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PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Human Development, Family Support, and Gender Affairs Hosts Opening of Disability Act Training

Belmopan, August 21, 2025.

The Ministry of Human Development, Family Support, and Gender Affairs, in collaboration with the University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus Belize, hosted the Introduction to the Belize Disability Act Training Course on August 21, 2025. The training marks a significant step in advancing the implementation of the Belize Disabilities Act, passed in 2024, which guarantees equal rights, protections, and opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The opening ceremony began with welcome remarks from Mr. Marshall Nunez, Disabilities Desk Coordinator, who highlighted the Ministry's ongoing commitment to building an inclusive society. Mr. Nunez reflected on the transformative impact of the Belize Disabilities Act and walked the participants through its stages of development from vision to implementation.

In her address, Mrs. Adele Catzim-Sanchez, CEO of the Ministry, emphasized that the Act represents Belize's pledge to ensure dignity, equal participation, and full protection for persons with disabilities. She also stressed the importance of education as a bridge between policy and practice, equipping participants to translate the law into meaningful action.

Dr. Sharmayne Saunders of UWI introduced the program and outlined the profiles of the facilitators. She welcomed the opportunity for partnership in building a community of champions for inclusive development. Facilitators Shantell Yearwood and Delvitt Samuels provided an overview of the training structure, which includes an examination of disability rights, responsibilities, and challenges, as outlined in the Belize Disabilities Act.

The one-day training aims to build awareness and capacity among professionals across various sectors, including health, education, social services, law enforcement, and civil society, so that they can effectively interpret, apply, and advocate for disability rights.

The Ministry reaffirms its leadership in fostering inclusion, equality, and protection for all Belizeans. The training is part of broader national efforts to establish the Disabilities Commission, develop a Disabilities Registry, and strengthen institutional support for persons with disabilities.

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