



# National Assembly of Belize

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### PRESS RELEASE

#### **Establishment of the New Belize Parliamentary Alliance Against Hunger & Malnutrition (BPAHM)**

--Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021— In July 2019, Belize joined 19 other countries in the Hunger Free Latin America and Caribbean Initiative to help reduce hunger and malnutrition and to promote initiatives for food security and nutrition, family farming, school feeding programs and school gardens.

With a new parliament, on Thursday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the new parliamentary champions from the House of Representatives and the Senate met and reconvened the Belize Parliamentary Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition (BPAHM) at the House of Culture in Belize City, and signed the BPAHM declaration at its first working meeting.

BPAHM is chaired by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Valerie Woods. There was critical support from the Minister of Education, Hon. Francis Fonseca, Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Jose Abelardo Mai, Minister of Health, Hon. Michel Chebat and Minister of Human Development, Hon. Dolores Balderamos-Garcia. Other parliamentary champions who form the Alliance include the Hon. Oscar Requena, Minister of Rural Development, Hon. Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Patrick Faber, Hon. Tracy Panton, the Hon. Carolyn Trench-Sandiford, President of the Senate, Senator Isabel Bennett, Senator Sheena Pitts, and Senator Osmany Salas.

“It is an example that with inter-ministerial collaboration, bi-partisan support and joint alliances between the House of Representatives and the Senate, there are sound parliamentary institutions and initiatives that carry over with new parliaments for the wider benefit of the population”, stated the Chairperson, Hon. Valerie Woods. She continued, “Belize’s health statistics particularly in relation to food insecurity, under-nutrition, obesity and non-communicable diseases further demonstrate the critical need for the country to have a serious long-term commitment to promote healthy eating and a healthier lifestyle with a particular focus in our schools. BPAHM brings this commitment from the highest level of decision making.”

At yesterday’s first working meeting of the new BPAHM, the members were provided with an update from the technical working committee on the progress of the initiative and renewed their commitment to champion necessary policies, legislation, activities, and awareness campaigns to combat hunger and malnutrition. Members provided an exchange of suggestions and ideas for new interventions and activities to be undertaken. With this information, the Alliance will be working on the implementation of activities for the remainder of the year and establish its workplan for 2022.

With the support of the United Nation’s Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), BPAHM will continue its work coordinating and collaborating with other international agencies, academia, the media, civil society, and private sector to combat hunger and malnutrition.

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