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## PRESS RELEASE

### **MoECST Establishes Pro-Tempore Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Committee**

*Belmopan, January 12, 2024.*

Today, the pro-tempore Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Committee (STIAC) was established in Belmopan. Its purpose is to guide the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (MoECST) in the development of Belize's first National Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy (2024-2034). The world has entered the Fourth Industrial Revolution, characterized by robotics, big data, artificial intelligence, and automation; therefore, the strategy aims to prepare and move Belize into this new era with the goal of attaining sustainable human development.

The STIAC is represented by private, government, and academic sectors, with support from the Science and Technology Unit of the MoECST, UNDP, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Members of the STIAC are:

- 1) Mr. Jody Williams, Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- 2) Dr. Osmond Martinez, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Economic Development;
- 4) Mr. Ishmael Quiroz, Office of the Prime Minister;
- 5) Ms. Alexia Peralta, Director, E-Governance and Digitalization Unit, Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics, and E-Governance;
- 6) H.E. Ambassador Carlos Fuller, Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations;
- 7) Dr. Apolonio Aguilar, Dean, Faculty of Science and Technology, University of Belize,
- 8) Ms. Ashley Longford, President, National Student Union of Belize;

9) Dr. Aaron Lewis, Physicist and Data Scientist from the United States of America (USA)

10) Dr. Sydney Taegar, Director of Optics, Research and Development, Nokia (USA);

11) Dr. Dorian Arnold, Computer Scientist, Dean of Graduate Studies, Emory University, (USA)

Dr. Hon. Louis Zabaneh, Minister of State in the MoECST, will serve as the chair of the STIAC. A representative from the Ministry of Sustainable Development will also be named to the committee shortly.

Also present at the inaugural meeting were Mrs. Dian Maheia, CEO, MoECST; H.E. Ms Rocio Medina Bolivar, IDB; Ms Kayla Grant, IDB; Mr Gian Vasquez, IDB; Ms Amilin Mendez, UNDP; Mr Carlos Quiroz and Dr Myron Medina, Science and Technology Unit, MoECST; and Mr Alejandro Delgado, Consultant.

The STIAC's mandate is to have a final draft of the Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy by the end of its working period on July 15, 2024, for the Cabinet's review and consideration. The committee will be meeting with all relevant stakeholders across the country and internationally.

**Ends**