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PRESS RELEASE

Greening Belize Initiative Launched to Restore Forests and Empower Communities

Belmopan, January 27, 2026.

The Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change, and Solid Waste Management officially launched the Greening Belize Initiative, a national forest restoration and climate resilience programme aimed at planting one million trees across Belize by 2035. Supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the GEF6 Project, the initiative focuses on restoring wildfire-affected and degraded landscapes while advancing sustainable land management nationwide.

Spearheaded by the Belize Forest Department, Greening Belize aligns with Belize's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0), the National Landscape Restoration Strategy, and international commitments such as the Bonn Challenge. The programme integrates large-scale tree planting with innovation through the Greening Belize App, a centralized digital platform that enables real-time monitoring, verification, public participation, and transparent reporting of restoration efforts, strengthening governance and data-driven decision-making.

A key component of the initiative is the Belize River Watershed Micro-Grants Programme, which will provide targeted funding to support community-led conservation and sustainable livelihood projects. As part of the launch, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with the Community Baboon Sanctuary (CBS) and the Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology (BEST) to support the delivery and implementation of the grant. The programme will empower community-based organizations, Indigenous Peoples, women-led initiatives, farmers, and youth groups to undertake projects such as riparian restoration, climate-smart agriculture, biodiversity conservation, reforestation, and environmental education, ensuring local communities play a central role in protecting the Belize River Watershed.

The launch ceremony was attended by Hon. John Briceño, Prime Minister of Belize; Hon. Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change, and Solid Waste Management; Milagro Matus, CEO of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change, and Solid Waste Management; and Michael Lund, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative. A symbolic tree-planting ceremony was held at the Ministry grounds, during which the Greening Belize App was officially deployed. Minister Habet remarked, “The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago; the second-best time is now.” The event marked a significant milestone in Belize’s efforts to restore degraded land, strengthen climate resilience, and secure long-term environmental and socio-economic benefits for all Belizeans.

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