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PRESS RELEASE

Belize Reaffirms Biodiversity Commitments and Calls for Stronger International Support at UN Biodiversity Conference

Belmopan, November 2, 2026.

Belize has reaffirmed its commitment to biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and inclusive natural resource management at the Seventeenth Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in Yerevan, Armenia.

Representing Belize, Minister of Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Honorable Orlando Habet, Director of the National Biodiversity Office, Saul Cruz, and the technical team highlighted national conservation achievements and priorities for implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Dr. Kenrick Williams, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations and Ambassador Plenipotentiary for Sustainable Development, also supported Belize's engagement in the negotiations.

In his high-level statement, Minister Habet highlighted that approximately 40 percent of Belize's land territory is within protected areas, forest cover remains close to 60 percent, and the country is close to protecting 30 percent of its ocean space. He also emphasized the urgent need for biodiversity financing, noting that Belize's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2035 estimates that approximately US$137 million is required for implementation. He called on developed countries to fulfil their commitments under Target 19 and provide adequate, predictable, and accessible financing, alongside capacity-building and technology transfer.

Belize also advanced discussions on the Tri-national Biocultural Corridor and Mesoamerica's 30x30 agenda, emphasizing ecological connectivity,

cultural heritage, and the meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in conservation.

A key highlight was Belize's commitment to join the Women Ocean Guardians Initiative, alongside 15 other governments, advancing women's leadership in marine conservation and the blue economy. Minister Habet stated, "Belize has always punched above its weight in marine conservation, but our success has never been an accident of geography — it is the result of the dedication, wisdom, and leadership of our women on the coast."

Belize's participation at COP17 reinforces its commitment to international cooperation and collective action to translate biodiversity commitments into meaningful results for nature and people.

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