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PRESS RELEASE

Labour Department and ILO Strengthen Labour Dispute Prevention and Resolution

Belmopan, August 17, 2026.

The Ministry of Immigration, Governance and Labour, through the Belize Labour Department, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), conducted a series of activities aimed at strengthening Belize's labour dispute prevention and resolution mechanisms and improving access to labour justice.

The activities included a diagnostic assessment of the Labour Complaints Tribunal, facilitated by Mr. Pablo Arellano, Senior Specialist in Social Dialogue and Labour Relations, ILO Regional Office. The assessment provided an opportunity to examine the Tribunal's current operations, followed by the presentation of results, feedback, and discussions among participants on the way forward.

A key component of the programme was a regional knowledge-exchange session on "Labour Dispute Prevention and Resolution Systems: Improving Access to Labour Justice," which brought together the Industrial Tribunal of The Bahamas, the Labour Complaints Tribunal of Belize, and the Industrial Court of Trinidad and Tobago.

The regional session opened with remarks by Ms. Nancy Varela, Social Dialogue and Labour Administration Specialist, ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean. Presentations were delivered by Her Honour Mrs. Indira Demeritte-Francis, President of the Industrial Tribunal of The Bahamas; His Honour Mr. Herbert Soverall, Vice President of the Industrial Court of Trinidad and Tobago; and representatives of Belize's Labour Complaints Tribunal. Mr. Arellano provided expert reflections, followed by a roundtable discussion on lessons learned and next steps.

The programme also included focused training for Labour Department technical officers and representatives of employers' and workers' organizations on access to labour justice and the prevention and resolution of labour disputes. Participants received practical training in negotiation and conciliation techniques, including positional and interest-based negotiation, reframing, effective questioning, paraphrasing, the role of emotions and body language, as well as practical role-play exercises. The training was aimed at strengthening the capacity of Labour Officers and social partners to manage workplace conflicts and support the early and effective resolution of labour disputes.

These activities form part of the Ministry's broader efforts to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Labour Department and the Labour Complaints Tribunal, enhance dispute prevention and resolution mechanisms, and improve access to labour justice in Belize.

The Ministry expresses its appreciation to the International Labour Organization, particularly Ms. Nancy Varela and Mr. Pablo Arellano, for their continued technical support. Appreciation is also extended to the representatives of the Industrial Tribunal of The Bahamas and the Industrial Court of Trinidad and Tobago, members of the Labour Complaints Tribunal, employers' and workers' representatives, Labour Officers, and all participants who contributed to the successful sessions.

The Ministry remains committed to strengthening Belize's labour administration and promoting fair, accessible, and effective mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of labour disputes.

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