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# PRESS RELEASE

## Belize and Cuba Meet to Advance Cooperation in Disaster Risk Management

*Belmopan, May 5, 2026.*

Hon. Henry Charles Usher, Minister of the Public Service and Disaster Risk Management, met with a high-level delegation from Cuba's Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment (CITMA) as part of an official visit to Belize from May 1 to 5, 2026.

The meeting, held at NEMO headquarters in Belmopan, built on ongoing collaboration between NEMO and CITMA and focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation in disaster risk management, climate resilience, and technical exchange.

Key areas of discussion included the development of a potential support programme between Belize and Cuba, as well as an exchange programme to enhance technical cooperation between institutions. Both sides committed to reviewing a draft concept note for a joint project and explored the possibility of a Belizean delegation visiting Cuba to further advance collaboration.

Discussions also highlighted the sharing of expertise in early warning systems, hazard monitoring, and disaster preparedness. The parties explored opportunities to standardize hazard analysis and risk assessments at the municipal level, strengthen vulnerability assessments, and integrate climate change considerations into future planning and development frameworks.

In addition, the potential deployment of Cuban technical experts to support training, capacity building, and knowledge exchange in Belize was discussed. The meeting also included an exchange of information on

NEMO's national work programme and ongoing disaster risk management initiatives.

Minister Usher emphasized that such partnerships are vital in strengthening Belize's national resilience and improving preparedness and response capabilities across all levels.

The Cuban delegation was led by First Deputy Minister Rudy Montero Mata and included Bárbara Calcedo Cuba, Director General of Economics and Human Resources; Ceferino Julio Santarén Suárez, Director of the Office of International Funds and Projects Management; and Pedro Julio Ruiz Hernández, Specialist in the Directorate of International Relations.

Also present at the meeting were Mr. Rolando Zetina, Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of the Public Service and Disaster Risk Management, and Mr. Daniel Mendez, National Emergency Coordinator of the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO).

The engagement reaffirmed the strong and longstanding relationship between Belize and Cuba, with both sides expressing commitment to deepening cooperation in areas critical to disaster risk reduction and sustainable development.

**Ends**