



PR#009-26

PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan, January 14, 2026.

The Cabinet met on 13th January 2026.

- Cabinet welcomed the announcement by the Prime Minister that the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, has accepted an invitation for a State Visit to Belize from 1st to 3rd February 2026. Dr. Ali will be addressing the Special Sitting of the National Assembly to be held on 2nd February in the newly renovated Assembly Building on Independence Hill.
- Cabinet discussed and took note of the consultations with stakeholders and supported the issuing of special permits for the transportation of wide loads on national highways. This, along with recent amendments to road safety regulations, will improve safety and reduce the number of reported traffic accidents, which last year reached over 3,300.
- Cabinet approved support for improved enforcement capabilities by the Department of Transport. Additional Transport Officers and vehicles will allow the Department to conduct 24 hours per day, seven days per week enforcement, to address the increased traffic infractions and accidents occurring across the country.
- Cabinet gave its approval for coordinated actions to strengthen the competitiveness of the Belize cacao sector by establishing a National Cacao Committee and for the implementation of key measures to meet emerging international market and compliance requirements.
- Cabinet gave its approval for the expansion of services for homeless and displaced persons through the establishment of new shelters in priority districts. These actions are proposed as part of the continued implementation of the Belize Homeless and Rough Shelter Initiative, which seeks to address the complex social challenges in Belize that are driven by factors such as mental illness, substance use, family disintegration, economic hardships, and the lack of long-term institutional care. Such services for homeless and displaced persons are critical to safeguarding vulnerable populations, improving public safety, and strengthening Belize's social protection system.

- In 2024, the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act was signed into law. This Act establishes provisions to prevent sexual harassment, protect all persons across workplaces and institutions, and provide an accessible mechanism for redress. Cabinet gave its approval for a coordinated national implementation framework for the Sexual Harassment Act, including institutional roles and responsibilities, compliance mechanisms, reporting obligations, and oversight arrangements.
- Cabinet has approved the adoption of the National Rural Development Strategy (NRDS) 2026–2030 and directed the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development and Local Government to coordinate its implementation. The Strategy establishes a unified national framework to guide rural development planning, investment, and delivery over the next five years. It ensures stronger coordination across Government and more effective targeting of resources in rural communities. The NRDS is structured around four strategic pillars: Partnership, Prosperity, People, and Places. It lays the foundation for inclusive and competitive rural economies, strengthened local governance, and improved quality of life in rural areas.
- Cabinet approved the establishment of a joint vetted unit in support of the national, transnational, and international immigration crime prevention unit. This unit will operate in partnership with the United States Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, at the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan. The terms of this agreement will be outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed between the Government of the United States and the Government of Belize.
- Cabinet approved an amendment to the First Schedule of the Customs and Excise Duties Act, Chapter 48 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, to provide for the corrective measures to address the breach of the Bound Rates of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Consolidated Tariff Schedule. WTO Bound Rates are the maximum tariffs Belize committed not to exceed on imported goods. It has been determined that the applied rates under Headings 44.04 and 44.09 are not in alignment with the bound rates established by the WTO, resulting in a breach of the tariff commitments. This amendment will ensure that Belize is compliant with its obligations under the WTO framework.
- Cabinet gave its approval for the amendment to the First Schedule for the Customs and Excise Duties Act, Chapter 48 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, to implement the fourth phase of the scheduled reduction of duties in accordance with the Government of Belize requirements under the Belize-Taiwan Economic Cooperation Agreement (ECA). This would bring Belize into full compliance with its phased tariff elimination obligation under the ECA.

- Finally, Cabinet encourages all Belizeans to celebrate safely on Thursday, January 15, in honour of the Father of the Nation, the Rt. Hon. George Cadle Price.

Ends