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PRESS RELEASE

Pilot Testing Underway for NEMO's New Online Shelter Management Training

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The National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), through the Ministry of the Public Service and Disaster Risk Management, has commenced the testing phase of a newly developed online, self-paced Shelter Management Training program.

This pilot marks a significant milestone in modernizing Belize's disaster preparedness training. Feedback is currently being gathered from a diverse group of participants, including new and experienced shelter managers, district coordinators, subject matter experts, the Public Service Training Unit, and members of academia. All comments are now being compiled and addressed. After revisions are completed, a smaller group will be invited to review the updated version before national rollout.

The training provides a strong foundation in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) within the Belizean context. Participants explore NEMO's mandate, the Disaster Risk Reduction Cycle, major national hazards, and the role of Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs).

A major component of the course focuses on comprehensive shelter operations, covering:

- Pre-activation tasks and opening procedures
- Daily routines and documentation requirements
- Safety and protection standards
- Child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) risk mitigation
- Deactivation and closure protocols
- Rapid reporting requirements

The digital course is initially being offered to public officers, with plans to expand access to trained response teams and community volunteers once finalized. Learners also examine how global frameworks, including the Sendai Framework, UNDRR guidance, and UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children, inform disaster response and shelter operations in Belize.

The learning journey culminates in a capstone hurricane shelter simulation, where participants apply team coordination, supply management, communication procedures, and end-to-end shelter operations in a realistic scenario.

This initiative is being developed in partnership with UNICEF, the University of Belize, and NVISION, and reflects the Ministry's continued commitment to strengthening national readiness, expanding access to standardized DRR training, and equipping frontline personnel and community responders with the tools needed to safeguard lives and build resilient communities.

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