



PR#088-25

PRESS RELEASE

Belize Returns to the International Labour Conference to Reinforce Global Standards and Social Justice

Belmopan. June 17, 2025.

Belize returned to the 113th International Labour Conference (ILC) held in Geneva from June 2-13, 2025, its first in-person attendance since 2009. This historic reengagement highlights Belize's commitment to advancing international labour standards and fostering social justice.

The ILC, the highest decision-making body of the International Labour Organization (ILO), convened delegates from all 187 Member States, alongside representatives of employers and workers, to deliberate and adopt new conventions, recommendations, and resolutions aimed at shaping the future of work.

The Belize delegation was led by Hon. Florencio Marin Jr., Minister of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government. He was accompanied by Mr. Valentino Shal, Chief Executive Officer; Mrs. Rissela Dominguez-Patt, Labour Commissioner; Ms. Ella Waight, President of the National Trade Union Congress of Belize (NTUCB); and Mr. Yorshabell Cattouse, Representative of the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI).

During the Conference, Belize made substantive contributions to global discussions on labour standards. Belize supported the first-stage approval of a draft Convention and Recommendation on Platform Work, advocating for fair classification, algorithmic transparency, and access to social protection for gig workers. The country also supported the finalized Convention and Recommendation on biological hazards in the workplace,

aimed at protecting workers from pandemics, zoonotic threats, and other health risks in the workplace.

In a key technical advancement, Belize supported the ILO's Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) amendments, which enhances protections for seafarers, including access to shore leave, safe working conditions, measures against harassment. In addition, Belize reaffirmed its commitment to ILO Recommendation No. 204, which encourages formalizing informal work sectors that are a significant part of Belize's economy.

Belize cast its vote in favour of the ILO's Programme and Budget for 2026–27, guaranteeing technical assistance for its national Decent Work Country Programme. Furthermore, Belize aligned with international consensus, voting to grant Palestine non-member observer status in the ILO.

In his statement to the Conference, Hon. Marin Jr. affirmed:

“Belize supports the creation of inclusive global labour standards that ensure all workers are protected. Justice must be more than an aspiration. It must be lived, legislated, and localized.”

As global labour standards evolve, Belize has positioned itself not just as a participant, but as an advocate for dignified, safe, and inclusive employment for all.

The Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government extends its appreciation to the ILO, social partners, and national stakeholders for their continued collaboration and support. Belize looks forward to implementing the knowledge gained and contributing actively to future ILO engagements, including the 114th ILC in 2026.

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For further information, please contact:

Mrs. Rissela Dominguez-Patt

Labour Commissioner

Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government

Email: Labour.Comm@labour.gov.bz

Tel: (+501) 828-4276