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PRESS RELEASE

Belize and the EU Hold Eighth Political Dialogue

Belmopan, May 23, 2023.

In accordance with Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement, Belize and the European Union (EU) held their eighth political dialogue in San Pedro, Belize, on May 22.

The dialogue was held in a very constructive atmosphere and addressed the multidimensional relationship between Belize and the EU. Both were like-minded on many critical global issues and shared their commitment to working together on the rules-based international order and the importance of multilateralism.

The development cooperation dimension reviewed the progress of implementation of projects and programmes ongoing under the 11th European Development Fund and stated the current discussion on identifying the actions under the EU-Belize Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2021–2027. The EU provided further updates on the progress of programming under their regional sub-programmes with the Caribbean and Central America, both of which are accessible to Belize.

The European Union's proposal for a Global Gateway Investment Agenda was also discussed. The trade and investment dimension followed up on the implementation of the EU-Economic Partnership Agreement and the challenges and opportunities therein. The broader challenge of access to affordable and sustainable financing was also addressed. As such, Belize highlighted the importance of the ongoing discussion of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index, which is expected to change the criteria for small island developing states to access concessional financing.

The participants discussed Belize's desire to enter the Schengen visa waiver list and the necessity of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific

States agreement to enter into force. The EU and Belize stressed the importance of the relationship of the EU-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States through the upcoming summit in Brussels from July 17 to 18, 2023.

The EU underlined the key role Belize plays as part of the Caribbean Community and the Central American Integration System (SICA). Belize presented achievements of its SICA Presidency Pro Tempore and committed to efficiently leading the regional efforts towards overcoming the difficulties SICA countries currently face and promoting development and prosperity for all.

Other issues on the agenda included good governance, human rights, the condemnation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its impact on food and energy security, the deterioration of the security situation in Haiti, the EU support for confidence-building measures in the Adjacency Zone between Belize and Guatemala ahead of the International Court of Justice ruling, and the preparation of the new Global Financial Pact. Regarding climate change, both sides shared their views on adaptation and mitigation measures, loss and damage reparations, and more ambitious climate financing.

The political dialogue was co-chaired by Hon. Eamon Courtenay, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration, and H.E. Marianne Van Steen, EU's Ambassador to Belize. Minister Courtenay was joined by Ambassador Amalia Mai, CEO in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. Ambassador Van Steen was accompanied by EU ambassadors from member states, including H.E. Elisabeth Kehrner of Austria, H.E. Johan Verkammen of Belgium, H.E. Zdenek Kubanek of the Czech Republic, H.E. Luigi De Chiara of Italy, H.E. Wilfred Theo Mohr of the Netherlands, H.E. Jose Maria Lavina Rodriguez of Spain, and Charge d'Affaires Mr. Thomas Wulfing of Germany.

Ends