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PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan. 22nd August 2022. 11:05 a.m.

The Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 19th August 2022.

A report was presented to Cabinet on the recent tropical wave that passed over Belize between 17th and 18th August and caused significant flooding which resulted in damage to the country's national highways and primary feeder roads, causing damages in the millions of dollars. Cabinet discussed and gave support for supplemental appropriations of BZ\$12 million to be presented to the House of Representatives to cover the cost of these emergency repairs.

Cabinet received a comprehensive report from the Ministry of Finance regarding settlement discussions relating to the 2013 cancellation of an agreement for Belize International Services Ltd. (BISL) to manage the international ships and companies' registries. Following a July 2020 Caribbean Court of Justice judgement, that government had acted illegally in taking back the registries, BISL's damages claim stood at some US\$65 million at the start of the administration in November 2020. Cabinet considered a steeply discounted settlement of this obligation, recommended by a debt management team of the Ministry of Finance. Approved in principle by Cabinet, the proposed settlement, which requires the National Assembly's approval, would substantially reduce government's contingent liabilities.

Cabinet supported the recommendation from the Attorney General's Ministry to introduce amendments to the Non-Governmental Organizations Act to allow for the appointment of a Registrar and to provide for the appointment of a Deputy Registrar to be appointed under the Belize Companies Act to be

the Deputy Registrar of Non-Governmental Organizations and to provide for the delegation of powers and functions of the Registrar and Deputy Registrar. In addition, Cabinet recommended amendments to the Patents Act to provide that the Registrar of the Belize Intellectual Property Office (BELIPO) be a sitting Registrar at BELIPO.

Cabinet gave its approval for the devolution, in principle, of the Department of Civil Aviation to a statutory body and the establishment of a Belize Civil Aviation Authority.

To realize the benefits of integration, Cabinet recommended that amendments are made to the Immigration Act and Caribbean Community Free Movement of Skilled Persons Act to allow for free movement of agricultural workers and security guards and to amend the qualification requirements for household domestics now domestic workers.

Cabinet was provided with an update on the status of vaccinations. Currently, there are more than 210,950 vaccines on hand. As of 16th August 2022, 228,187 persons or 53.04 percent had received at least one dose of the vaccine and 219,116 or 50.9 percent have been fully vaccinated. Of the population ages 12 to 17 years, 26,726 have received two doses of the vaccines. Of the population ages 5 to 11 years, 6,353 have received two doses of the vaccines. To date, 50,329 booster shots have been issued.

Finally, Cabinet congratulates our Belizean athletes who successfully competed at the North American Power Lifting Federation Competition in Panama where six of our eight Belizean athletics won medals, two gold and four bronze for a total of six medals.

Ends