

Reporter

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Mixed solution for bus industry

GOB counters BBA with price-and-subsidy formula

By Michelle Sutherland

The Government of Belize (GOB) has countered the Belize Bus Association (BBA)'s call for a 25% bus fare increase with a hybrid approach, which involves both a subsidy and tiered per-mile pricing system. The Reporter has confirmed this week.

Speaking with the media on Wednesday, Minister of Transport explained the tiered price proposal. "There were 3 tiers. We were saying anything between 11 miles or 12



Pg. 2

The Belize Bus Association (BBA) asked for a 25% fare increase or a fuel subsidy. GOB has suggested a blend of both.

Regional assoc. warns of imminent flour-price increases



Pg. 3

By Javam Flowers

The high cost of producing flour "is unsustainable [for] any manufacturing entity and, therefore, must be ultimately passed on in some measure to the consumers," The Caribbean Millers' Association (CMA) announced this week.

Via a two-page release, the CMA—a Jamaican-based organization that functions to monitor the price, logistics, transportation, and associated

costs relating to all wheat types used by flour millers within the Caribbean region—detailed that the industry faces "imminent and actual" increases in the cost of raw materials by more than 40%.

The CMA explained projected production cost of the main classes of wheat used in the Caribbean. These include Soft Red Winter (SRW) wheat, Hard Red Winter (HRW) wheat, and Dark Northern Spring

(DNS) wheat. The association also informed that the steep increase in the principal wheat production cost is attributable to droughts in the United States and Canada, and is compounded by the Russian incursion into Ukraine.

The global conflict will continue to affect the industry as Russian and Ukrainian wheat account for close to 30% of the world's exported wheat, which

INSIDE BOX

Belizean investments to replace imports



Pg. 3

Ministers of government at the opening of the new milk facility

Health Minister: 99.9% of remaining COVID regs lifted as of April 1



Pg. 21

Minister of Health Kevin Bernard



Last week the Briceño government dropped a bombshell on the business community by publishing the names of 25 businesses who owe taxes. The amounts outstanding range from \$17,017.42 at the low end to \$2,784,507 at the high end.

In his budget speech two weeks ago Prime Minister Briceño signaled that this was coming. He noted that the government was owed \$645 million in unpaid taxes, and that of this amount \$419 million was not recoverable because of the Statute of Limitations.

He vowed, however, to “pursue with vigor” the collection of the remaining arrears.

He would do so using tactics such as publishing the names of defaulters, triggering “court proceedings and activating liens and all other actions” provided for by the Administration and Procedure Act.

In every age and in every country there are people who deliberately default on their taxes. These are often people with political connections, who bet that “their party” will not move against them. Some of these debts go back ten or more years.

These tax-dodgers should not be lumped with struggling business men and women whose businesses have been severely impacted by the Covid pandemic which has gripped our country for the last two years and are even today struggling to keep their noses above water.

The current General Sales Tax (GST) regime has been unkind to start-ups and small businesses who are obliged to pay the General Sales Tax of 12.5 percent on sales, whether they make a profit or not.

We suspect that the public shaming of delinquent businessmen has been applied to men and women who have consistently failed to meet their tax obligations.

We believe that a distinction should be made between those defaulters who purposefully neglect their tax obligation out of indifference and those who have been meeting their tax obligations all along but have been severely hurt by the epidemic. These would be the businesses which have fallen into arrears during 2020 and 2021.

These people deserve a break! They are not defaulters in the true sense, and something should be done to help them to rehabilitate their status.

During normal times the Tax Department imposes a penalty on those who do not pay their taxes on time. This penalty is something quite formidable, and when applied to struggling businesses may have the effect of sinking them.

We believe that the Government should distinguish between these and the tax-dodgers, and make it possible for them to get back into good grace.



CZAR-ISH

Dear Editor:

The past three weeks of international news has convinced me that the most important issue in the world is for democratic nations to preserve and improve their democratic framework. This boils down to zealously securing the voter registration process, the meticulous guarding of the rolls, the equitable and honest delineation of the constituencies, strict time limits for registration and for voting.

If there is one crucial lesson that the present world crisis, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has taught me is the importance of democratic actions and the propaganda value of its appearances. President Putin really seems to think that the world will accept his unlawful aggression because he is acting to preserve the integrity of a province of Russia, a democratic nation. After all, he is the lawfully elected leader of his country!

My fellow Belizeans (the old Creole designation of Belizeans, because of my desire to alert you that I claim no special knowledge). I am just a simple guy whose common sense tells him that the leader of a country that appears to be pretty much the same as it was before 1917, cannot stand on the moral ground of democracy and freedom. After all, to me, Russia looks pretty much to be the same in political culture as it did when a Czar and his elites ruled. Its president has ruled for the past two decades because political rivals have along the way been eliminated one after the other, the last one almost poisoned.

We in Belize must enhance our democracy by improving our election law.

Whereas any law abiding resident citizen may



make bold to submit himself for election, the electorate must continue to educate itself about the most important issues of national importance. Let there be no more captivation by a candidate who sells their voice to championing fringe moral ideas. Moral fringe ideas may seek to be a bigger voice, but their support to any candidate must be declared. This would result if the Election Campaign law would make mandatory the revelation of huge donations.

To make our democracy more vibrant sometime in the late 2020's the Office of the Ombudsman should be reinstated - not right now, for to do so at this time would add another quarter million to the national budget. I have already publicly said that I would be willing to give my advice to the office pro bono.

During my tenure, some voices called for the Ombudsman to have “teeth”. One of the teeth that should be given to him is to be able to rebuke the MEDIA.

Even now, I continue to be amazed at how naive the media look to me when they publish over and over a narrative of persons who fall into a tussle with the police upon being arrested. If after an investigation the Ombudsman finds that the Police did no wrong, but were professionally doing their duty, the media should apologize and report the whole story.

After all, the MEDIA should inform us about FACT and TRUTH - NOT PROPAGANDA!

To return to the international stage.

No system of governing people is perfect, or will ever be perfect. But, democracy is much wiser than dictatorship. Every form of government of civilized people should have safeguards to protect nations against tyrannical rule. Certainly the killing of innocent people is the worst form of tyranny!

Sincerely: Paul Rodriguez

Mixed solution to bus industry

Cont'd from pg. 1 miles and below, its 25 cents. And anything between 12 miles and 31 miles is 50 cents. And anything over 31 miles is a dollar increase. So that's what we came up with and that is still not enough for them.”

However, the size of the increases fell short of the BBA's original demand. BBA's Secretary Ewart Metzgen explained, “The increase in the bus fares was not what was agreed upon and sent to Cabinet; it was changed by them... we are not in agreement with it [GOB's proposed changes to the fares].”

The difference in the BBA's request for a 25% increase and the GOB's offer could be assessed from the point of view of the Belize-City-to-Belmopan route, which is approximately 50 miles. The BBA's estimate would see the price for that route increase from about \$6.00 to \$7.50. The government's counter, however, would bring the new fare to \$7.00, which represents closer to a 17 percent increase.

The Place for Subsidy

Metzgen explained to The Reporter that the lower fares proposed by the government were not sufficient to help them cover their costs, but acknowledges the place for financial support from GOB.

“We are hoping we get the fuel subsidy,” Metzgen added. “We are not in agreement [with GOB's price proposals] but if the fuel subsidy comes in we can see how that factors into the equation.”

Minister Ferguson, for his part, also spoke to the role to be played by the fuel subsidy. “When we go with the subsidy, they should get an increase plus a subsidy.”

According to a BBA member, Wednesday's meeting became necessary after the association had learned that the Ministry was in the process of issuing a press release to outline the new bus fares,

which according to the source, was not what they had initially agreed upon.

Subsidy and Fare Increase

Ferguson noted that he will take the new proposal to Cabinet on Tuesday, which according to him, will now include a price increase and fuel subsidy for bus owners.

“After Tuesday, then, we will have a final price, a final structure, a final figure for the bus operators,” said Ferguson. If all goes well, it is expected to take effect on April 15th.

Readers would recall that the BBA had threatened to stage a national shutdown of the public transportation system a couple of weeks ago due to the rising cost of fuel. That resulted in talks with the Ministry surrounding a possible tariff increase.

THE REPORTER

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Regional assoc. warns of imminent flour-price increases

Cont'd from pg. 1

has affected the price of the commodity and the logistics and transportation. The Association further notes that due to Russian oil being prevalent within the global oil and gas market, there have been exponential increases in the cost of ocean freight.

As a consequence of the culmination of the aforementioned factors, the CMA stated that "ultimately" the costs must be "passed on in some measure to the consumers."

Last week, in an interview with The Reporter, one local bakery explained that they are anticipating that coupled with the rise in flour and LPG, the prices of most of their products will see some form of a price increase. Notably, they mentioned that due to the price increases, specific adjustments

to deliveries and the overall cost-effectiveness of day-to-day operations would have to be scrutinized to ensure that their business

remains profitable.

It is to be noted that the increase in wheat prices will have a domino effect on the cost of grain, feed, poultry,

and dairy products.

According to the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB)'s Consumer Price Index report for February 2022,

flour prices have only increased in Belize, so far, by 3.5%, one percentage point below the all-items rate of 4.5%.

Indications are, however, that imported inflation will continue to push up local prices of food and other items in the coming months.

Belizean investments to replace imports

By William Ysaguirre

Three Mennonite Enterprises of Spanish Lookout in the Cayo district have made million-dollar investments to improve the quality of their products and expand production to replace imports of milk, cooking oil and chicken hatchlings, and held launching ceremonies on Wednesday, March 30.

Western Dairies has invested \$2.3 million in a new processing plant to produce a new milk product which has a shelf life of up to three months without refrigeration, because it has been processed at Ultra High Temperature.

Western Dairies man-

ager Karl Reimer explained that the new facility heats the fresh cow milk up to 141 Celsius or over 20 Fahrenheit for about one and half seconds, after which it is packaged in an aseptic, laminated plastic pouch which is completely sterile and free of all bacteria which might have caused the milk to spoil. This gives the milk a storage life of at least three months, though Reimer said the packaging may last even longer, as with future quality control tests.

Initially, the company is offering the product in the 1-liter sized pouch and smaller 180 milliliters pouches which will be perfect to include in

children's lunches for students to pack in their knapsacks. Presently, the company is offering whole milk, low-fat milk, and lite or skimmed milk in the new packaging, and it also plans to introduce strawberry and chocolate-flavored milk.

The plant has a capacity to process and package 2,700 liters per hour, which means they can package about 40,000 pounds of milk in an 8-hour shift. The volume of raw milk production from the farms and how the new product is received on the local market, will determine the company's production, Reimer said.

Belize presently imports \$35 million worth

of dairy products, but produces only about \$10 million worth of milk products, so there is a great opportunity for local farmers to invest to expand production, Minister Jose Mai said. The limiting factor in the past has been the short shelf life of 5-13 days for pasteurized milk, even when refrigerated, which restricted local demand. Now, with the longer shelf life, he anticipates that more Belizeans will be buying Western Dairies milk instead of the imports.

Belize is also part of the CARICOM Single Market Economy (CSME), and he anticipates that the company will now be also able to export its products to CSME and even Central America, where the demand for milk has grown, as El Salvador imports a lot of milk.

The Ministers also attended the groundbreaking ceremony for a new soybean oil refinery which the Quality Group is investing \$8 million to build. Quality Poultry, Quality Feeds and Quality hatcheries are all members of the group. The new facility will be able to refine the raw oil extracted when soybean meal is processed for animal feeds, and produce up to 3.5 million liters of cooking oil per year. This will do much to supply domestic demand, as Belize presently imports up to 5.7 million liters of vegetable oil per year.

Minister Mai welcomed this development, as Belize soybean production has grown from 5,000 acres under soybean cultivation in the 90's to 28,000 acres producing soybeans today, and he anticipates that production can increase to up to 40,000 acres, now that the feed mill will have a way to make a value-added product from the raw oil. When the feed plant processes the soybeans into animal feed, the raw oil fetches a low price, as the protein in it causes it to develop a fishy flavor upon repeated refrying. The Quality Feed plant did not get a good price for the raw oil when exported, but the refinery will offer a quality product for Belizean consumers.

Friesen Hatcheries has been in the poultry business in Belize for over 50 years, but originally used to import hatchling chicks from the USA in the 1970's. However, they are now also investing millions of dollars in a new, state of the art hatchery, which will be producing baby chicks for the local poultry farms to nurture into broilers and laying hens for egg production.

Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño and Minister of Agriculture; Food Security and Enterprise Hon. Jose Abelardo Mai; and Minister of Sustainable Development Hon. Orlando Habet attended the inauguration of the new plant.

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CLASSIFIED ADS

VACANCY: Animal Medical Centre is looking for a skilled **Bookkeeper** to accurately record all day-to-day financial transactions, including purchases, sales, receipts and payments. Responsibilities will include ordering, purchasing and maintaining inventory. The candidate should be familiar with **Quickbooks and Excel** and have a solid understanding of basic accounting principles. **Degree in Finance, Accounting or Business preferred.** Email your cover letter and resume to belizevet@yahoo.com

LIQUOR LICENSE NOTICE: Notice is hereby given that **Joel Garcia** of Santa Rosa Village, Dangriga, Stann Creek District is hereby applying for a **Restaurant Liquor License for Flex Restaurant** situated in **Santa Rosa Village, Dangriga, Stann Creek District for the year 2022.** Under the Intoxicating Liquors Act Revised Edition of 2000.

LIQUOR LICENSE NOTICE: Notice is hereby given that **Alan Moro** of Young Bank, Camelote Village, Cayo District is hereby applying for a **Shop Liquor License for A Star** situated in **Young Bank, Camelote Village, Cayo District for the year 2022.** Under the Intoxicating Liquors Act Revised Edition of 2000.

PUBLIC AUCTION SALES: PICKUP & VAN Belize City, Belize District

BY ORDER of Messrs. St. John's Credit Union Limited, Licensed Auctioneers Kevin A. Castillo and Christiana R. Castillo are selling ONLINE via belizepropertyauctions.com the below described vehicles. Sales currently running and will expire Monday 11th April 2022 at the time shown on the website.



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A Return to Virtue to Strengthen the Jewel

By Fr. Scott Giuliani, SOLT

After a long-debate on the Legalization of Marijuana bill, the legislation was ultimately passed by the Senate. The social partners were united in their rejection of bill. UDP senators chose to abstain rather than to vote against the bill.

What is going on here?

How did it come to this, and how was the legalization of mind-altering drugs justified by the majority of civil leaders, who are otherwise respected for their leadership and intelligence? How could a decision to legalize drug use, which would have been denied by the original leaders of the country of Belize, been passed by this current generation?

The answer reveals a further concern, and the remedy to restore Belize. My opinion is that the entire public dialogue and debate of the civil leaders, and even some spiritual leaders, on this issue reveals a shift in moral assessment from natural law, and virtue ethics, to a consequentialism morality. Consequentialism occurs when the morality of an action is judged

solely by its consequences, regardless of human nature or virtue ethics.

The Constitution, as envisioned by the founders, best works with a virtue ethic model, where we realize we are free only when "moral and spiritual values and the rule of law" is respected. The vote confirms a consequentialism model of morality among political leaders, which will gradually lead to incremental loss of freedom and morality in its citizens, unless there is an intentional decision to return to the natural law and virtue ethic form of morality envisioned in the Constitution of Belize.

Our civil leaders have many gifts to govern in culture, politics, law and commerce, but many either lack the humility, or the intellectual formation, to recognize the foundational principles from which they have drifted, although with good intentions and altruistic promises. Unfortunately, the real effects of this direction will be felt in the future when a new leadership (whether it is in the current party, or a new one) takes power, and the protective measures embedded

by the founders are no longer in place because they have eroded.

The decision by the House of Representatives and Senate to vote to legalize marijuana lacked vision and moral leadership, largely due to a consequentialist moral application.

A return to the founding principles of humanity and morality will be necessary to maintain a society of virtue and freedom in Belize.

Otherwise, human rights abuses in the name of security, exploitation of women for economic profit and government overreach of parental rights for the good of children, as seen in other nations that embrace a consequentialism morality, will come to the Jewel.

We pray for wisdom and moral courage for the civil leaders to recognize and repair this error. God will be their judge, which is one consequence that is unfortunately diminished when civil leaders are pressured to make immoral decisions. We pray for mercy for those responsible, and hope that our leaders will have the humility to receive it.



VACANCY - PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICER CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - BELIZE CITY

Interested applicants must possess the following skills and qualifications:

REQUIREMENTS AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Education and Experience:

- Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration or similar field with at least 2 years of related experience.
- Experience in project management and banking will be considered an advantage.

Interpersonal Relations:

- Excellent oral and written communication.
- Contribute positively to team building.
- Maintain good relations with team leader and team members.

Knowledge, Skills and Competencies:

- Excellent organization and time management skills.
- Detail oriented in managing and executing work responsibilities.
- High level of proficiency in Microsoft 365 and Microsoft Project.
- High level of work and ethical standards.
- Ability to prioritize tasks assigned and work effectively under pressure.
- Ability to manage highly sensitive and confidential information.

General Responsibilities:

- Manage projects in accordance with the Bank's methodology.
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- Maintain effective working relationships with all project stakeholders.
- Manage and update project documentation.
- Quality monitoring and implementation of project standards across projects.
- Track the status of project deliverables and milestones.
- Reporting on all aspects of the project status to Manager.
- Overseeing progress of projects versus the project plan.
- Analyze project activities comprehensively and independently to recommend improvements.
- Ensure timely project delivery for all projects under assigned portfolio.
- Train, coach and guide team members and teams in project management.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2022

Interested applicants may submit application letter, résumé, and two reference letters to:

Manager Human Resources /Admin.
Human Resources Department
Cor. Cleghorn Street / Freetown Road, P.O. Box 481, Belize City, Belize
Atlantic Bank Ltd.

NOTICE

GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE TREASURY BILLS ISSUE NUMBER 4/2022

Tenders are invited for an issue of Government of Belize Treasury Bills. The amount of the issue will be \$83,200,000.00.

The Bills will be issued in electronic form only evidenced by an electronic book entry in the Central Securities Depository of the Central Bank of Belize in multiples of \$200 and will be repayable at par 91 days after issue. They will be issued on Wednesday, 6 April 2022 and will be redeemed on Wednesday 6 July 2022.

Each tender must be for \$200 or a multiple of \$200 and must specify to five decimal places the amount, which is offered for each one hundred dollars face value of the Bills sought.

Members of the public who wish to participate in the auction must submit their bid to the Central Bank of Belize electronically or at the designated drop off box no later than 12:00 noon on Friday, 1 April 2022.

The Auction in the Central Securities Depository System (CSD) will be opened from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on Wednesday, 6 April 2022.

Successful bidders should arrange to settle via the Automated Payment & Securities Settlement System of Belize (APSSS).

Bank: Central Bank of Belize
Account: GL1CORP0402627

The Government of Belize reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all tenders in whole or in part.

CENTRAL BANK OF BELIZE

Notices are placed on Central Bank of Belize Website (www.centralbank.org.bz)



Easter Holiday Opening Hours

The public is advised that all Atlantic Bank Branches and Drive Thrus will be opened for business from
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM
on Thursday, April 14, 2022.

All branches will reopen on
Tuesday, April 19, 2022.

Weh Wi Ga Fi Seh

Vairos di eez dong,
bot kip op yu helt.

Fool ahn fool-fool fi Aal Foolz Day

Bileev mi ahn noh mek nobadi fool yu.

Believe what I say and don't let anyone fool you.

Peeta du loan fool wid ih laif ahn ih en op da jayl.

Peter did nothing but foolishness with his life, and he ended up in jail.

Taam ga Sheli foolfool kaa shee bileev evriting ih seh.

Tom makes Shelly look really foolish because she believes everything he says.

Noh kohn een ya wid fi yu fool ataal ataal.

Don't come in here with your foolishness at all.

Yu da wahn big kunumunu fi mek da gyal tek yu mek fool.

You're a real patsy for letting that girl make a fool of you.

Dehn seh dat da naat jrizzl weh wet op fool-fool man.

They say that only a foolish person will walk through a drizzle from the north.

Stap di papisho op yusef.

Stop making a fool of yourself.

Mi chriki kozn tink ih ku fool mi, but ih kyaahn put no wap pahn mi.

My tricky cousin thinks he can fool me, but he can't put anything over on me.

Ah noh di tek nohmoh fool fahn da man.

I am not tolerating any more nonsense from that man.

Aal a dehnya sentens kohn fahn di Kriol-English dikshineri.

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<https://www.sil.org/resources/archives/10602>

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New 'House' rules on the way to curtail absentee Area Reps.



House orders do not adequately address the frequency of members' absences

By Javan Flowers

Since the beginning of the Briceño Administration, Belizeans have noticed that certain parliamentarians have frequently absented themselves from House sessions. This issue has highlighted the gaps in the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives that the Office of The Speaker of the House stated, "warrants serious consideration for revision."

The Report issued by the Speaker's Office explained that between January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021, there were a total of 10 working meetings. Of these meetings, four were regular (ordinary) meetings occurring on Fridays as provided for in the Standing Orders. The other six were special meetings occurring either during the prescribed recess periods of the House or on a day other than Fridays.

Currently, as stip-

ulated by Section 59(2)(a) of the Constitution of Belize, "A member of the House of Representatives shall also vacate his seat in the House- if he is absent from the sittings of the House for such period and in such circumstances as may be prescribed in the Standing Orders of the House."

Standing Order 84 of the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives reads that "If, without the leave of the Speaker obtained in writing before the end of the last of the sittings referred to in this paragraph, any Member is absent from the House for more than six consecutive sittings occurring during the same Session, and within a period of not longer than three calendar months, such Member shall vacate his seat in the House under section 59(2)(a) of the Belize Constitution Act, 1981, as amended."

The National Assembly has never convened for six consecutive sessions within three months; therefore, delinquent parliamentarians are not in breach of this portion of the subsection. Since they cannot be held accountable for the inadequate amount of meetings being called, parliamentarians who choose not to attend house meetings are only required, as per Standing Order 84, to notify the Office of the clerk who informs the Speaker. The Reporter has since confirmed that absent parliamentarians have been doing this.

Given that Standing Order 84 cannot be effectively and adequately enforced due to the few meetings in a year, the Report notes that "the standing orders of the House as it relates to Absence of Members (Standing Order 84) warrant serious consideration for revision."



Belize Solid Waste Management Authority

of the

Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining



Invitation to Quote (ITQ) for Maintenance of Dumpsites in Corozal, Orange Walk, Belmopan, Dangriga, Placencia and Punta Gorda

The Government of Belize (GOB) has received financing from the *Inter- American Development Bank (IDB)*, towards the cost of the Solid Waste Management Project II and intends to apply part of the proceeds towards the maintenance of dumpsites in Corozal, Orange Walk, Belmopan, Dangriga, Placencia and Punta Gorda.

The Belize Solid Waste Management Authority now invites interested bulldozer operators from Corozal, Orange Walk, Belmopan, Dangriga, Placencia and Punta Gorda to submit an application letter to provide services for the respective dumpsite, a completed quotation and schedule, and bulldozer specifications in hardcopy or email to the address listed below.

Additional information and a copy of the template for quotation and schedule may be obtain from the address below. Deadline for submission of application is April 8, 2022, at 3:00p.m.

Waste Management Technician

Belize Solid Waste Management Authority

3013 Bougainvillea Street, Orchid Garden Area

City of Belmopan, Belize, C.A.

Tel: (501) 802 1527

E-mail: TimmonsRJ@gobmail.gov.bz

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The U.S. Embassy Belmopan is seeking eligible and qualified applicants for the following position:

Position Name: Janitor

Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-06

Closing date: April 7th, 2022

Interested applicants must submit their application via the Electronic Recruitment Application (ERA) system, a web-based system. To view and apply for this vacancy, visit the ERA site at: <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/blz/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

Please visit the Embassy's website for instructions on how to apply via the ERA system: <https://bz.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/>

Note 1: Resumes will not be considered. Candidates must note all work experience when completing the ERA application. Insufficient or incomplete information will result in an ineligible application.

Note 2: Candidates must submit applicable required documentation by the closing date of this announcement. Failure to provide the required documentation will result in an ineligible application.

The Righters Write

Coming out of hiding

Contributed by the Human Rights Commission

It is just a little over three weeks that the Human Rights Commission of Belize has been offering the migrant population assistance in filling out their applications for permanent residency under the Amnesty Program that is soon to be rolled out by the government.

The HRCB decided to extend its services to provide this support because many were visiting our Belmopan office to inquire about the process and the forms. In short, what the HRCB does is to help applicants fill out the forms, guide them through the process as specified on the Immigration Department's website or just provide printouts of the forms to those who stop by for them.

The HRCB saw the need to provide this service as the Amnesty Program is an opportunity to provide basic civil rights to undocumented immigrants, and open a pathway for citizenship. These are among the basic human rights that each person is entitled to and as supporters and promoters of human rights standards and principles, the HRCB has to do its part.

So far, people are trickling into our Belmopan Office, and the numbers increase daily. We have heard many stories and one thing that stands out is that these individuals are hardworking, humble people who really are just looking for stability and security to enjoy their lives with their families. Many have children born in Belize and who are also going to school here. Others are married to or in a common-law union with a Belizean.

Others have been living in Belize for over ten, fifteen or more years. There are also refugees and asylum seekers, persons who have been forced to leave their homes to escape persecution or even death.

Even though they have been living in Belize for decades or are new to the country as refugees or asylum seekers, these are persons who live as quietly as possible and in the shadows. Their fear is to be forced out of the country. Even so, they must eat, and many have families to feed. So, they find work. Given their legal status though, they expose themselves to extremely low wages, long work hours, and some are only able to work in the agriculture sector. Worse, some women who are brought here on the promise of a good job are placed in brothels and forced to work as prostitutes to pay off their "debts" to the people who brought them.

One might ask, so why migrate to a foreign country? The reasons are many. Amnesty International states that "Factors pushing people to leave their homes include human rights abuses, poverty and lack of human security, lack of economic development and employment prospects, inequalities between and within countries, population growth, environmental degradation and natural disasters. Factors pulling migrants towards new countries include labour shortages and demographic decline, which hold out the promise of work and a better life; faster, cheaper and, in some cases, safer

communications and transport systems; existing migration networks and diasporas; and the possibility of sending money back to the country of origin to support immediate and extended family."

Now, living in Belize illegally still limits their possibilities to obtaining a better standard of living, but for many they at least have some level of safety and security, once they remain quiet and out of sight. But even so, migrants still face discrimination, racism and xenophobia. One body that has a big impact on this is the state as "The way migration issues are presented by politicians, public officials and the media has a significant impact on public perceptions of migrants and their rights. The exploitation of popular fears and the use of migrants as scapegoats for diverse social problems fuels discrimination, racism and xenophobia," (Amnesty International).

This is ever present in Belize and are sometimes accompanied by measures that "have trampled on some of the most basic human rights of migrants, including the right to liberty and security of the person. Much of the public debate about migration is couched in terminology which is loaded and derogatory. People trying to enter another country are vilified as "illegal immigrants", "gate-crashers", "queue-jumpers", and even as "invaders" seeking to breach the defences of a country with malicious intent. The clear implication is that they are

abusing the system and exploiting the generosity of states. Such descriptions create the impression not only that migrants have no right to enter, but that they have no rights at all."

Additionally, those who have been stripped "of identity documents and fearful of contact with the authorities, ... are difficult to identify or trace. Sometimes migrants themselves seek invisibility to escape official attention or threats to themselves or their families. These "invisible" migrants are at heightened risk of exploitation and abuse. Their lack of legal status or documentation makes it extremely difficult for many to claim their rights."

The government's offer for amnesty to over 50,000 migrants is, therefore, welcomed. It not only shows good will but it's a step towards advancing human rights in the country. Prime Minister John Briceno said in an interview aired at a local Belmopan news outlet on March 29th, that "Once they become legal in the country it makes it so much easier for them to be able to get a social security, for them to be able to open a bank account, to be able to work, and also to stop exploitation. Because, a lot of unscrupulous business people would take advantage of them because they don't have their papers."

This opportunity provides a way for migrant families to come out of the

shadows and to enjoy their human rights to life, work, stability, a home, education, and more. Additionally, this can also assist stateless migrants, persons "not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law."

It is expected that some thirty to forty thousand persons will apply under the Amnesty Program, which has been welcomed by many human rights-based organizations including UNHCR, the refugee agency, in Belize. It's an opportunity that does not present itself often, as Belize has offered similar opportunities just two times before, in 1984 and 1999 which saw over nineteen thousand persons were registered altogether. Once closed, government intends to take measures to tighten its control on the migrant situation in the country.

In the same interview, the Prime Minister also stated that the "We can't continue this open-door policy that we have, that anybody can come and visit their family or their friends and then they stay. So, we will have to, once this amnesty is over, we will have to be able to tighten the immigration laws. So, that if you come for thirty days you will have to leave in thirty days. We have to remove it from the political process where the representative that is in government or the minister can just say 'oh give a stamp

to this person'. We have to remove that so that we can do that and then people have to go back home. We have to make sure that to have the necessary services, it costs the government; more hospitals, access to clinics, access to education, so many things. So, when these people become a part of the formal sector we are hoping then that we will be able to collect taxes from them through income tax and also to protect them from exploitation... We want to make sure that we could follow the process, that it is a legal process, that we are not hurrying the system just because an election is coming. So, that is what we are attempting to do."

It is the HRCB's hope that these measures respect the fundamental human rights of migrants, and indeed actively seek to respect, protect and promote the rights of all migrants, regardless of factors such as their status or mode of travel and arrival into the country.

The Prime Minister announced that they intend to begin accepting applications at the start of June.

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper's stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.

RF&G LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY LTD.

Date: March 28, 2022

Edward Vargas of Cemetery Street, Orange Walk Town, Orange Walk District, Belize C.A. having made written declaration that Policy LTAN000156 under RF&G Life Insurance Company Ltd has been lost and having made request to the Company for a duplicate of the Policy, notice is hereby given that unless objection is raised within one month of the date herein, the requested duplicate policy will be issued.



INVITATION TO QUOTE – GOODS

Institution: Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing

Country: Belize

Project: Additional Financing for George Price Highway Rehabilitation Project

Sector: Transport

Abstract: Equipment for the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing Soils Lab

Loan No.: Loan 4616/OC-BL

Deadline: 2:00 pm (Local Belize Time) on April 21st, 2022

1. The Government of Belize has received loan financing from the Inter-American Development Bank toward the cost of the additional Financing for George Price Highway Rehabilitation Project, and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this financing to payments under the Contract for the Supply of Equipment for the Soils Lab under the George Price Highway Rehabilitation Project.
2. The Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing now invites sealed quotations from eligible and qualified bidders for the supply of the following items: **a Compression Testing Machine, a Motorized Liquid Limit Machine, Rebar locator/cover meter along with spare parts and a Plastic Limit Roller with 20 pads.**
3. Bidding will be conducted through the Shopping procedures specified in the Inter-American Development Bank's Policies for the Procurement of Works and Goods financed by the Inter-American Development Bank, and is open to all bidders from Eligible Source Countries as defined in the Policies.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain the full Invitation to Quote for the required equipment from the **Program Management Unit, Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing**, located on the **First Floor of the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing Soils Lab Building, Power Lane, Belmopan** by emailing **pmupcmow@gmail.com** AND **mow.project3344@gmail.com**.
5. Quotations must utilize forms provided in the invitation to quote. One (1) Original and two (2) copies are to be submitted in sealed labelled envelopes to the address indicated below. Quotations by email **WILL NOT** be accepted.
6. Bidders are informed that they can only bid for the type of equipment specified, and quote for all items in this Invitation. Price quotations will be evaluated for all the items. Price quotations should be **Exclusive of General Sales Tax**.
7. Your quotation(s) should be submitted as per the following instructions and in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of supply in the attached Quote Submission Sheet.
 - (i) **VALIDITY OF THE OFFER:** Your quotation(s) should be valid for a period of 90 days from the date of receipt for quotation(s).
 - (ii) **SUBMISSION OF OFFERS:** Offers will be submitted on the Quote Submission Sheet including a description of specifications offered, Price Schedule for Goods and Related Services. These templates are annexed in the full Invitation to Quote. All documents must be completed without any alterations in format, and no substitutes shall be accepted. All blank spaces shall be filled in with the information requested.
8. The Purchaser shall award the Contract to the offer which complies substantially with the technical specifications and other requirements in these documents and represents the lowest price.
9. Quotations must be delivered to the address below at or before **2:00 pm (Local Belize Time) on April 21st, 2022**. Electronic quotes will not be permitted. Late quotes will be rejected. Your quotation should be in the English language in the required format or other similar, acceptable format should be addressed and submitted to:

**Attention of (Name): Mr. Rolando Chan, Program Coordinator
Program Management Unit**

**Address: Program Management Unit,
First Floor – Soils Lab
Ministry of Infrastructure Development
and Housing
Power Lane, Belmopan
Cayo District, Belize**

Phone #: 822-1942/822-0100

Email: pmupcmow@gmail.com AND

Single-Use Plastics are now Illegal



By Javan Flowers

As of April 1st, 2022, prohibited plastic products, which include all items listed under Schedule II of the Environmental Protection (Pollution from Plastics) Regulations, 2020, shall be considered illegal as advised by the Department of the Environment.

The Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management reminded the

public this week that prohibited products such as disposable plastic and foam cups, plates, containers, as well as plastic forks, spoons, straws, and lids that are found in possession of importers and retailers after the phase-out date for these items, March 31st, 2022, would be deemed liable as stipulated by the Environmental Protection (Pollution from Plastics) Amendment Regulations, S.I. 17 of 2022.

The Ministry, via its press release, added that importers and retailers are advised that possession of any PROHIBITED items will result in court action, which can incur summary conviction as outlined in the relevant sub-regulations, which sees fines as high as BZ\$20,000 and or up to six months imprisonment. Penalties also include the cost of destruction or the cost of returning the items to the country of origin.

UB certifies 23 Midwives



Nurses complete UB midwifery program.

By William Ysaguirre

Twenty-three young nursing students, 21 women and two men, received awards when the University of Belize held a ceremony to honor midwives at the Best Western Biltmore Plaza Hotel in Belize City on Monday, March 28.

The 23 honorees are completing the certificate training course offered by the UB Faculty of Health Sciences, and they will still need to sit and pass a licensing examination, before they can be licensed as midwives/birth

caregivers by the Nurses and Midwives Council of Belize.

They will serve the need for more qualified midwives in our community, explained Dr Lisa Johnson, Dean of the Faculty, as there are presently only 35 registered midwives working in our public hospitals and clinics throughout the country.

It is equally important to educate expecting young mothers during prenatal health care visits about maintaining a proper diet during their months of preg-

nancy and other issues which may arise during childbirth, she added, as the entire health profession is working to keep down and reduce infant mortality and maternal mortality rates in Belize.

Dr. Johnson presented the awards for academic excellence and clinical excellence to the most outstanding student William Palma, and his classmate Marie Teul delivered the address on behalf of the rest of the student body. Guest speaker Mrs. Cynthia Guild gave the keynote address.

Read, lets get inspired!

BY ORDER OF CHARGE NOTICE OF INTENTION TO SELL

LAINMACULADA CREDIT UNION LIMITED, a Credit Union duly formed and registered in Belize under the Credit Union Act Chapter 314 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011 with registered office situated at **No. 5 Park Street, Orange Walk Town, Orange Walk District, Belize**, hereby gives notice of its intention to exercise its **Power of Sale as Chargee** under the virtue of Charges between those hereinafter named and the said **La Inmaculada Credit Union Ltd.** with said Charge is registered at the Land Registry. The Credit Union will at the expiration of **TWO MONTHS** from the date of the first publication of this notice to sell the properties described in the schedule hereto.

ALL offers to purchase the said property must be made in writing to **LA INMACULADA CREDIT UNION LIMITED**, from whom full particulars and conditions of sale may be obtained.

SCHEDULE

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Parcel No.-3217 situated in the **Ann Gabourel** Registration Section, **Orange Walk District**, and held under Land Certificate LRS-201608522 **TOGETHER** with all buildings and erections standing and being thereon, the freehold of **Nery Leonardo Sosa & Josselin Jannethe Alvarado (Jointly)**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Parcel No.-122 situated in the **Trial Farm** Registration Section, **Orange Walk District**, and held under Land Certificate LRS-201108503 **TOGETHER** with all buildings and erections standing and being thereon, the freehold of **Angelica Leslie**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Parcel No.-491 situated in the **Trial Farm** Registration Section, **Orange Walk District**, and held under Land Certificate LRS-201108507 **TOGETHER** with all buildings and erections standing and being thereon, the freehold of **Angelica Leslie**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Parcel No.-1079 situated in the **San Jose Palmar** Registration Section, **Orange Walk District**, and held under Land Certificate # 9845/2004 **TOGETHER** with all buildings and erections standing and being thereon, the freehold of **Angelica Leslie**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Lot No.-184 attached to Plan No.-2146 Deed of Conveyance LTU-201501474 situated in the **St. Matthews Village, Cayo District**, and registered at the Lands and Surveys Department in Belmopan, as Lot No. 184 on Plan No. 2146 - **TOGETHER** with all buildings and erections standing and being thereon, the Deed of Conveyance of **Miriam Janet Quevedo for Abner Jonathan Quevedo**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Parcel No.1802- situated in the **Ann Gabourel** Registration Section, **Orange Walk District**, and held under Land Certificate LRS-201910114 **TOGETHER** with all buildings and erections standing and being thereon, the freehold of **Mark Glenford Meighan**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Parcel No.- 2050 situated in the **Orange Walk Town** Registration Section, **Orange Walk District**, and held under Land Certificate LRS-201810171 **TOGETHER** with all buildings and erections standing and being thereon, the freehold of **Roamir Edwardo Gonzalez**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land Parcel No.- 370/1 situated in the **Miller's Bight** Registration Section, **Orange Walk District**, and held under Lease Certificate LRS -201005197 **TOGETHER** with all buildings and erections standing and being thereon, the leasehold of **Carlos Garcia for Julie Linda Garcia**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Parcel No.-212 situated in the **Guinea Grass** Registration Section, **Orange Walk District**, and held under Land Certificate LRS-201900303 **TOGETHER** with all buildings and erections standing and being thereon, the freehold of **Edison Albert Johnson and Rosita Johnson (Jointly)**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Parcel No.-672 situated in the **Ann Gabourel** Registration Section, **Orange Walk District**, and held under Land Certificate # 3710/95 **TOGETHER** with all buildings and erections standing and being thereon, the freehold of **Maria Elena Diaz for Leonardo Daniel Diaz**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Parcel No.-2949 situated in the **San Pedro** Registration Section, **Belize District**, and held under Land Certificate LRS-201511416 **TOGETHER** with all buildings and erections standing and being thereon, the freehold of **Leon Levi Anderson**.



Institution: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
Country: Belize
Project: Solid Waste Management Project II (SWMPPII)
Sector: Waste Management
Abstract: Social Inclusion Officer for the Solid Waste Management Project II(SWMPPII).
Loan No.: 3684/OC-BL
Deadline: April 14th, 2022

The **Government of Belize (GOB)** has received financing from the **Inter- American Development Bank (IDB)**, towards the cost of the **Solid Waste Management Project II** and intends to apply part of the proceeds towards to hiring of a **Social Inclusion Officer**.

The Objective of the consultancy is to provide technical assistance to BSWaMA in promoting the social inclusion, formalization, and professional development of affected recyclers working at key project sites.

The Belize Solid Waste Management Authority, the Executing Agency, now invites interested eligible individual consultant to submit Expressions of Interest indicating qualification and experience required to provide these consultancy services listed below.

A) **SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Consultant shall:

- 1) Support BSWaMA and the IDB Project Team as needed in the updating and implementation of the Social Inclusion Plan (SIP) for the recyclers at each of the project sites, following the Social Inclusion Plan Framework as a guide and including, but not necessarily limited to: (i) consultation; (ii) documentation; and (iii) the monitoring of SIP related performance indicators.
- 2) Prepare reports on the SIP implementation status, to be included in the semi-annual reports to the IDB.
- 3) Provide support to the recyclers at the 5 operational transfer station sites across Belize, and provide consultation and support to the recyclers at the beneficiary municipalities of SWMPPII, in the formation, maintenance, and promotion of a cooperative; or other form of formally recognized sustainable collective organization.
- 4) Support the preparation of a replicable Business Plan/ model for the recyclers recovering material at the operational transfer station.
- 5) Provide support to all other affected groups of recyclers at the project sites. The exact nature of this support is to be determined in consultation with them, and in accordance with the Social Inclusion Plan Framework, but it should, among other things, involve actions designed to close gender gaps.
- 6) Ensure that the recycler groups are trained in team building, organization, entrepreneurship and other income diversification related skills; support and provide guidance as needed.
- 7) Monitor and observe recyclers, listen to their concerns, and assist them in understanding and managing social, and habitual problems. 8) Facilitate the development of social and business partnerships (e.g., with the Cooperatives Department, Belize Recycling, private sector and buyers of recyclable materials, other GoB agencies, NGOs, credit unions, and local CBOs).

B) **QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

The Consultant shall have the following:

- 1) Minimum of a Bachelor's degree in Social Work, Social Sciences, or related discipline; A masters degree will be an asset. A combination of a social science degree with a Business Management or Administration degree or training in entrepreneurship, production, sales and marketing will be considered an asset.
- 2) Two (2) or more years demonstrated professional experience in at least one of the following areas: - Institutional strengthening, partnership building activities, community organization, cooperative development, business development, marketing, conducting training, and fund raising.
- Experience working with poor and marginalized communities, and irregular immigrants particularly those involved the informal sector; the waste/recycling sector and/or small business development
- 3) Demonstrated capacity to conduct field-level interventions and processes with marginalized groups and engage in strategic planning and the preparation of key operational documents. Good command of the English Language. Knowledge of the Spanish language will be an asset.

The **Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining** now invites eligible individual consultants to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested individual Consultants must provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualification and relevant experience to perform the Services.

Consultants will be selected in accordance with the Selection of Individual Consultants method and other procedures set out in the Inter-American Development Bank: **Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants financed by the Inter-American Development Bank - GN-2350-15**, and is open to all eligible candidates as defined in the policies.

Further information can be obtained at the email address below during office hours: **Monday to Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. local time.**

Expressions of interest must be submitted electronically and must include a signed application letter, Curriculum Vitae (CV), copies of academic qualification, and the names and contact information of two professional references no later than **Thursday, April 14th, 2022, at 2:30 p.m. local time. Application must be submitted via one consolidated PDF document; only complete packages will be processed.** Packages must be sent to the address below:

Solid Waste Management Authority
Attn: Procurement Officer
3013 Bougainvillea Street, Orchid Garden Area
City of Belmopan, Belize, C.A.
Tel: (501) 802 1527
PO Box 285
E-mail: GladdenM@gobmail.gov.bz

Berger Field gets \$400,000 Renovation

By William Ysaguirre

The Berger Football Field is to undergo a major upgrade to become a 7-a-side football facility with artificial turf and concrete seating, thanks to an urban renewal project jointly funded by the Belize Tourist Board, the Ministry of Sports, Youth and Transportation, and the Football Federation of Belize.

Minister of Sports Hon. Rodwell Ferguson is only following through on an agreement signed by his predecessor Hon. Kevin Bernard last November with the BTB and the FFB. At the groundbreaking ceremony on Monday, March 28, Minister Ferguson said each of the partners is providing a third of the \$400,000 cost for the project, which will be put out to tender, and should be completed over the next six months, after which there will be another inauguration ceremony to open the

facility to the public.

The field is located within the Pickstock constituency, of which Minister of Tourism and Diaspora Relations Hon. Anthony Mahler is the area representative, so he has been a driving force to make the project a reality. He said such a facility would provide a place for positive, constructive activities, and would do much to help the children and young people of the area develop to their full potential. He said it will also help to bridge the gap between our under-13 excellence in winning gold medals at CODICADER Central American Junior Scholastic Games, and our senior footballers' dismal performance in international competition.

Minister of State for Sports Hon. Gilroy Usher Sr is the area representative for Port Loyola, which also has limited green spaces for children and young people to play and enjoy some healthy exercise, so he



Officials unveil plans for upgrading Berger Football Field

and Belize City Mayor Bernard Wagner also welcomed the project. Together the ministers unveiled the architect's concept of what the project will look like when completed.

FFB President Sergio Chuc said it is important to develop players' skills from when they are children, six

to eight years old, and to continue this development through primary school programs, high school sports programs and even to the tertiary level, until they reach a level where they may be called to a national team.

The FFB is also seeking to provide educational opportunities for promising young players to develop their

talents at universities in the United States. Chuc said the FFB has partnered with Prospect2Player, which scouts players to serve as matchmaker with universities offering scholarships to talented soccer players and has already obtained scholarships for several male and female players to further their education, even as they develop their football skills playing

in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tournaments in the United States. While he hopes that the best of these athletes may also develop to a level where they may be offered a professional contract to play soccer in a major international league, the higher education will serve to prepare the young people for their future careers beyond football.



Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre

TENDER OPPORTUNITY: REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTERESTS

Data Management Officer

Country:	Belize
Donor:	Green Climate Fund (GCF)
Project Name:	National Adaptation Planning for Integrated Water Resource Management in Belize.
Contract Title:	Data Management Officer, Hydrological Data
Contract #:	Contract #22,23,24/2022/GCF/BELIZE/CCCC
Number of Positions:	Three (3)
Type of contract:	Fixed Price - Individual Consultant
Maximum budget	USD 24,000
Estimated Start Date:	April 2022
Contract duration:	Twelve (12) Months - Full Time
Main duty station:	Office of the National Hydrological Service under the Ministry of Natural Resources, Belize
Deadline for Submission:	on or before 2:00pm (GMT-6), Thursday, 7th April 2022

The Centre is an Equal Opportunity Employer

The full Terms of Reference (TOR) for the contract "Data Management Officer, Hydrological Data" can be accessed and downloaded at: <https://wp.me/pa0qC3-3AB>

Requests for Clarification: email: procurement@caribbeanclimate.bz Attention: **Andrea Tillett, Procurement Officer**. Requests for clarification should be received by the Centre no later than: **Wednesday, March 30, 2022**. Consultants are advised that the responses to the requests for clarification will be only posted on the Centre's Webpage at: <https://www.caribbeanclimate.bz/category/opportunities/>

The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre reserves the right to accept or reject any submission and to annul the process and reject all submissions at any time prior to the contract signature without thereby incurring any liability.

3rd Floor, David McKoy Business Centre, P.O. Box 563, Bliss Parade, Belmopan, BELIZE
Tel: (501)822-1104 or 1094, Fax: (501)822-1365, Website: www.caribbeanclimate.bz

Shyne Vows to Clean up UDP's Delegates List

By Michelle Sutherland



Moses "Shyne" Barrow says delegates should be elected.

Despite only winning by a very thin margin, minutes after he had officially been dubbed the Leader of the United Democratic Party (UDP), Hon. Moses Shyne Barrow pledged, among other things, that he would reform the UDP, commencing with the cleanup of the delegates list.

In one of his first interviews with the media, Barrow voiced that he was a strong proponent of

constitutional reform for the UDP and that one of his first moves as party leader would be to ensure that his party moves away from the age-old practice of area representatives appointing delegates, which goes contrary to the party's constitution. Something which he says has been allowed to occur for far too long without any objection and only serves as a breeding ground for unequal representation among the party.

Barrow noted, "I don't have a problem with family members being a part of your committee. What I do have a problem with is the constituents not participating in that election. That should not be a selection or an appointment; that should be an election. So under my leadership, I will ensure that there are constituency

conventions to elect the delegates."

Additionally, Barrow said that he would make an adjustment to the threshold as it relates to voter turnout, which currently stands at 10% and disallows "true representation."

"You can bring the delegates list to fifty, but if we don't follow the procedure to elect them by the constituents and not the area representatives appointing them, you still won't accomplish anything cause I will have fifty people that I placed there," explained Barrow.

The UDP Currently has 516 delegates who are selected by constituency standard bearers, as opposed to the PUP whose delegates are chosen by a committee of each constituency and who are chosen for every 50 votes that the party gets.

Destiny Wagner shines on the cover of Harper's Bazaar women's magazine

By Javan Flowers



Destiny Wagner

Harper's BAZAAR magazine featured Belize's Destiny Wagner, the reigning "Miss Earth," on the cover of their latest issue-themed "Art and Women," released early this week.

Harper's Bazaar is an American monthly women's fashion magazine, and along with featuring Destiny in their latest issue, they also provided extracts of an interview with her, in which Destiny shared, "It is an honor to represent our country. I always want to show my best in the competition. But you know, news like this doesn't happen to Belizean girls very often. So, therefore, this title means a lot to me."

Destiny further noted that she is actively working to build protected areas and encourage and support ecotourism. According to her, like other countries, Belize was seriously affected, especially the tourism industry.

"We are now in the final stages of the fight against the virus. I am always ready to promote ecotourism and take the lead in protecting the seas," She added.

The Reporter spoke with Wagner shortly after she won the "Miss Earth" title. In that one-on-one interview, the reigning queen had shared her views on various topics, including her focus on addressing the climate crisis. "This title symbolizes progression, ambition, unity, and us coming together to combat these issues," Destiny told us.

She emphasized that being authentic and true to oneself is what Belizeans must strive for. "I didn't have to change who I am to get this win, and none of us should have to change who we are to accomplish anything."



TENDER FOR THE GENERAL SECURITY AND SURVEILLANCE OF THE CENTRAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OFFICE

Tenders are invited from security companies for the general security and surveillance of the **Belize National ICT Center Building (Belmopan City), corner Mountain View Blvd. and Dry Creek Street**, and for infrastructure relating to the **Disaster Recovery Site** located on the top floor of the **Post Office Building in Belmopan**.

1. The tender shall be for a period of one (1) year commencing 1 July 1, 2022, and ending 30 June 2023.
2. The successful tender will be expected to provide the following security and surveillance services:
 - (a) General security and surveillance of the Belize National ICT Center compound (**the "Premises"**) including all buildings and fixtures erected therein by armed guards on a 24- hour basis seven days per week, including public and bank holidays.
 - (b) Monitor the Disaster Recovery Site (**the "DR Site"**) using surveillance cameras and conduct nightly patrols and random verification checks of the generator, electrical room door, and main access door commencing at 6pm to 6am.
 - (c) Allow only authorized persons to enter the Premises. The Security must maintain a log of all persons and vehicles entering and leaving the Premises.
 - (d) Conduct patrols outside the Premises to ensure that doors remain locked and that there is no sign of breakage into the building.
 - (e) The Security Company will provide its personnel with equipment including a licensed firearm for the effective performance of their duties.
 - (f) The Security Company, or its agents shall not divulge to any person or persons, any proprietary information coming to their knowledge in the course of their duties.
 - (g) The Security Company/Guard shall also comply with CITO's Fire Safety Policy in the event of an emergency fire evacuation. (Details available upon request).
 - (h) Any other security related task as may be agreed upon from time to time by the Parties involved.
3. Costs incurred in visiting the Premises and preparations of the tender bid are the sole responsibility of the tenderer.
4. Tenders shall include
 - a. Letters of Good Standing Belize Tax Service
 - b. Letters of Good Standing Belize Companies Registry
 - c. Letters of Good Standing Belize Social Security Board
 - d. Current Trade License
5. The tenderer shall provide evidence:
 - a. firearm licenses.
 - b. evidence of past jobs
 - c. recommendations for 3 or more customers.
6. Tenders are to be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"TENDER FOR THE GENERAL SECURITY AND SURVEILLANCE OF THE BELIZE NATIONAL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CENTER BUILDING (BELMOPAN)"**, and delivered to the **Central Information Technology Office, Belmopan**, no later than **3 June 2022 at 10:00 a.m.**
7. Tenders will be opened on **3 June 2022 at 10:30 a.m.** in front of the tenderers or their representatives who wish to attend the opening.
8. Evaluation of tender will be carried out immediately after the opening of the tenders on **3 June 2022**.
9. Additional information can be obtained from Ian Smith at telephone: **828-5169** or by email at ian.smith@cito.gov.bz.
10. The lowest tender will not necessarily be accepted.
11. Late tenders will be disqualified and returned to the tenderer unopened.

A Few Thoughts on Constitutional Reform



By Ambassador Daniel Gutierrez

I remember September 21st 1981 clearly, the buzz, the music and festivities, the bangs of the celebratory exuberance of a nation born. I guess it is only human to look back and realize that the soiree deafened any discussion on the new set of rules we inherited. When the parties ended, it was time to roll up the proverbial sleeves and build our nation. We would leave any discussion and education about the way we are governed to the school system. Period! End of story!

The problem with this approach is that—of course, with the rare exception of a zealous social studies teacher here and there—this in-depth discussion and understanding of our rulebook did not happen. At least not for those in my generation. I am not making our school system a scapegoat; I am simply admitting, that for many Belizeans, there is only a cursory understanding of the rules we live under, and by this I mean our Constitution.

So, here we are 40 plus years after independence and about to enter into the most important exercise in a generation, again. Without the benefit of a crash course on the Constitution, we are about to re-write the rule book. Many Belizeans have voiced that constitutional reform must be undertaken. I for one agree with them. Having said this I think it prudent to caution the current framers against throwing out the baby with the bathwater. The very fact that we can have a public discussion on our Constitution and the way we are governed without people being carted off to jail, means that something has worked and those aspects of our political culture ought to remain sacrosanct.

I should also be clear that this piece is not meant to be an exhaustive guide to all the areas where the current constitution needs to be improved upon. I will instead concentrate on a couple of the areas, in no particular order of importance, that have been in the public discourse recently.

As we read these paragraphs and others written by other Belizeans, I invite us to not look at the potential changes to come and measure these by the yard stick of other nations. By this I mean that what other nations in other times and places have constructed for themselves should not be our straitjacket. We should welcome these as guides, but not as prescriptions. Belize should construct a system of governance that works for Belize, fully conscious of our nuances, our politics, our way of life. We should not copy and paste from anyone no matter how glamorous they appear to live. We can be guided by what has worked for them, but we must build something that will work for us, or we shall fail.

First, with no disrespect to the current Monarch or its representatives in Belize, the time has come for Belize to have a Belizean born head of state. The Monarchy and the Governor General are vestiges of colonialism and we must move on. As we explore the possibility of a post monarchical Belize, we need to ask ourselves what the nation should expect from its head of state. Given our experiences since 1981, we would be wise to have a head of state that is first the guardian of the constitutional order and second who is outwardly nonpartisan. The first is achieved in the system of laws; however, the second is trickier but imperative. Any outcome that achieves neither of these is merely an expensive decoration.

The framers of our new constitution should not shy away from a system where the head of state serves for a period of no less and no more than a decade, or a period that goes beyond a specific government. I can understand how the direct election of the person holding this office is attractive to representational purists. However, given our Belizean experience in party politics, we should guard against a person elected through the same party politics mechanism. How to legitimize this office while sidestepping the basic tenants of representational democracy and at the same time vaccinating it against the malaise of party politics is indeed a tall order. To be clear though, if this office is to remain divorced from the everyday political back and forth, then this delicately balanced outcome must be our north star.

Second, more Belizean voters must have a say in who the leader of the opposition or party leader and, by extension, a potential Prime Minister is. Party conventions where a select club, handpicked by an even more exclusive cabal, decide who the next Prime Minister or Opposition leader is, is anachronistic, exclusionary and non representative. Although Belizeans accept this status quo, many don't like it, and this reform process would be an opportunity missed were this practice not end up in its cross hairs.

Third, we must endeavor to remove the coercive participation of money and influence from the system of governance. This is not easy, but we must undertake this task with urgency and with clear eyes. In doing so, however, we must not assume that the political parties are the only entities in governance that have powerful forces whispering in their ears, a platform denied to most Belizeans. Clearly the political parties have money influencers. This is not new and I will not expound further as there exists a mountain of literature in this regard. Suffice to say we have an opportunity to address it without unduly curtailing the right of any Belizean to make financial contributions to the party or parties of their choice.

Since the inclusion of the social partners in formal national discourse started with constitutional reforms years ago, we have not stopped to realize that social partners are not immune to money influencers or chain of command influencers and we must find a way to address this in this reform. Before I go any further, I should point out that the underlying assumption regarding my position on chain of command influencers in the Senate is premised on there being no change to how senators are appointed, or elected. However, I do not know if it is desirable to leave the Senate in its current form. The senate in its current form, not including the appointments by the political parties, is elected from exclusive groups of Belizean organizations and its arguable that this exclusivity in and of itself is not participatory and thereby non-democratic.

We must examine our conscience, question ourselves, and ask if as a people, and in the maximum expression of our national persona, meaning our system of governance, are we content in providing a platform to some to the exclusion of many, notwithstanding the parliamentary eloquence and good intention of the some? Further discussions need to be had on

this topic and we should enter into this process guaranteeing protection to no sacred cows.

Let me be clear, I have participated in the Senate as a part of the Business Sector. I support the principle of social partnership and I am witness to the positive benefit of having diversity in discussions of national importance. I am still a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and I support the inclusion of social partners fully. I merely posit that the way social partners participate in our democracy needs to be reexamined in the current exercise.

In the case of social partners representing workers, their domain, their motivation and their command and control is Belizean, enough said. Social partners representing the private sector are made up of companies and entities that are legally Belizean, although there are foreign owned entities therein. The majority is companies who live and die based on what happens in Belize, thereby, making their impetus the progress of Belize's economy as a matter of survival. In their majority the command and control is Belizean, but not always.

Social partners representing the churches have their organizations, parishioners and their outreach grounded in Belize, but by the very nature of how they are set up, in several cases, their command and control is foreign. This is not a criticism of them, but it is a description of the reality where they are concerned. It does not make them bad, or less effective as participants in the system, but when you're not the boss, you're not the boss, period. Their command and control is in Europe or in North America.

The responsibility of the state is to its citizens first and foremost, and while the churches have participated with good intent as social partners, the state and the organs of the state like the Constitution must ensure that parental influences, which are incongruent with our ethos as a people, and without curtailing people's rights to freedom of conscience, are kept in check.

Regarding the NGO community, the representatives, the efforts and the results therefrom are in Belize and focused on Belize, but as with other social partners, the command and control may not be. It is no secret that the money and the influence behind several of our NGO's are not of this country. In fairness to their efforts and in the broadest of description of their work, the pursuits and goals of the NGO community are laudable, but in many cases, these are unabashedly global pursuits. Unless we are naïve, it should be clear to any detached observer that global pursuits and local needs will never line up 100%. It is just life and we need to understand this clearly. I also want to be clear about one thing: I know several public personas in the NGO movement and those I know are all in for Belize and want the best for this country. A Constitution, though, cannot rely on the personalities. It must prescribe parameters if it wants to stem the coercion that in this case may come from abroad and pursue objectives that may not completely align to our own in Belize.

I hope that this article, and others like it, stimulate conversation and lead us to facing topics that may be difficult to discuss. Please discuss these with your family and friends, over dinner and after church, in school and at work. They are not easy, but constitutional reform is not for the faint of heart, toes will be stepped on and feathers might get ruffled. That is par for the course. So let us take on this generational conversation with zeal, honesty, patriotism, and always with respect for each other. Our country, our children and grandchildren should expect this of us and we must deliver.

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper's stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.



STRENGTHENING OF TAX ADMINISTRATION PROJECT

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Consulting Services for Consulting firm to Prepare, Implement and Execute a New Audit Model, making use of the wider range examination and risk-based techniques (to include analytical tools for audit)

Institution: The Ministry of Finance (MOF)

Country: Belize

Project: Strengthening of Tax Administration (STA)

Abstract: Consulting Services for Consulting Firm to Prepare, Implement and Execute a New Audit Model, making use of the wider range examination and risk-based techniques (to include analytical tools for audit).

Loan No.: 4839/OC-BL

Deadline: April 8th, 2022, Belize Local Time

The Government of Belize (GOB) has received financing from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for the execution of a five-year tax modernization project entitled "Strengthening of Tax Administration" (BL-L1031). The main beneficiaries of the Project are: (a) the Government, which will have more revenues to implement its public policies; (b) taxpayers, who will have more support and a digital environment to fulfil their tax obligations; and (c) the population, from the government policies implemented. Through this project, the Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD) has procured a Modern Integrated Tax Administration System (the Revenue Management System (RMS) and is presently in the implementation process. This new system will be used in the management of the Belize Tax Administration.

The BTSD management has identified the need for a modern audit approach based on risk analysis. The BTSD Strategic Plan states that:

"BTSD will explore the introduction of a Risk Management Plan (RMP) to properly respond to the risks identified on a timely basis, to minimize overall compliance burden for both the taxpayers and the tax administration. As an important aspect of the RMP, risk mitigating strategies will be proposed for application against potential and existing risks. The plan will highlight all areas of risks including risk-based assessments, risk-based audits, risk-based sector and taxpayer segmentation, compliance risks (registration, filing, reporting and payments) and international risks. Risk mitigation reduces the extent of exposure and ensures that the strategic objectives are achieved."

The consulting services ("the services") includes the contracting of a consulting firm for a period of ten (10) months to Prepare, Implement and Execute a New Audit Model, making use of the range examination and risk-based techniques (to include analytic tools for audit). The main activities of the consultancy include:

1. To assess the status of BTSD taxpayer audit strategies and operations for all tax type.
2. To review the Audit Division organization and resources, as well as the staff skills.
3. To suggest the strategy for centralization/decentralization of the audit.
4. To propose a new organization area (if required).
5. To propose the staff composition by area and by location.
6. To propose the different audit programs taking into consideration taxpayer segments and different audit locations (central, districts).
7. To propose a system of massive audit based on IT verification of returns against risk factors and third-party information. The selected cases should be resolved very quickly (4 cases a day) as they are based on firm verification.
8. To propose modern analytical tools for tax auditing suitable for Belize's environment by conducting a SWOT analysis to support the audit work.
9. Once the proposal of the modern analytical tools is approved, the consulting firm will procure the Analytical tools software for auditing with 50 licenses with subscription for 3 years, implement, and train auditors in its utilization for adoption.
10. To execute onsite Pilot audit (for at least one month in duration) with the audit team to plan, execute and report on randomly selected taxpayers.
11. To develop training materials and manuals in hard copies and digital copies in Microsoft Word format.

The consulting firm should have a minimum of five (5) years' experience in similar assignment. In addition, the consulting firm should have a minimum of three (3) years specific experience in the following areas (* are must):

- Tax administration taxpayer audit and risk analysis. (*)
- Conducting design of modern taxpayer audit programs. (*)
- Conducting design of risk-based audit programs. (*)
- Training tax administration staff in audit techniques (*)
- Using modern audit analytic tools. (*)
- Developing programs for organizational strengthening for tax administration.
- Developing modern taxpayer audit programs.
- Conducting design of modern information crosschecking programs.
- Business Strategy (supporting business and organization goals).

The firm should prove ability to identify strategic issues, opportunity and risks. As well as have knowledge and experience working in Belize and or the Caribbean environment in a similar assignment.

The Ministry of Finance now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested eligible Consultants must submit an

Expression of Interest providing information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services (brochures, description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills, etc.). The term "consultant" means a legally-established professional consulting firm or an entity that may provide the services.

Expression of Interest package should contain:

- (i) Document explaining interest, experience, and competence of the consulting firm.
- (ii) Firms experience in the assignment of similar consultancy services during the past five years. Description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments.
- (iii) Firms evidence of past jobs. (This includes letters from the respective client on the job (s) carried out, or a copy of contract or agreement with the client including copy of the TOR).
- (iv) Two references
- (v) Proof of nationality: Copy of certificate of incorporation, information of shareholders of company specifying the shares owned by each respective shareholder of the company and a copy of documentation of nationality of the shareholders of the company.

Additional documentation required for National Consultants:

- (vi) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from Belize Company Registry
- (vii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Social Security Board
- (viii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Belize Tax Service
- (ix) Copy of Current Trade License

The total estimated contract price for this consultancy inclusive of taxes is **US\$ 451,328.00.**

Consulting firm will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) method set out in the Inter-American Development Bank: Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (GN-2350-15, May 2019 edition) and is open to all eligible consultants as defined in the IDB policies. The selection of the successful firm will be based on a competitive process among short-listed firms that takes into account the quality of the proposal and the cost of the service. Only the short-listed firms will be notified and will be asked to submit a technical and price proposal.

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications. For the purpose of establishing the short list, the nationality of a firm is that of the country in which it is legally incorporated or constituted and in the case of Joint Venture, the nationality of the firm appointed to represent it.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours **Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.** Expressions of interest must be delivered via direct mail or e-mail at the address indicated below by **4:00 p.m. (Belize local time) on Friday, April 8th, 2022.**

Interested consulting firms are asked to submit their expression of interest via e-mail to Michelle.Longsworth@bts.gov.bz marked **STAP- Consulting Firm to Prepare, Implement and Execute a New Audit Model** in the subject header, or submit on or before **4:00 p.m. (Belize local time) on Friday, April 8th, 2022** to the following address:

**Director General
Belize Tax Service S
trengthening of Tax Administration Project
Charles Bartlett Hyde Building
Mahogany Street, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114**

For clarifications kindly contact:

**Procurement Officer
Project Executing Unit
Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Charles Bartlett Hyde Building
Mahogany Street, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114/E-mail: Ian.Ramirez@mof.gov.bz**



STRENGTHENING OF TAX ADMINISTRATION PROJECT

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Consultancy Firm to prepare and implement the Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD) Enforcement Collection Model based on risk criteria

Institution: The Ministry of Finance (MOF)
Country: Belize
Project: Strengthening of Tax Administration (STA)
Abstract: Consulting Services – Consultancy Firm to prepare and implement the Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD) Enforcement Collection Model based on risk criteria
Loan No.: 4839/OC-BL
Deadline: April 8th, 2022, Belize Local Time

The Government of Belize (GOB) has received financing from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for the execution of a five-year tax modernization project entitled “Strengthening of Tax Administration” (BL-L1031). Through this project, the Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD) has procured a Modern Integrated Tax Administration System (the Revenue Management System (RMS) and is presently in the implementation process. This new system will be used in the management of the Belize Tax Administration.

The authorities’ concerns on the growth of the arrears balance are reflected in the BTSD strategic plan; “The stock of debt has been steadily increasing throughout the years, with the largest increase recorded between 2017 and 2018. The respective annual increases from 2016 to 2018 were 4%, 7% and 23%. There is a need to institute a mechanism to facilitate monitoring and timely enforcement actions to collect and recover revenues.”

The consulting services (“the services”) includes the contracting of a Consultancy Firm for a period of **five (5) months**. The main activity of the consultancy includes:

1. To assess the current situation of BTSD enforcement collection and review the organization and resources of the collection area as well as their skills
2. To assess the potential sources for information on taxpayer transactions and assets that could be used as arrears payments (Customs, social security, immovable property registration department, Bank accounts, City Council’s Traffic Departments, etc.)
3. Propose a strategy for enforcement collections and prioritization based on risk analysis, define risk parameters and relevant mitigation measures as well as special procedures according to taxpayer segments
4. Establish a system of payment by instalment via Internet, with parameters defined by BTSD with payments through automatic debit in the taxpayer bank account and to freeze delinquent taxpayers’ bank accounts via Internet
5. Establish rules for writing off uncollectable debts and modify ITAS to incorporate them
6. Update the BTSD Enforcement Collection manual defining the procedures to select the debts to be enforced, the task to collect the debt, the identification, and procedures to put a lien on debtors’ properties, the rules, and procedures for agreements for payment by instalment, etc.
7. Propose performance indicators for monitoring the enforcement collection
8. Deliver workshops and train the collection staff in the new procedures
9. Implement the new procedures
10. Conduct Pilot with the designated BTSD staff to plan, execute and report on randomly selected taxpayers.

The Consultancy Firm should have a minimum of five (5) years’ relevant working experience in the following areas:

- Organizational development and design;
- Enforced arrears collections;
- Tax administration training

As well as minimum of five (5) years relevant assistance to tax administrations, particularly in the arrears collection areas. In addition, the Consultant firm should have at least three (3) years of previous experience specifically in conducting programs on arrears collection with the use of risk analysis techniques or similar programs and consultancies between the calendar years 2015 to 2020, as well as experience in Belize, and Caribbean environment.

The Ministry of Finance now invites eligible Consultancy Firms (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested eligible Consultants must submit an Expression of Interest providing information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services (description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills, etc.). The term “consultant” means a legally established professional consulting firm or an entity that may provide the services.

Expression of Interest package should contain:

- (i) Document explaining interest, experience, and competence of the consulting firm.

- (ii) Firms experience in the assignment of similar consultancy services during the past five years. Description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments.
- (iii) Firms evidence of past jobs. (These includes letters from the respective client on the job (s) carried out, or a copy of contract or agreement with the client including copy of the TOR).
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- (viii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Belize Tax Service
- (ix) Copy of Current Trade License

The total estimated contract price for this consultancy inclusive of taxes is US \$133,555.00.

A Consulting firm will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost - Based Selection (QCBS) procurement method set out in the Inter-American Development Bank: *Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants financed by the Inter-American Development Bank* (GN-2350-15, May 2019 edition) and is open to all eligible consultants as defined in the IDB policies. The selection of the successful firm will be based on a competitive process among short-listed firms that takes into account the quality of the proposal and the cost of the service. Only the short-listed firms will be notified and will be asked to submit a technical and price proposal.

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 Charles Bartlett Hyde Building
 Mahogany Street, Belize City
 Tel: 501-222-5114/E-mail: Ian.Ramirez@mof.gov.bz**

All about The People

The Case of the Royals



Neri Briceno

comes to conquest and exploitation - Europe did it, Asia did it, Africa did it and the New World of the Americans certainly did it among the Indian population to their own, prior to the arrival of the Europeans. There is enough blame to go around.

There is not a single modern country of the current 195 nations in existence today that has not experienced a form of conquest, colonialism, or exploitation. Some have been brutal like Genghis Khan's conquest of Asia while others have been milder and less expansionist like that of the Empire of Brazil; yes, Brazil was once an empire.

The nation of Belize was and still remains a vestige of the empire on which the sun never sets., the mighty British Empire. The British like any other colonial master was no saint, and in line with the way empires were structured and governed, they adopted the notion of the mother country first. Colonialism was centered upon the domination of one state over many others and the subjugation of a people by one dominant race.

Belizeans like any subjugated people were not at the top of the British totem pole and neither was the colony when compared to the 'jewel in the crown', India. But what is seldom mentioned in today's "Cancel Culture and Me-Too Movement mentalities", are those intrinsic orders that colonialism brought, more so the British influence on the world and even more so on the nation of Belize.

The British brought a sense of efficiency in the way they operated their colonies, sometimes not by choice, but because that was what was required to maintain, run and govern an empire. They established institutions, laws, and a management system that today is the basis of how the Belizean nation and the economy operate. It afforded the concepts of free speech, freedom of religion, freedom of choice, and the availability of a judicial system

where anyone can appeal if they feel wronged or deprived of their rights. They formed a strong education, healthcare, military, and social system along with a counterbalance in the separation of powers and opposition to the government in the upper and lower

elites and whose empire stretched from Mexico to Central America, the protest against royals seems laughable.

Indians in Belize have probably benefitted largely from the colonial system of which they now complain. When the British came to the

The problem is not society, colonialism or lack of opportunity, the problem is us and until we take our head out the sand and figure that out, we will never make progress.

houses of government. It established people's representation through the vote and a right to that fundamental thing that millions still yearn for and do not have even today - freedom.

I am not implying that colonialism was right, just, or fair, but I much prefer this legacy of colonialism as opposed to that of the Belgians, Germans, Ottomans, or the Russians. To this day as I pen this article, the Russians are on a cruel expansionist drive into Ukraine. Prior to the royal visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Prince William, and Katherine, the people of Indian Creek decided that it was in their best interest to stage a protest against the royals' presence on 'their land', due to the ongoing land issues they have been having with a non-profit organization, of whom the prince is a patron. The small protest was an alphabet soup of issues, including colonialism and the claim that no permission was obtained to land the helicopter transporting the royals on their football field.

For starters, the land on which Indian Creek sits is not their land. The land is a part of the nation of Belize, a fact these people in the indigenous movement somehow cannot seem able to grasp. The football field was probably funded by tax-paying Belizeans, of which they contribute the least of all groups in Belize. For a people that were once governed by kings, high priests, and royal

colony of British Honduras, it did away with the glorious Mayan empire. Their temples were left in ruins and were covered by centuries of jungle and soil. They basically lived in scattered villages throughout southern Belize, not in majestic temples but in wooden homes with thatch roofs and mud floors.

There was no sanitation system, and the nearby bushes were the relief areas of choice along with corn cobs as toilet paper. This was reality and for those of us who grew up in the south, we know this to be a fact. Additionally, there was no educational system in place. Nor were electricity, water, or healthcare systems in place. They had their own local ways of governing, but this was primitive at best. They did not even have a tax system, hence zero contributions were paid to the settlement.

Thanks to the system they now complain about, which forms the Government of Belize, they have developed a robust social network, educational (thanks to Garifuna teachers), sanitation and healthcare systems. To add to the insanity, the representative of the monarchy is one of their own. Where was the protest at what would seemingly have been the biggest slap in their faces when my distinguished classmate Dame Froyla Tzalam was appointed as Governor General, the representative of the monarch itself?

But in this era of can-

cel culture and blame gaming society, anything is possible. If there is anyone that should cry about the ills and the injustices of the colonial system, it should not be the Indians in Belize. I believe the Garifuna people would have a better stake for that spot over Creoles, Mestizos, or any other group.

Britain adores, loves, and finances its royals and that's their choice. The fact that we are a civilized and welcoming people, would be the only reason to give the royals a welcoming treatment.

I would not do so because I support them or admire the structures, systems, or organs that made them royals, but because it is the decent thing to do and because in their own way, they represent the state of the United Kingdom. In the same way that we would not appreciate our ambassadors scorned overseas, likewise, we should not do scorn other nation's representatives.

The royal visit also presented an opportunity and one that we should have jealously embraced. For a nation that is trying to promote itself on the international stage as a premier tourist destination, the visit was free advertising and PR. If the argument is that the royals exploited us through colonialism then why not exploit them for free marketing? Seems fair to me. But most of us have become so embroiled in the idea that we are owed something for slavery, oppression, colonialism, and God knows what else under the sun, that we feel entitled.

Let me make this categorically clear, neither Europe nor any of the nations that held empires throughout the world in the last part of this century will EVER pay us any type of reparation and we need to stop wasting time and energy pursuing that. We need to get off our butts, educate ourselves, work hard and reach for the stars. But as people of colour we especially need to do this because all other cultures are surpassing us, and not because they are given different op-

portunities.

I will say this. The migrant Central American population that came to Belize in 1980 as a result of civil wars that were raging in Latin America, have in just one generation surpassed the living standards of most people of colour, especially those in urban communities. Some came literally with just the clothes on their backs and now have homes, land, and a decent way to carve out a living.

Coincidence? NO! These people came with a goal and saw opportunities that we as a people failed to take and they ran with it. They did not come thinking that Spain owed them reparation for colonizing Latin America, instead, they focused on the here and now.

Look around. Who is hanging on the block all-day-long drinking and smoking weed?

Latin Americans come to reap oranges, sell fruits, and vegetables on the side of the street or door to door, start a food cart on the street, or do the most menial jobs and they survive and prosper. Ask our people to do that and it's beneath us. We rather remain broke and hanging on the block seeking pipe dreams that will never materialize. The problem is not society, colonialism, or lack of opportunity, the problem is us and until we take our head out the sand and figure that out, we will never make progress.

Julio Saqui from Che'il Chocolate Factory in Maya Center was able to see opportunity and common sense and now he can proudly say that he makes and serves chocolate that is fit for a king. Way to go Saqui.

It's all about the people!

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“Crossing-the-Floor” provision robs Budget Debate of its true significance

At the close of every fiscal year (and ushering in the start of the new FY), the people of Belize are treated to a spectacle of hours-long “debates” of the national budget. By custom, the Prime Minister of the day opens with his “Budget Speech,” and the other members of the House of Representatives (“the House”) proceed to make their (often pre-prepared) contributions.

The whole event—despite its theoretical importance to the governance and democratic process—has largely devolved into a series theatrical displays. And, in this article, allow me to posit that it is forced to be that way due to a provision that still ambiguously sits in Belize’s Constitution: That is, the section 59 prohibition as it pertains to “crossing the floor.”

Defining the ‘Anti-Defection’ Law

Let us start with getting the definition of crossing the floor (or anti-defection rules) out of the way. “Crossing the Floor” (CTF) is defined as an “action in Westminster-style parliaments where a Government or Opposition member of parliament refuses to vote with his or her own party in a particular division and crosses the floor of the parliamentary chamber to vote with the opposing side.”

This provision currently resides in section 59(2)(e) of the Belize Constitution. Notice I said “currently.” I’ll return to that shortly. However, for now, it is worth highlighting what this provision says in the Constitution. Section 59(2)(e) reads:

“A member of the House of Representatives shall also vacate his seat in the House ... if, having been a candidate of a political party and elected to the House of Representatives as a candidate of that political party, he resigns from that political party or crosses the floor.”

Section 59(A) of the Constitution would go on to delineate the notification procedures. At Section 59(A)(3), it states:

“Upon receipt of the written notice referred to in subsection (1) or (2), of this section the Speaker shall, if satisfied that the circumstances referred to in section 59(2)(e) exist, make a declaration at the next sitting of the House of Representatives next after receiving the notice that the member has ceased to be a member of the House of Representatives by reason of resignation or crossing the floor, as the case may be.”

The Constitution would go on to provide for an appeal to the Supreme Court, but that appeal is not to determine whether or not the member could retain his or her seat DESPITE having crossed the floor. The appeal is simply to determine if indeed the member has crossed the floor.

In effect, this provision reduces the duly elected area representatives to mere political-party representatives, with open dissent with the party line potentially being punishable by his or her removal from his or her seat in The House.

The gravity of this prospect ought not to be lost on anyone. It is imperative that one recalls that an Area Representative is ELECTED (or hired, so to speak) by the voters in a particular electoral division. Consequently, the Area Representative—as the title implies—is to speak on behalf of his constituents. However, the Section 59(2)(e) provision effectively precludes a member from disagreeing with his Party Whip even when the party’s position is potentially adverse to the constituency. To vote against could potentially be defined as the member having crossed the floor, and, thus, risk losing his or her seat in Parliament.

The Political Reform Commission and Section 59 I had mentioned above that I would return to the explanation for the use of the word “currently.” The fact of the matter is that the concept of “crossing the floor”

did not exist in Belize’s Constitution prior to 2001. Yes, we did not inherit this feature from the British. Instead, this is our own post-independence doing, and a change (however well-intended) that emanated out of the Political Reform Commission (“The Commission”).

At the time, the Commission had debated four conditions under which it would be possible to determine if a member had crossed the floor: (1) the member resigns from a political party that has seats in the House; (2) the member crosses the floor and joins another political party in the House; (3) the member votes against their political party in the House without party permission; and (4) the member abstains from voting with the political party in the House without party permission.

There was healthy disagreement over which of those four conditions should apply, although the first two appeared to have enjoyed the greatest support. The opinions, however, were split over the third and fourth conditions.

In the end, the Commission gave the following recommendation:

“The Commission recommends that the Government of Belize, after public consultation, develops and enacts anti-defection legislation for members of the House of

“Yes” will have it.

In their paper “ANTI-DEFECTION LAW: A DEATH KNEEL FOR PARLIAMENTARY DISSENT?” Kartik Khanna and Dhvani Shah (2012) write:

“First, the right to vote for or against party lines is a genuine exercise of free speech in Parliament... We, therefore, conclude that the aforementioned provision ... mistakes a legitimate avenue of dissent as an act constituting defection. By giving every member the opportunity of actually forming an opinion, parliamentary debate can be fostered. This would shift the focus of political parties from merely giving directions to [actually] convincing members of the merits of a particular vote.”

Envision a scenario wherein the Prime Minister of the day has to actually convince his party members of the merits of his budget. Imagine a situation in which—and for fear of an area representative dissenting due to his constituency not benefiting sufficiently—the Prime Minister has to ensure that the Area Representative’s genuine concerns (on behalf of his constituents) are adequately factored into the budget. Visualize a case where a member can say to his own incumbent party: “I do not agree with this budget on legitimate grounds.”

This is what is missing in our system. Consequently, we end up with a virtually pointless exercise of grown men participating in a political skit for the purposes of sound bites and political grand standing on both sides of the aisle.

The Way Forward

What is the way forward? To move the matter beyond any shadow of doubt, the Constitution should be amended to make it clear—without having to force a member to resort to the Supreme Court for a common-law defense—that “crossing the floor” does not extend to voting against one’s party on legitimate grounds.

Fundamentally, I believe most persons can agree that party switching

can be unstable for a small, developing democracy. That by definition is “defection.” However, there is a large enough difference between “defection” and “dissent.” As a result, the member should be free to “dissent” on motions, Bills, or any relevant matter without the fear of being deemed as having “crossed the floor.”

This is not a difficult change to make to the Constitution. It would be simply a matter of inserting a definition of “crossing the floor” as being limited to actual defection, and does not include the members’ freedom to vote his or her conscience.

On a final point, it must be acknowledged that there have been discussions in other jurisdictions on whether the freedom to vote (or dissent) should not extend to certain types of matters. These include “No-Confidence” motions and Money Bills. While I can see the potential value in the discussion and debate regarding the former, my personal view on the latter remains unchanged: Members should be allowed to vote their conscience on Money Bills, with no exceptions.

Ultimately, we need to start looking at fixing the system. If we don’t, we will possibly have another two decades of Parliamentarians with good ideas that are superior to that of the Party Line that can never exercise their right to freedom of expression for fear of being classified as a defector.

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper’s stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.

Type of democracy, 2007	Number of nations	Those with floor-crossing laws	Nations with floor-crossing laws
Older democracies	36	5 (14%)	India, Israel, Portugal, Trinidad & Tobago
Newer democracies	54	13 (24%)	Belize, Bulgaria, Ghana, Guyana, Hungary, Lesotho, Mexico, Namibia, Romania, Samoa, Senegal, Suriname, Ukraine
Semi-democracies	58	19 (33%)	Armenia, Bangladesh, Fiji, Gabon, Kenya, Macedonia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia
Non democratic	45	4 (9%)	Congo (Democratic Republic), Pakistan, Thailand, Zimbabwe
TOTAL	193	41	

Representatives. The Commission further recommends that in developing the Anti-Defection Act that:

(a) crossing the floor to join another political party in the House, and resignation from a political party in the House are included as part of the definition of defection;

(b) it be further debated if members voting against their political party’s position in the House, or abstaining from voting in the House should constitute defection.”

So the natural question emerges at this point: Does the Constitution presently define “crossing the floor” as being limited to a member joining another party, or does it extend to the member voting against his party on a particular Bill? On this score the Constitution is silent, thereby, leaving things open to (common-law) interpretation.

Now, of course, one could assume that based on the “mischief” that the Commission was trying to prevent, the definition ought to be limited to the former: That is, the member switching parties in the House. The legitimate concern here is that this type of action could create an unstable government, especially when the incumbent holds only a small lead in terms of the number of seats in the House.

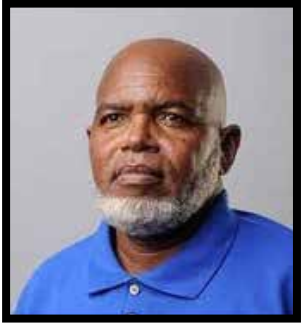
Cult-like Budget Support

At this point, let me shift to the impact that this principle and law has had on the parliamentary process, especially with the recent budget debates. Essentially, the expectation that all members of a given party will hold the “party line” has resulted in debates that are void of any real deliberation and substance.

For instance, it is expected that every member of the incumbent will “rise to support the budget” and every member of the Opposition to criticize and ultimately vote against. It happens every year. And every year the

GRASSROOTS

Hon. Gilroy Usher's Contribution to the 2022-2023 Budget (Part I)



By Hon. Gilroy Usher

"A budget is telling your money where to go instead of wondering where it went." –Dave Ramsey

The new budget of \$1.361 billion is the largest spending budget in the history of this nation. It represents an increase in spending of \$144 million for the benefit of the Belizean people instead of for the socks and private accounts of greedy and corrupt politicians as was the case with many members of the previous government.

For the new fiscal year revenue is projected to be \$1.122 billion. That is \$86 million more than expected earnings for the current fiscal year which ends on March 31, 2022, and is \$86 million more to address the basic needs of the people from Corozal to Toledo and from Benque to the Cayes.

Those figures represent expected revenue collection and expenditure to offer the Belizean people a better life as promised in Plan Belize.

To really appreciate those achievements we must recall the terrible mismanagement of the economy and the massive corruption by the previous government which left this nation on life support.

In his presentation of the new budget two weeks ago, Prime Minister John Briceño best described the terrible condition in which the previous administration left Belize when he said "Our administration inherited an economy weighted down by corruption and incompetence, withering from prolonged recession, strangled by rocking debt and deficits, squeezed by costly credit, beset with surging unemployment, and void of common-sense solutions."

The Belizean people must also remember that although COVID 19 caused major economic decline and increase in unemployment and death, under the previous administration the country was already broke when COVID hit our land.

The evidence was there for all to see. Less than a month after COVID 19, it became evident that the country was broke, when the

then P.M. had to resort to barrowing a \$1 million daily in order to pay bills to keep the country operating.

Luckily under the stellar leadership of

This steady recovery is only possible because the teachers, public officers, and other regular employees of the government accepted the 10 percent pay cut that was necessary to avoid more painful measures to rescue the economy such as reducing the government's wage bill by firing 3,000 public officers and increasing revenue by raising the G.S.T. to 19 percent as was requested by the I.M.F. for Belize to access its bailout funds.

Prime Minister Briceño, who followed the steps for good governance as outlined in Plan Belize, the administration was able to guide the nation's ship away from total destruction on the reef of corruption and mismanagement, and put it on the path to recovery as outlined in both this new Budget and the previous one for a Belize in which all Belizeans are winners.

This steady recovery is only possible because the teachers, public officers, and other regular employees of the government accepted the 10 percent pay cut that was necessary to avoid more painful measures to rescue the economy such as reducing the government's wage bill by firing 3,000 public officers and increasing revenue by raising the G.S.T. to 19 percent as was requested by the I.M.F. for Belize to access its bailout funds.

Sincere thanks is therefore in order to all those who endured that painful but necessary pay cut that is now being fully restored from July 1st in this new budget.

The economic recovery is also occurring quicker, because this administration was able to rid the country of the unbearable super bond in exchange for the Blue bond which has more favorable payment terms and which will enable the country to save half a billion dollars in interest payments and other cost.

Due to mismanagement and massive corruption under the previous administration, 12 budgets from 2008 to 2020 resulted in more Belizeans living in poverty and over 25 new "Red millionaires."

On the other hand with proper management of the country's resources, people-centered policies, enhanced revenue collection, and a true fight against corruption, as with its first budget, the second budget of this administration will result in less Belizeans in poverty, more Belizeans employed, and a better life for all the people as the resources of the country are used to address the needs of our communities.

The benefits of the expenditure in this budget are numerous for the Belizean people. This writer, however, will only highlight a few of them.

The new budget provides employment for 15,000 public officers and teachers including the full restoration of the 10% pay cut.

It allocates funding for the Belize Defense Force, the Police Department, and the Coast Guard to provide security and safety across the country. The new budget also includes funds to reduce gang violence through employment opportunities, mediation, adult

education, and life skills training.

The new budget promotes justice with the allocation of funds for more judges and magistrates in addition to funds for other basic things for the proper functioning of the judiciary.

The new budget funds maintenance of 500 miles of paved roads, over 2,000 gravel roads, and scores of bridges. It also funds construction of new roads and bridges in Belize City and across the country including construction of the new Haulover Bridge.

The budget funds scholarships and grants for assistance with school fees. It funds building of new classrooms, payment for preschool teachers, transportation for school children in rural areas, and free education for deserving students attending Sadie Vernon, Maud Williams, and Excelsior High Schools.

The government is investing heavily in education, because it recognizes that enabling persons to access an education is the best way for them to overcome poverty and become law-abiding and productive citizens instead of gang members or persons, who engage in a life of crime.

The budget seeks to eliminate poverty and empower Belizeans with \$1 million in funding for the survey and distribution of 8,000 lots in several areas of the country including the portion of land from Gibson St on Faber's Road to the check point on the George Price Highway which consists of 70 acres.

With this administration land which is as valuable as money in the bank is being made available to ordinary Belizean including single mothers instead of only Ministers and their cronies.

With this administration, the days when ordinary Belizeans couldn't get a house lot or a farm land, while persons with political connection acquired large tracks of land and milked the government of millions of dollars in corrupt land deals are over.

The new budget also seeks to eliminate poverty by providing all 31 divisions with a Constituency Development Fund that can be used to improve streets, enhance playgrounds, and promote sports as well as small businesses which create many jobs.

The new budget also seeks to eliminate poverty with the construction of concrete starter homes that include ceiling, partition, toilet facilities, and kitchen with a stove and other basic things.

Under this administration the people including single mothers are no longer given weak plycem houses without ceiling, electrical wiring, portion, and toilet facilities which rob them of their dignity.

As the Minister of State for Youth, Sports, and Transport, this writer fully supports the Hon. Rodwell Ferguson, Minister of Youth, Sports, and Transport and his entire team as we do everything possible with the available funds in the new Budget to improve the level of youth Services, sports, and transport in the country for the good of all Belizeans.

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper's stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.



Oración al Espíritu Santo

Espíritu Santo. Tú que me aclaras todo, que iluminas todo mis caminos para yo alcance mi ideal; tú que das el don divino de perdonar y olvidar el mal que me hacen y que en todos los instantes de mi vida estas conmigo, yo quiero en este corto diálogo agradecerte por todo y confirmar una vez más que nunca quiero separarme de tí, por mayor que sea la ilusión material! Deseo estar contigo y todos mis seres queridos por tu misericordia para estar conmigo y los míos. (La persona deba rezar esta oración 3 días seguidos sin decir el pedido. Dentro de tres días será difícil que sea. Publicar en cuando se reciba la gracia.

Gracias Espíritu Santo.

R.M.L.

How Soaring Shipping Costs Raise Prices Around the World

By Yan Carrière-Swallow, Pragyana Deb, Davide Furceri, Daniel Jiménez and Jonathan D. Ostry

The sea carries more than 80 percent of the world's traded goods, most of which sail inside 40-foot-long steel containers stacked by the thousands atop some of the largest vessels ever built.

The shock of the pandemic underscored just how crucial the maritime container trade is to the global economy. From Shanghai to Rotterdam to Los Angeles, the coronavirus upended supply chains. Ports lacked workers who were home sick. Truck drivers and ship crews couldn't cross borders because of public health restrictions. Pent-up demand from

huge stimulus programs during extended lockdowns overwhelmed the capacity of supply chains. Besides causing delays in getting goods to customers, the cost of getting them there surged.

As the Chart of the Week shows, the result of those challenges was that the cost of shipping a container on the world's transoceanic trade routes increased seven-fold in the 18 months following March 2020, while the cost of shipping bulk commodities spiked even more. Our new research shows that the inflationary impact of those higher costs is poised to keep build-

ing through the end of this year. Our analysis predates the war in Ukraine but isn't isolated from it: the conflict will likely exacerbate global inflation.

Studying data from 143 countries over the past 30 years, we find that shipping costs are an important driver of inflation around the world: when freight rates double, inflation picks up by about 0.7 percentage point. Most importantly, the effects are quite persistent, peaking after a year and lasting up to 18 months. This implies that the increase in shipping costs observed in 2021 could increase inflation by about 1.5 percentage

points in 2022.

While the pass-through to inflation is less than that associated with fuel or food prices—which account for a larger share of consumer purchases—shipping costs are much more volatile. As a result, the contribution in the variation of inflation due to global shipping price changes is quantitatively similar to the variation generated by shocks to global oil and food prices.

Our findings also reveal some of the mechanisms at work. We show that higher shipping costs hit prices of imported goods at the dock within two months, and quickly pass through to producer prices—many of whom rely on imported inputs to manufacture their goods.

But the impact on

the prices consumers pay at the cash register builds up more gradually, hitting its peak after 12 months. This is a much slower process than what is seen after a rise in global oil prices, which drivers feel at the pump within a couple of months.

Rising shipping costs affect inflation in some countries more than others. First, our research shows that the structural characteristics of an economy matter. Countries that import more of what they consume see larger increases in inflation, as do those who are more integrated into global supply chains. Similarly, countries that typically pay higher freight costs—landlocked countries, low-income countries, and especially island states—see more inflation when these rise.

Second, a strong and credible monetary poli-

cy framework can play a role in mitigating the second-round effects from import prices and inflation. Our analysis shows that keeping inflation expectations well-anchored is key to containing the effect of soaring shipping costs on consumer prices, particularly core measures that exclude fuel and food.

Our results suggest the inflationary impact of shipping costs will continue to build through the end of 2022. This will create complicated trade-offs for many central bankers facing increasing inflation and still ample slack in economic activity. Moreover, the war in Ukraine is likely to cause further disruptions to supply chains, which could keep global shipping costs—and their inflationary effects—higher for longer.

VACANCY NOTICE

Position Title: Grant Support and External Relations Coordinator
Salary Pay Scale: Salary commensurate with qualification and experience
Duty Station: Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management. Accountable to: the Chief Executive Officer

Posting Period: 2 years

Basic purpose of position:

The Grant Support and External Relations Coordinator shall effectively assess and coordinate the donor landscape aligned with our sustainable development priorities with the aim of aligning, identifying, and facilitating the entrance into and approval by these facilities; thus, securing opportunities and financing for environmental/sustainable development projects with high biodiversity returns in Belize.

Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Serve as the ministry's liaison officer between international partners such as the UN system, Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Central American Commission for Development, among others.
2. Assess the grant funding landscape aligned with national sustainable development targets and goals.
3. Document entry points, focus areas, processes, requirements, and opportunities of donor agencies aligned with our national target and goals for the environment.
4. Develop a funding dashboard which facilitates tracking of biodiversity targets and investment funding windows.
5. Develop expressions of Interests, concept notes in collaboration with relevant agencies for submission to donors and facilities.
6. Work closely with Results Based/Monitoring and evaluation Specialist within the MSDCC&DRM to ensure alignment of grant opportunities with investment opportunities.
7. Develop a donor coordination mechanism that supports the ministry's strategic priorities.
8. Submits periodic reports on the status of projects development with external stakeholders.
9. Any other duties, assigned from time to time, for the MSDCC&DRM.

Minimum Qualifications – Academic/Training:

Master's Degree in: Finance, Economics, Investment Management, or closely related field

Skills, Experience and Qualification Required:

1. Strong organizational skills and leadership capability.
2. Ability to integrate financial knowledge with operational strategies and policy objectives.
3. Knowledge of environmental finance, sustainable development issues and the interface between socioeconomics and the environment at the local and international level
4. Strong interpersonal and communication skills
5. Intermediate level Spanish proficiency
6. Knowledge of national governance framework strongly desired
7. Ability to prepare publications, reports, and presentations.
8. Proven knowledge of financial planning and diagnosis
9. Ability to conduct research, data analysis.
10. Ability to work with a multidisciplinary and multicultural team.
11. Computer literacy particularly in Microsoft and Access software application
12. Strong work ethic.
13. Flexible and ability to prioritize a variety of complex evolving tasks.

Application Requirements

Interested persons shall submit an Expression of Interest/Letter of Application Letter along with Curriculum Vitae inclusive of two (2) references and supporting documents no later than **April 18th, 2022**, to:

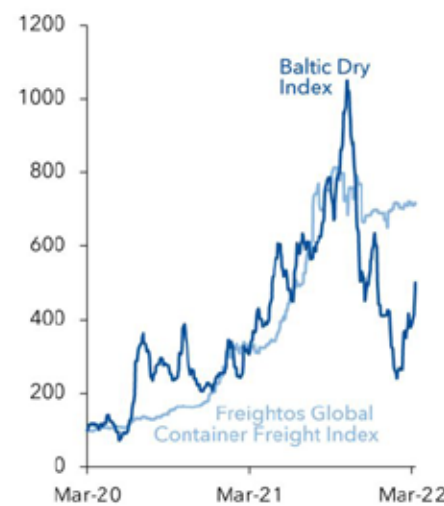
Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management
 Attn: National Biodiversity Office- Director
 3rd Floor Green Complex Building #2557 Hummingbird Highway Belmopan
 Telephone number 828-9055 or
 Email address: BIOFIN-Belize@environment.gov.bz

*Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted

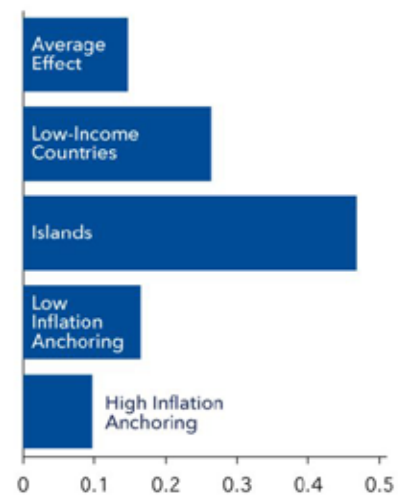
Cargo crunch

Global shipping costs surged during the pandemic, and are likely to continue boosting inflation through year-end.

Shipping costs
(indexes; March 1, 2020=100)



Inflation effects 12 months after shipping costs increase
(percentage point)



Sources: Haver Analytics and IMF staff calculations.

Note: The right panel is based on estimates in Carrière-Swallow and others (2022), and presents the impact of a one standard deviation increase in world shipping costs (+21.8 percentage points) on domestic headline inflation after 12 months.

IMF

PUBLIC AUCTION SALE: PROPERTY

Banak Street, Belize City

BY ORDER of the mortgagees, Messrs. Heritage Bank Limited, Licensed Auctioneers Kevin A. Castillo & Christiana Rebecca Castillo is selling ONLINE via belizepropertyauctions.com the below described property. Sale currently running and will expire Monday 11th April 2022 at 1:30 pm.



REGISTRATION SECTION: Lake Independence
 BLOCK: 45
 PARCEL: 757

(Being a two-storey concrete/timber dwelling house (1,368 sq. ft): Ground floor – Open Area; First floor – 2 bedrooms + 1 bathroom + living/dining/kitchen + Verandah and lot [352.471 Sq. Yds.] situate at No. 16, Banak Street, (between Lake View Street & Central American Boulevard) Lake Independence, Belize City, Belize, the freehold property of Mr. Reynaldo Romero & Ms. Ema Romero.)

TERMS: STRICTLY CASH

KEVIN A. CASTILLO

TELEPHONE 223-4488

Website: belizepropertyauctions.com

E-mail: belizeauctionsales@gmail.com

Face Book: Belize Auctions

Full Reopening of Schools Set for August

By Michelle Sutherland

Despite the lifting of the remaining restrictions, which are expected to take effect on Friday, April 1st, the Ministry of Education says that they are in no rush to reopen schools for face-to-face learning as yet, but intend to do so for the commencement of the new school year.

On Wednesday of this week Minister of Education, Hon Francis Fonseca told the Reporter, "As it relates to schools, we are still taking the hybrid approach so we don't expect to be fully back at school for face-to-face learning, five days a week until the new school year in August. Although some schools have already started along that path, it's going to be done on a gradual basis. So we are not requiring schools to do face-to-face instruction at this time."

Fonseca explained that with only two months more to go before the summer break the Ministry does not see the need to require schools at this point to revert back to face-to-face learning. That, according to Fonseca, will only result in schools being open for a couple of weeks before it closes back down for two months, something which he says "does not make any sense." The Minister, however, says that he is urging managing authorities, and teachers to use the time to prepare for the full reopening in August.

"But if some are ready to reopen for face-to-face learning, and we are satisfied that they are prepared there is absolutely nothing in place to stop them from doing it, so we are not going to stop them," reiterated the Minister.

As it relates to the lifting of the remaining regulations, which are to take effect on April 1st and which will no longer require students or the public to wear masks indoors, Minister Fonseca said that he applauds the move. He, however, reiterated that while students will no longer be required to wear their masks at school, that decision will be left up to the respective schools to decide whether they still feel the need to require mask-wearing and social distancing inside their compound.

"The lifting of the remaining restrictions signals that we are moving in a new direction where we have to take personal responsibility for our actions and that applies to schools as well. They have been doing a good job at that. Schools know best. They know their students and their environment, their teachers, and their circumstances so where they want to keep in place certain protocols we fully support that and of course, we still encourage schools to have sanitization supplies so that students have access to those," said the Minister.

Schools across the country are currently conducting the Belize Diagnostic Assessment Test (BDAT), which is being administered at all levels. The test seeks to gauge the current academic needs of students, following the two years that schools have been closed due to the pandemic. The result of those tests will assist the Ministry as well as teachers with a comprehensive view of which subject areas are lacking and to formulate plans to address those needs in the upcoming months.



CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Belize Electricity Limited (BEL) is the primary distributor and the only licensed public provider of electricity in Belize. Our Mission is to deliver safe, reliable and sustainable energy solutions to enhance the quality of life and the productivity of enterprise and to support national development.

We are looking for a highly motivated, goal oriented, responsible and committed person to join our Company in the role of Apprentice Lineman in the Distribution Operations Department of our Distribution Services Division at the following locations:

San Pedro	San Ignacio	Independence
Caye Caulker	Dangriga	

Applicants will undergo company-based training aimed at progression to qualified Lineman. This post offers the opportunity for progressive career advancement to supervisory/management levels.

Education and Experience:

- Associate Degree in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and/or Engineering Technology is required

Required Skills and Abilities:

- Ability to work in a team with good collaborative skills for pursuing shared goals
- Must be reliable and self-motivated
- Possess planning and organization skills with good attention to detail
- Ability to work in a fast-paced environment and meet deadlines
- Good communication and interpersonal skills (written and verbal)
- Action and results oriented
- Working knowledge of the Windows Environment and Microsoft Office applications
- Valid Class B2 driver's license

Salary:

- \$20,700.00 per annum
- Annual increase is applied based on training progression

Submit application letter along with resume, copy of degrees and certificates and two recent professional letters of recommendation via email to:

Manager, Talent Acquisition & Development

Email: career.opportunity@bel.com.bz

In the email subject, please indicate the position:

Application - Apprentice Lineman (vacancy location of your choice)

**Only electronic applications are being accepted at this time.
For more information or queries, call 227-0954 Ext. 2901 or 1415**

Deadline: Friday, April 8, 2022



CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Belize Electricity Limited (BEL) is the primary distributor and the only licensed public provider of electricity in Belize. Our Mission is to deliver safe, reliable and sustainable energy solutions to enhance the quality of life and the productivity of enterprise and to support national development.

We are looking for a highly motivated, goal oriented, responsible and committed person to join our Company in the role of **Supervisor, Operations Information Systems** in the **Distribution Planning and Engineering Department** of our **Distribution Services Division** at our Magazine Road compound in Belize City.

Duties:

- Maintain and update the Company's Geographic Information System (GIS) database and manage data collection procedures involving Distribution Technicians countrywide.
- Train pertinent staff in all relevant departments as required to implement data collection.
- Implement and manage ArcFM Designer and workflow control, implement and maintain ArcFM Web Portal, create mapping applications that facilitate efficient data dissemination.
- Review for adequacy the human, equipment, software and other resources required to develop, update and maintain the GIS database, make recommendations for new resources or for resource changes as seen relevant.
- Document, categorize and develop a plan for the delivery of various GIS services to departments/users throughout the Company, and external customers as requested.
- Provide services (including web apps, map services, etc.) to relevant users as required.
- Lead Operations Information System (OIS) section to support BEL Divisions with GIS related operations and lead the transition from a traditional process to geographically integrated systems.
- Develop and implement process flows to support BEL's operations.

Education and Experience:

- Bachelor's degree in Geographic Information System or related field and five year's relevant experience
- Two year's supervisory experience

Required Skills and Abilities:

- Working knowledge of GIS related software (ArcGIS suite)
- Knowledge of Server Management software
- Working knowledge of Microsoft Office programs and database applications
- Strong project management skills
- Strong analytical and critical thinking skills
- Good innovation and creativity skills
- Excellent interpersonal and leadership skills
- Strong general and technical communication skills (reports, instructions, specifications, technical manuals, proposals, presentations)
- Action and results oriented with excellent collaborative skills for pursuing shared goals
- Ability to take initiative, exercise sound judgement while maintaining high work quality
- Ability to meet deadlines in a fast paced and changing environment
- Valid driver's license

Salary: in accordance with Company Salary Structure.

Submit application letter along with resume, copy of degrees and certificates and three recent professional letters of recommendation via email to:

Manager, Talent Acquisition & Development
Email: career.opportunity@bel.com.bz

In the email subject, please indicate the position:
Supervisor, Operations Information Systems

Only electronic applications are being accepted at this time.
For more information or queries, call 227-0954 Ext. 2901 or 1415

Deadline: Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Taiwan helps Banana farmers fight fungus wilt

By William Ysaguirre

The Belize banana industry will have help in fighting the possible threat of banana wilt or "Panama disease", which caused by the "fusarium oxysporum" fungus, with the technical support from the International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF) technical mission of the Republic of China on Taiwan.

The ICDF mission is partnering with the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA) and the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) to use state of the art technology to interpret satellite imagery, which can be used to detect the presence of the fungus in banana plantations. Taiwan is funding the project for it to be implemented throughout the entire Central American region and OIRSA member countries.

ICDF experts Kun-Mu Cheng and Cheng-Lung Wang are in Belize for a week to set up the project, which will detect and diagnose the presence of the fungus, and build the farmers' capacity to respond to the fungus. They and Ambassador David Kuan-Chou met with the OIRSA country representative Fermin Blanco early this week. The ICDF team also assessed what is needed to strengthen the diagnostic capacity of the BAHA laboratory at Central Farm during their visit to lab.

Preventing the introduction of agricultural diseases and pests in the region and their social, economic and environmental consequences is a top priority for OIRSA, which has established regional action plans to work with national authorities in member countries to minimize the threat.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and Enterprise (MAFSE) will work with the germ-plasm materials and will train the farmers to monitor their banana groves for the disease, and in how the biosecurity protocols will work, in the event that the disease gets into the country. BAHA will be the lead agency to coordinate all phases of the project, along with OIRSA.

The ICDF team also met with Chief Executive Officer Servulo Baeza of the Agriculture ministry, who enthusiastically supports this initiative to safeguard Belize's food security. The possible arrival of the fungus in Belize poses not only an economic threat to Belize's banana export earnings, but it is also a food-security issue since plantains and bananas are an important part of Belizeans' diet, and local sales are a source of the farmers' income.

The ICDF experts will also meet with the Banana Growers Association to fine tune the monitoring technology and to discuss the three-year project strategy for a better and more efficient implementation.

The project to prevent banana wilt will include the planting of experimental plots of banana varieties which are resistant or tolerant of the banana wilt fungus, to evaluate which varieties thrive in Belizean soils and environment, and which can be adapted to production. Introducing these new varieties will follow all requisite biosecurity protocols for movement of genetic materials and traceability. The team also met with University of Belize (UB) scientists to include them in the research and tissue culture components of the project.



STRENGTHENING OF TAX ADMINISTRATION PROJECT

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Consultancy Firm to prepare and implement a Taxpayer Account Model to allow for fast taxpayer centric overview

Institution: The Ministry of Finance (MOF)

Country: Belize

Project: Strengthening of Tax Administration (STA)

Abstract: Consulting Services – Consultancy Firm to prepare and implement a Taxpayer Account Model to allow for fast taxpayer centric overview

Loan No.: 4839/OC-BL

Deadline: April 8th, 2022, Belize Local Time

The Government of Belize (GOB) has received financing from the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)** for the execution of a five-year tax modernization project entitled “**Strengthening of Tax Administration**” (BL-L1031). Through this project, the **Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD)** has procured a **Modern Integrated Tax Administration System (the Revenue Management System (RMS))** and is presently in the implementation process. This new system will be used in the management of the **Belize Tax Administration**.

The consulting services (“**the services**”) includes the contracting of a Consultancy Firm for a period of **six (6) months**. The main activity of the consultancy includes:

1. To assess the current situation of BTDS taxpayer account in Integrated Tax Administration System (ITAS).
2. Develop a model for a new taxpayer account in ITAS. The model should specify the entities dealing with the taxpayer account, the information that flows to and from the account, and the transactions that will be allowed with the taxpayer account (e.g., debt from tax returns, debts from refunds, debts from adjustments, debts from audits, debts from payment by instalment agreements, credits from regular payment, credits for adjustments in appeals cases, credit from payments of payment by instalment agreements, etc.). The account will be organized by Taxpayer Identification Numbers (TIN), tax type and period
3. Define the procedures for taxpayer access to his account via Internet
4. Define which transactions taxpayers would be allowed to perform through the Internet
5. Define the changes to be made in ITAS for the introduction of the new model
6. Prepare the taxpayer account manual
7. Implement the new taxpayer centric current account
8. Train BTS staff in the new taxpayer account design and operation

The Consultancy Firm should have a minimum of five (5) years’ relevant working experience in the following areas:

- **Designing modern taxpayer account**
- **Preparing taxpayer account procedures and manuals**
- **Training enforcement agents in taxpayer account;**

As well as minimum of five (5) relevant working experience in enforcement of arrears payment and design of modern taxpayer current account. In addition, the Consulting firm should have at least three (3) years of previous experience conducting consultancies to countries implementing modern taxpayer accounts.

The Ministry of Finance now invites eligible Consultancy Firms (“**Consultants**”) to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested eligible Consultants must submit an Expression of Interest providing information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services (**description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills, etc.**).

Expression of Interest package should contain:

- (i) Document explaining interest, experience, and competence of the consulting firm.
- (ii) Firms experience in the assignment of similar consultancy services during the past five years.
Description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments.
- (iii) Firms evidence of past jobs. (These includes letters from the respective client on the job (s) carried out, or a copy of

contract or agreement with the client including copy of the TOR).

(iv) Two references

(v) Proof of nationality: Copy of certificate of incorporation, information of shareholders of company specifying the shares owned by each respective shareholder of the company and a copy of documentation of nationality of the shareholders of the company.

Additional documentation required for National Consultants:

(vi) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from Belize Company Registry

(vii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Social Security Board

(viii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Belize Tax Service

(ix) Copy of Current Trade License

The total estimated contract price for this consultancy inclusive of taxes is **US \$133,555.00**.

A Consulting firm will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost - Based Selection (QCBS) procurement method set out in the Inter-American Development Bank: ***Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (GN-2350-15, May 2019 edition)*** and is open to all eligible consultants as defined in the IDB policies. The selection of the successful firm will be based on a competitive process among short-listed firms that takes into account the quality of the proposal and the cost of the service. **Only the short-listed firms will be notified and will be asked to submit a technical and price proposal.**

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications. For the purpose of establishing the short list, the nationality of a firm is that of the country in which it is legally incorporated or constituted and in the case of Joint Venture, the nationality of the firm appointed to represent it.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours **Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.** Expressions of interest must be delivered via direct mail or e-mail at the address indicated below by **4:00 p.m. (Belize local time) on Friday April 8th, 2022.**

Interested eligible Consultants are asked to submit their expression of interest via e-mail to **Michelle.Longsworth@bts.gov.bz** marked **STAP-Consultancy Firm to prepare and implement a Taxpayer Account Model to allow for fast taxpayer centric overview** in the subject header, or submit on or before **4:00 p.m. (Belize local time) on Friday April 8th, 2022** to the following address:

**Director General
Belize Tax Service S
trengthening of Tax Administration Project
Charles Bartlett Hyde Building
Mahogany Street, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114**

For clarifications kindly contact:

**Procurement Officer
Project Executing Unit
Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Charles Bartlett Hyde Building
Mahogany Street, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114/E-mail: Ian.Ramirez@mof.gov.bz**



Central Information Technology Office Ministry of Finance

Corner Dry Creek Mountain View Boulevard Belmopan
Telephones: 501 822-2406/08-20708 • Email: contact@cito.gov.bz

TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY OF MICROSOFT 365 LICENSES FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE

- The Government of Belize, acting through the Central Information Technology Office, now invites Tenders for the supply of Microsoft 365 Licenses for the Government of Belize. The subscription period required is for one (1) year.
- Procurement of the goods will be conducted through Open Tendering Procedure.
- Terms of Reference**
3a. Technical specifications
The scope of work includes the provision of Microsoft Licenses for the products listed in the table below:

ITEM	QUANTITY
Azure Active Directory Premium P2	100
Microsoft 365 E3	3,800
Microsoft 365 F3	175
Office 365 E3	750
Office 365 E1	900
Office 365 F1	200
Microsoft Defender for Office 365 (Plan 1)	5725
Microsoft Defender for Office 365 (Plan 2)	100
Power BI Pro	10
Project Plan 3	60
Project Plan 5	7
Visio Plan 2	70

3b. Program of Works

The program of work includes:

- Technical support with license provisioning
- Activation of licenses and handing over to Central Information Technology Office
- Issue resolution for the duration of the contract period (12 months)

3c. Schedule

The licenses are to be provisioned and activated no later than 30 June 2022.

- Copies of this Tender document can be downloaded from the **Ministry of Finance Procurement Portal** <https://procurement.gov.bz/> or from the CARICOM Public Procurement Notice Board <https://cppnb.caricom.org/epps/home.do>.
- Currency exchange rate for regional/international bidders is **USD 1.00 to BZD 2.00**.
- Eligibility Criteria:** This invitation is open to all eligible Tenderers as per the eligibility criteria below:
 - The Tenderer has an active membership in Microsoft Partner Network for Latin America and the Caribbean region and market (MPN ID)
 - The Tenderer must be an active Cloud Service Provider (CSP) that can sell CSP offers in Latin America and the Caribbean region and market
 - The Tenderer should provide evidence of experience deploying Microsoft 365 for business of a comparable size within the past three years.
 - Audited Financial Statements for the past 3 years.
 - Bid-Securing Declaration in the amount of **BZD 10,000.00**
 - The Tenderer has availability of liquid assets through either:
 - Access to line of credit of 30% of the bid price
 - Case in bank account of an amount at least 30% of the bid price
- All Tenders shall include the following additional documentation:
 - Business certificates
 - For local Tenderers:**
 - Copies of Certificates of Good Standing from:
 - Belize Tax Service
 - Belize Companies Registry
 - Belize Social Security Board
 - Copy of current Trade License
 - For regional/international**

Tenderers: Statement of compliance from Companies' Registry

- Evidence of past jobs including a copy of the contract or agreement with the client including a copy of the TOR.
- Two references.

- The contract is subject to Income and Business Tax as per Government Policy as shown below:
 - 25% - for non-Caricom states
 - 15% - for Caricom member states
 - 6% - for companies in Belize.

- Price should be inclusive of General Sales Tax (GST) payment of 12.5%

10. Questions and Replies

Questions shall be type-written in English and shall be sent via email to the following address: MS365tenders2022@cito.gov.bz. The deadline for queries is 9 May 2022. Responses from the CITO will be type-written in English and will be emailed to the requester and may also be made available to other Tenderers subject to confidentiality.

- Submission Tenders** should be emailed to MS365tenders2022@cito.gov.bz with the subject **TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY OF MICROSOFT 365 LICENSES FOR GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE**.

The bid response should consist of two password protected files - one technical and one financial. The Technical file will be open first and evaluated.

Only the top 4 bidders that meet the technical merit will have their financial file opened.

To ensure the confidentiality of the submission, the files should be protected via a password. This can be done on the file itself, using zip password protection, or some other means of password protecting the file. The password will be requested at the opening of the tender.

- The deadline for Tender submission is 23 May 2022.** Submissions received after the deadline will be rejected.

13. Evaluation Criteria

Tenders will be evaluated on technical merit and price based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Weight (%)
Financial Offer	50%
Technical proposal	50%
Direct technical support from Microsoft.	20%
Access to the portal for managing licenses with the flexibility to increase or decrease licenses throughout the term of the agreement (1-year) at the guaranteed price.	10%
Service delivery models for issue resolution, preferably with English-speaking technical support.	10%
Service delivery experience in provisioning and supporting Microsoft365 for business comparable in the magnitude of this Tender	5%
Financial strength of company demonstrated over past three (3) years	5%
Total	100%

- Opening of the Tenders** will take place online on **23 May 2022 at 2 pm Belize Time** and in the presence of the Tenderers or their representatives who wish to attend the Tender opening.

- Evaluation of the Tenders** will be conducted on **25 May 2022**.

- The selection of the successful Tenderer will be based on a competitive process that considers Technical and Financial Proposals.

- Incomplete tenders will not be accepted.

Health Minister: 99.9% of remaining

COVID regs lifted as of April 1

By Michelle Sutherland

Most remaining COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted as of the start of next month, including those that applied to bars and nightclubs, Minister of Health Hon. Kevin Bernard confirmed with The Reporter late this evening.

After having successfully made the case for the change in the regulations at today's Cabinet meeting, Bernard told our newsroom that as of April 1st the relaxation of the rules "will include bars and nightclubs, which will now be allowed to reopen."

The minister also explained that the mandatory wearing of masks indoors and outdoors will also be scrapped. The wearing of masks will now be a personal choice because it will no longer be a crime. "All of those major public events will now be opened without any restrictions."

There will no longer be any restrictions on those types of events," Bernard shared. "We felt that it is time that we open back the country." Bernard, however, indicated that while 99.9% of the remaining restrictions have been lifted there are some that will need to remain in place for now. For instance, he explained that "unvaccinated Belizeans" will only be allowed to exit for medical purposes and must present a valid medical document.

Belizeans 12 years and above wishing to exit Belize through air, land, or seaports must be fully vaccinated. All unvaccinated persons 5 years and above entering Belize via the airport, land, or seaport, must show proof of a negative rapid or PCR test taken within the last 48 hours or 72 hours, respectively.

The Minister also notified that after careful consideration and close monitoring of the country's daily infection rate, his medical response team advised that it was safe for the Ministry of Health to proceed with their plans to remove the remaining restrictions that have been in place for over two years.

The gradual return to normalcy commenced a month ago with the lifting of the nightly curfew and the outdoor mask mandate. When asked what's happening with the pandemic, Bernard replied, "Well, you know that the WHO [World Health Organization] will at some point declare a pandemic [to be] endemic based on situations. In Belize, we have been having a steady decline in numbers, and if you notice those have been hovering between 10 and 20 a day. However, we are also keeping our eyes on what is happening around us, including the emergence of any new variant."

In regards to schools, Minister Bernard said that the Ministry of Health will hold back its recommendations for the full reopening of schools at this point. However, based on the present situation he will be recommending that it be done in early August. The Ministry of Health and Wellness will be making a formal announcement in the upcoming days to inform the public of these latest changes.

Fuel Price Update



Belmopan. March 31st, 2022. 3:10 p.m.

The Ministry of Finance announces that effective April 1, 2022, the regulated pump price of diesel remains at \$13.41 per gallon in Belize City with prices being slightly higher in the districts reflecting transportation costs.

The most recent shipment of diesel received this week brought with it a further increase in acquisition costs. However, to maintain the pump price at the current level, the government reduced all levies on diesel by 76 cents per gallon. This is in addition to an earlier reduction in taxes of \$1.17 that took effect on March 12, 2022. Thus, the total reduction in taxes on diesel this month now stands at \$1.93 per gallon.

A statutory instrument reducing the taxes with effect from April 1, 2022 will be issued shortly.

Countries all over the world are enduring fuel price surges as a direct consequence of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Though future prices are impossible to predict, the Government of Belize continues to examine all viable policy options for minimizing the fuel price shock, balancing as best as possible between the twin demands of affordable pump prices and national budgetary requirements.

**Kick back
Relax and
Enjoy**

The Reporter
Independently serving Belize since 1967

SOCIAL SECURITY BOARD

VACANCY

The Social Security Board invites applications from suitably qualified persons to fill the role of **QUALITY ASSURANCE INTERNAL AUDITOR** at its Internal Audit Services Division, SSB Headquarters, Belmopan.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:
Bachelor's Degree in Business Management, Finance, Accounting, or other closely related discipline, with five (5) years' supervisory experience in Internal Auditing.

Visit our website at www.socialsecurity.org.bz/vacancy-announcement/ to view further details on this position.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:
Application packages containing application letter, resume, two (2) recent letters of recommendation, copies of degree, certifications and other relevant academic credentials and current police record or receipt for record may be submitted via email to:

Manager, HR Strategies, SSB Headquarters, Belmopan:
dlindo@socialsecurity.org.bz

HR Advisor, HR Policy & Strategy, SSB Headquarters, Belmopan:
fphillips@socialsecurity.org.bz

Copy to: Ag. General Manager, Human Resources, Headquarters, Belmopan: odakers@socialsecurity.org.bz

Email Subject Line: "Application for QA Internal Auditor"

APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 14th, 2022

ASR GROUP | BELIZE SUGAR

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Belize Sugar Industries Ltd.
Invites qualified and self-motivated individuals to submit applications for the post of:
IT Site Support Specialist
at Tower Hill, Orange Walk

The **IT Site Support Specialist** provides technical and analytical support to users, troubleshoot and resolve technical infrastructure issues that include PC's, printers, network devices, servers and collaboration technologies.

Qualifications and Experience:

- Bachelors of Science Degree in Information Technology or related field
- Minimum of three (3) years work experience in related field
- Fluency in English both written and verbal, ability to speak Spanish will be an asset
- Knowledge of Windows Active Directory architecture and its interaction with the desktop environment
- Knowledge of network topologies, protocols, UTP and Fiber cables
- Experience using remote client management tools
- Experience using Service Now or other Enterprise Service Desk incident and project management reporting tools
- Experience remediating operating system security vulnerabilities and patch implementation methods
- Experience with unattended build processes and imaging utilities
- Knowledge of device encryption and anti-virus software

Skills and Competencies:

- Good interpersonal skills, team oriented
- Strong analytical and research skills
- Self-motivated with exceptional work ethic
- Proactive, organized and dependable
- Good interpersonal skills, team oriented

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Provide technical support for clients at both the local office and remote locations
- Maintain site's IT inventory IN Asset Inventory System
- Work with outside contractors, project teams and internal staff to maintain and repair all IT assets
- Work with the infrastructure team on network device monitoring, maintenance, server patching and troubleshooting LAN/WAN/VPN connectivity issues
- Support annual equipment refresh including switch and server replacement

Letter of application accompanied by a résumé, police record, recent transcript and two letters of reference should be submitted to:

Human Resources Manager
P.O. Box 29, Tower Hill, Orange Walk
Or email
HR.Belize@asr-group.com

Deadline for submission is April 5, 2022.



Ministry of Finance, Economic Development & Investment
Belmopan
MARCH 31, 2022

**NOTICE TO TAX DEFAULTERS PURSUANT TO SECTION 64A OF TAX
ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURE ACT (TAPA)**

NAME	OCCUPATION	TAX CENTRE	TAX TYPE	AMOUNT OWED
Matus Medical Supplies	Medical Supplies Importer	Belize	GST and Business Tax	\$271,705.59
DK Limited	Retailer	Belize	GST	\$131,932.93
Darrell Carter	Upholsterer	Belize	GST	\$854,419.47
HLB Belize, LLP /Grant Thorton	Accounting Firm	Belize	GST and Business Tax	\$2,421,576.26
Buttercup Development Co. Ltd	Real Estate	Belize	GST	\$63,703.66
Jose Depaz	Land Surveyor	San Ignacio	GST	\$261,963.06
Mark Neal	Gym	Belize	GST	\$47,561.74
Denvor Fairweather	Producer	Belize	GST	\$17,017.42
Johnny Quan	Retailer	Corozal	GST	\$161,223.14
Zhen Jun Lan	Retailer	Corozal	GST	\$444,111.53
Damaris Berges	Restaurateur	Corozal	GST and Business Tax	\$115,881.53
Caribbean Sunrise Limited	Manufacturer	Belize	GST	\$402,440.99
Quality Water Depot	Manufacturer	Belize	GST	\$226,745.84
Amigos Del Mar	Tour Operator	San Pedro	GST	\$1,822,074.47
Belize Pharma Supplies	Pharmacy	Belize	GST	\$93,049.36
Ivor Company	Real Estate/Marketing	Belize	GST and Business Tax	\$60,410.51
Austin Waight	Marketing	Belize	GST and Business Tax	\$166,304.48
Out Island Construction & Development	Construction	Belize	GST	\$408,950.55
Arthur Saldivar	Attorney	Belize	Business Tax	\$57,712.95
Eden Holland	Restaurateur	Belize	GST	\$834,465.22
Mark King	Security Services	Belize	GST	\$398,141.53
Smoky Mermaid	Restaurant	Belize	GST	\$256,017.56
El Secreto	Hotel	San Pedro	GST and Business Tax	\$293,630.87
M&M Engineering	Engineer/Construction	Belize	GST and Business Tax	\$2,784,507.54

You are hereby notified to contact the Belize Tax Service Department as soon as possible to settle your arrears. Failure to do so in a timely manner will result in court proceedings or further action taken against you pursuant to the TAPA.

**A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
BELIZE TAX SERVICE DEPARTMENT**

TOGETHER WE BUILD OUR COUNTRY: YOUR CONTRIBUTION, OUR DEVELOPMENT



Press Release
28 March 2022

Digi to Power Nationwide Mobile Wallet Offering



Digi, Our National Telecom, is proud to announce the successful launch of DigiWallet - Belize's most innovative mobile wallet solution – on March 23rd, 2022!

DigiWallet is an all-in-one solution that will replace the need for Belizeans to conduct monetary transactions across the country. The launch of this dynamic mobile app is Digi's contribution to financial inclusion across Belize, offering mobile money as a safer and more accessible option to pay for goods and services.

DigiWallet will charter a new way to pay for all Belizeans!

Our National Telecom has focused over the years in providing the most innovative products, services, and solutions to our customers. We continue to meet the demands of the evolving Belizean market; aligning our corporate goals to support Belize's continued economic growth and development. This all-inclusive solution is available to mobile customers across Belize regardless of their service provider and is easily accessible regardless of the handset type. DigiWallet will open doors and create opportunities for Belize's banked, underbanked and unbanked populations.



“Today we unveil the most complete, comprehensive, and innovative payment solution that introduces a new era of mobile payments in Belize. Digi today launched financial technology within the mobile industry; making us the first to launch a mobile payment platform in Belize. We are a mobile telecom that now allows you to use your device to conduct multiple forms of payments and financial transactions. We are excited that this new innovative solution that is backed by the Digi brand is here; transforming and redefining the overall financial landscape.”

Ivan Tesucum, Chief Executive Officer, Digi

DigiWallet gives all registered users across the country the ability to conduct low-cost financial transactions in a safe, secure, and easy manner.

To enjoy the wide range of DigiWallet features, users are only required to have a registered mobile number in Belize and a mobile device. Download and register for DigiWallet today to be a part of the transformation.

DigiWallet - A New Way To Pay!

To find out more, visit www.digiwallet.bz