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PRESS RELEASE

Belize Marks 52 Years in CARICOM with Youth-Focused Panel Discussion

Belmopan, May 12, 2026.

As part of the annual CARICOM Week activities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade hosted a panel discussion on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, under the theme, "Your Future, Your Region."

The event took place at the Ministry's headquarters in Belmopan, bringing together students, young professionals, and educators from secondary and tertiary institutions for an engaging discussion on the opportunities CARICOM creates for Belizeans.

The panel discussion, titled "Building Skills, Expanding Access, and Contributing to Belize: What CARICOM Means for You," explored how regional integration continues to support education, skills development, entrepreneurship, professional mobility, and regional collaboration across the Caribbean.

Delivering the welcome remarks, Hon. Marconi Leal Jr., Minister of State for Foreign Trade, reflected on Belize's longstanding commitment to regional cooperation since joining CARICOM in 1974. He emphasized that CARICOM is not only about institutions and agreements, but about people and the opportunities created through collective regional development.

Addressing the young audience in attendance, Minister Leal encouraged participants to view themselves as active contributors to Belize's future and the advancement of the wider Caribbean region.

The discussion featured an accomplished panel of professionals whose careers reflect the impact of regional engagement and leadership. Panelists

shared personal experiences, insights on professional growth, and perspectives on how young Belizeans can take advantage of opportunities available through CARICOM while contributing meaningfully to national development.

The event also highlighted the importance of preparing Belize's youth to compete and succeed in an increasingly interconnected region and global economy. Participants were encouraged to engage actively, ask questions, and explore the many pathways available through regional cooperation.

The Ministry expressed appreciation to the moderators, panelists, participating institutions, and attendees for contributing to a meaningful and forward-looking dialogue during CARICOM Week 2026.

As Belize continues to strengthen its role within CARICOM, the event reinforced the value of regional unity, shared opportunity, and youth empowerment in shaping the future of both Belize and the Caribbean community.

Ends