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PRESS RELEASE

Belize Participates in 8th Global Environment Facility Assembly

Belmopan, June 4, 2026.

Belize is participating in the 8th Assembly of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), being held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from May 30 to June 6, 2026. Representing the Government of Belize are Mrs. Judene Tingling-Linares, GEF Operational Focal Point (Alt.) in the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Solid Waste Management, and Mr. Leroy Martinez, GEF Political Focal Point and Director of the Climate Finance Unit within the Ministry of Economic Transformation.

The GEF Assembly is the Facility's highest governing body. It convenes ministers, government officials, development partners, civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples, the private sector, and environmental experts from around the world every four years to discuss global environmental priorities and guide future investments.

Belize's participation in the Assembly provides an important opportunity to advance national priorities identified under Plan Belize 2.0, the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 3.0, and the country's broader sustainable development agenda. The delegation is also actively engaging within the Small Island Developing States Constituency to ensure that the unique needs and priorities of island and coastal nations are reflected in discussions on policies, programming directions, and financing modalities for the ninth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-9).

For more than three decades, Belize has maintained a strong partnership with the Global Environment Facility. Through this collaboration, Belize has successfully accessed financial and technical resources to support the implementation of several multilateral environmental conventions. GEF-funded initiatives have directly benefited Belizean communities by strengthening the management of protected areas, supporting sustainable livelihoods, improving resilience to climate impacts, promoting sustainable agriculture and fisheries. They have also increased opportunities for local

communities, indigenous peoples, women, youth, civil society organizations, and the private sector to participate in environmental stewardship and sustainable development initiatives. These investments have not only improved the well-being of the Belizean people but have also generated significant global environmental benefits.

While in Uzbekistan, both officials are participating in a series of high-level dialogues, constituency meetings, and technical learning sessions focused on emerging financing opportunities under GEF-9. These engagements are designed to strengthen Belize's capacity to develop high-quality projects and access future funding that can support communities and national institutions in addressing pressing environmental challenges.

The Government of Belize remains committed to working with national and international partners to secure investments that promote sustainable development, strengthen climate resilience, conserve the country's natural resources, and improve the quality of life for all Belizeans.

Present at the event is Mr. Jaren Serano, a Ph.D. student at the University of Florida and the first Belizean recipient of the Gustavo Fonseca scholarship launched at the 7th GEF Assembly. Jaren embodies the promise of Belize's next generation of environmental leaders, driven by a passion for conservation and a commitment to finding innovative nature-based solutions, demonstrating how science, leadership, and local knowledge can work together to solve environmental challenges.

The Government of Belize extends its sincere appreciation to the GEF Secretariat and the Government of Uzbekistan for the warm hospitality and successful hosting of the 8th GEF Assembly.

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