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PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan. 31st March 2022. 9:20 a.m.

The Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met in regular session on 29th March 2022.

- Cabinet took note of the recent alleged child labor and trafficking offence issues and reiterated its commitment to fighting all forms of exploitation. Cabinet also instructed that there be full collaboration among line ministries in this regard.
- Cabinet gave its approval for the unification of tax administration to be done in a phased approach aimed at the restructuring of revenue administration through consolidation and modernization. This will allow for all major tax revenue entries to be administered and collected by one revenue department or authority. These tax revenue centers would include tax collecting centers such as the Customs Department, Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Belize Tax Services, among others.
- Cabinet considered various relief measures in connection with heightened fuel prices and their volatility. In addition to action already taken to mitigate the price increase through reduction of excise duty by \$1.23 per imperial gallon and further excise duty reduction on regular gasoline, Cabinet is evaluating possible targeted subsidies as well. Cabinet further determined that constituent commercial components of the fuel price including the dealer's margin and the depot fee be urgently renegotiated.
- Cabinet will shortly introduce legislation for the consolidation and modernization of the Companies Law Framework in Belize by bringing together the Belize Companies and Corporate Affairs Registry (BCCAR) and the Belize International Corporate Affairs Registry by introducing an act for the creation of the Belize Companies Bill. This is a part of government's reform process to modernize and consolidate the business laws and processes in Belize. The result of these actions will allow for strengthened compliance in line with international rules and regulations to support and enable digital transformation through the leveraging of information and communications technology and to enhance the business law regime, all meant to improve investor confidence, boost competitiveness, and cultivate a culture of innovation and modernity in the business environment.
- Cabinet gave its support to the request from the Minister of Defence and Border Security to allow members of the Belize Defence Force to

pay social security contributions and to become insured persons through the Social Security Board.

- Cabinet was updated on the status of vaccinations and the number of vaccines available in Belize. Currently, there are more than 243,000 vaccines on hand. As of 29th March 2022, 215,428 persons or 50.07 percent have received at least one dose of the vaccine and 209,379 or 48.6 percent have been fully vaccinated. Of the population aged 12 to 17 years, 25,968 have received two doses of the vaccines. To date, 43,190 booster shots have been issued. The daily positivity rate is 1.38 percent, an indication that the nation is moving in the right direction.
- Cabinet approved the following measures in advance of the 1st April 2022 lifting of restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic:
 1. All unvaccinated people 5 years and older entering Belize through the airport must show proof of a negative rapid test (48hrs) or a PCR test (72hrs)
 2. All unvaccinated foreigners 5 years and older entering Belize through a land or seaport must show proof of a negative rapid test (48hrs) or a PCR test (72hrs)
 3. Belizeans 12 years and older wishing to exit Belize through air, land or seaports must be fully vaccinated before exiting.
- Finally, Cabinet urges all Belizeans to take personal responsibility to minimize the risk of contracting COVID-19 and encourages those persons not vaccinated to do so.

Ends