro-processing, aquaculture and manufacturing, and the fiscal incentives program used by tourism and other business ventures.
- Cabinet approved the development concept of a Government Administration Campus in Belize City in the Lake Independence Development Area using f a public-private partnership vehicle. It is intended that such a campus will consolidate government departments scattered across the city including the various courts of the judiciary and enable the more efficient provision of government services to the public.
- Cabinet took note of the report from the Inter-Ministerial Committee on measures that would improve the effectiveness of garbage disposal as well as recommendations on the sustainable practices to promote a clean environment, climate protection and zero waste for the health, aesthetics and well-being of the country. Recommendations include a review of the current environmental protection regulations, amendments to the Returnable Containers Act, strengthening the institutional capacity of the Department of the Environment, and new actions on plastic and waste disposal and an awareness campaign on cleaner communities and on recycling.
- on COVID-19, As of 23rd May 2022, 216,474 or 50.32% of the total population have received at least one dose of the vaccine, 211,693 or 49.21% of the total population two doses and 47,671 or 11.09 % of the

total population had received booster shots. As of 23rd May 2022, 31,803 or 54.56% of the target population (58,292) of children ages 12 to 17 years have received at least one dose of the vaccine and 26,628 or 45.68% of the target population have been fully vaccinated. Since the start of the pandemic, the cumulative number of deaths up to 20th May 2022 is 677.

- The Ministry of Health & Wellness reminds the public that an unvaccinated person is 24 times more likely to die compared to a vaccinated person and statistics show that the adjusted mortality rate for every 10,000 people is 1.99 among fully vaccinated, 6.35 among partially vaccinated and 48.42 per 10,000 unvaccinated individuals.
- Finally, Cabinet advises all Belizeans to continue to adhere to COVID-19 prevention safety measures including wearing a face mask in public, maintaining physical distance where possible and washing hands regularly. Cabinet also encourages all those not yet vaccinated to do so. Vaccines save lives.

Ends