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PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Sustainable Development and UNICEF Sign MOU

Belmopan, November 28, 2023.

The Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to formalize a partnership for the protection of children, mothers, and vulnerable Belizeans.

The ministry and UNICEF have identified actions that are geared towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Plan Belize Medium Term Development Strategy through strategic actions being implemented by the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU), National Climate Change Office (NCCO), National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), and the Department of the Environment (DOE).

During the signing, Dr. Kenrick Williams, Chief Executive Officer in the ministry, thanked Ms. Alison Parker, UNICEF Belize's Country Representative, for supporting the Government of Belize in addressing the pressing issues of climate change and disaster risk reduction and their impacts on women and children and fostering a healthy environment for all.

Ms. Parker said, *"The Children's Climate Risk Index reports that approximately 1 billion children, half of all the children in the world, live in countries like Belize that are classified as 'extremely high-risk'. We've lived this reality, as over the past 3 years, Belize has endured an increase in extreme rainfalls, flash floods, and hurricanes threatening its economy, people, and assets. Whether we recognize it or not – climate change is impacting children! I recognize this MOU as an important partnership to amplify our efforts ensuring they are strategic, collaborative and takes to*

scale important programmes and interventions to mitigate the climate crisis for children and advance the SDGs.”

This MOU is a first-of-its-kind and will support the ministry with its ongoing activities to be all-inclusive and child-focused in charting the way forward as Belize increases its climate resilience, focus on disaster risk reduction, protection of the environment and achieving overall sustainable development.

Through this MOU, the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management and UNICEF will foster a collaborative partnership to leverage respective expertise and resources in creating a more resilient future for families and children, especially in vulnerable communities.

Ends

For more information, contact:

Dr. Kenrick Williams

Chief Executive Officer

Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster
Risk Management

822-1060

ceo@environment.gov.bz