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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Ministry of Rural Transformation and Partners Inaugurate \$2.2 Million Rehabilitated Water System in Sarteneja Village**

*Belmopan, January 23, 2026.*

The Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, and Local Government, in a landmark partnership with the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), officially inaugurated the newly rehabilitated Sarteneja Village Water System today. This vital infrastructure project, representing a total investment of \$2.2 million, was made possible through the collaborative funding of PACT, UNICEF, the South Korean Fund, and the Government of Belize. This significant financial commitment marks a major milestone in the national effort to provide sustainable, high-capacity water services to rural and coastal communities.

The comprehensive rehabilitation project was designed to address both the long-term quality of the water supply and the administrative efficiency of the local water board. It included the procurement and installation of a state-of-the-art Reverse Osmosis System and a high-performance backup generator to ensure a continuous supply of potable water. Beyond the advanced filtration technology, the project encompassed the full restoration of the reservoir and the water board office. To ensure operational sustainability of the system, the initiative also provided 250 individual water meters and a bulk meter, allowing for the precise tracking of total village water usage. Furthermore, the office was equipped with a new laptop and printer to modernize billing and record-keeping processes.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Hon. Oscar Requena, Minister of Rural Transformation, Community Development and Local Government; Hon. Florencio Marin Jr., Area Representative of Corozal Southeast; and Dr. Olusila Oladeji, the Health and Nutrition Specialist for UNICEF. They were joined by Mr. Valentino Shal, Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development and Local Government, Ms. Robbin Burns, the Conservation Investment Manager for PACT, and Mr. Cornelio Acosta, Chairman of Belize Water Services (BWS), alongside members of the Sarteneja Village Council and Waterboard.

The proceedings concluded with a collective recognition of the project's transformative impact on Sarteneja. The speakers emphasized that the \$2.2 million expenditure serves as a direct investment in the fundamental pillars of community health and economic development. By integrating these improvements, the Ministry and its partners have implemented a proactive solution to various challenges that will ensure the village remains a resilient and thriving community. This inauguration stands as a definitive testament to the power of multi-agency partnerships in delivering high-value infrastructure that empowers rural Belizeans and secures their future well-being.

**Ends**