



National Assembly of Belize

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PRESS RELEASE

The National Assembly Signs Declaration of Intent with United Nations Belize

—**1st December 2022**—The National Assembly signed today a joint declaration of intent (DOI) in the auditorium of the Leigh Richardson Building in Belmopan. The National Assembly was represented by Presiding Officers, Hon. Valerie Woods, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Hon. Carolyn Trench-Sandiford, President of the Senate, and the United Nations was represented by the Resident Coordinator in Belize, Ms. Birgit Gerstenberg.

President Trench-Sandiford and Ms. Gerstenberg in their remarks both reflected on the critical importance of the partnership between the National Assembly and the United Nations in promoting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (“SDGs”) under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). President Trench-Sandiford underscored the important role of the Legislature in advancing these goals.

Through the collaboration with UN Belize, much support will be provided to parliamentarians in their role as advocates of strategically achieving the SDGs in Belize and to continue to make progress on recovery and resilience in the post COVID-19 era, specifically along key cross-cutting areas of mutual interest related to the work of the United Nations country team in Belize and the development efforts by the National Assembly of Belize.

Some areas of common interest include: the adoption of international human rights-based approaches and standards, the principle of Leave No One Behind (LNOB), the implementation of best practices and recommendations from the Human Rights Handbook for Parliamentarians, and the implementation of inclusive citizen participation processes and the facilitation of national civic space that enables an environment where peoples and groups (especially those vulnerable, marginalized or excluded) can participate meaningfully in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the Belize society, among many others. A copy of the DOI can be found on our website: www.nationalassembly.gov.bz

Honourable Valerie Woods, Speaker of the House of Representatives, on behalf of the National Assembly, expressed her appreciation to the UN country team for the opportunity to formalize a proper mechanism that will help to outline the areas of interest to which the UN and the National Assembly can further collaborate. She also expressed her appreciation to CEO Amalia Mai and her team in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for providing the protocol and logistics assistance in making this event successful. She finally conveyed her gratitude to parliamentarians for their continued support and encourage them to make suggestions on the particular areas covered in the DOI that they would want to learn more about in 2023.

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