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PRESS RELEASE

Belize Engages CARICOM and Global Partners at WTO MC14

Belmopan, April 1, 2026.

Belize participated in the 14th World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference (MC14), held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from March 26–30, 2026, where it actively advanced its national and regional trade priorities within a challenging global trade environment. The delegation was led by H.E. Dr. Harold Young, Belize’s Permanent Representative to the WTO, with support from Mr. Andy Sutherland, Director General for Foreign Trade, and Mr. Berisford Codd, Senior Trade Economist. The team coordinated closely with the CARICOM Ministerial caucus, while also engaging within the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group.

At the margins of the conference, Belize held several bilateral meetings with key partners, including Suriname, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, the United Arab Emirates, and Japan. These engagements provided opportunities to deepen cooperation, explore market access issues, and reinforce Belize’s commitment to constructive dialogue within the multilateral trading system.

Conference outcomes reflected the increasingly multipolar nature of global trade relations, which limited consensus on several longstanding negotiating issues. While some progress was recorded on fisheries subsidies and elements of special and differential treatment, significant concerns remain unresolved for small and vulnerable economies such as Belize, particularly in the areas of agriculture, e-commerce, intellectual property, and WTO reform.

Belize placed particular emphasis on the need for transparent, predictable, and enforceable trade rules that support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Strengthening these rules is critical to enabling Belizean firms to participate more effectively in international trade, diversify exports, and create sustainable employment opportunities at home.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade notes that while MC14 did not deliver all the outcomes sought by developing countries, it nonetheless provided an important platform for Belize to assert its interests, build alliances, and contribute constructively to ongoing discussions on WTO reform. Belize will continue to work with CARICOM partners and other like-minded members to strengthen dispute settlement, enhance transparency, and embed development considerations in future reform efforts.

Looking ahead, Belize remains committed to export diversification and market expansion as key pillars of its trade strategy. These efforts will be pursued in tandem with domestic trade policy reviews to ensure that Belizean producers and exporters are well positioned to navigate an evolving global trade landscape.

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