



National Assembly of Belize

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PRESS RELEASE

The Joint Public Accounts Committee (JPAC) met with the Honourable Prime Minister

The Joint Public Accounts Committee (JPAC) met yesterday, 4th December 2023, in the Committee Room of the National Assembly, in Belmopan, in an in camera meeting with the Hon. Prime Minister, as the Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment.

Following meetings with the Financial Secretary, Accountant General, and Auditor General on the needs and urgency to complete the outstanding Financial Reports for Fiscal Year 2015-2016 to present, the Committee agreed to ask for an audience with the Hon. Prime Minister to share with him the Committee's grave concerns for not being able to carry out its mandate which is to scrutinize and provide oversight of the use of the public funds. The Committee informed the Hon. Prime Minister that the last national audit report was produced for the financial year 2014-2015. The Committee shared with the Hon. Prime Minister the challenges and issues being faced by both the Accountant General and the Auditor General in meeting the deadlines and obligations outlined in the Finance and Audit (Reform) Act. The Committee stated that the government financial system is in dire need of rectification as the system is completely non-functional.

The Hon. Prime Minister assured the Committee that he will assist, as much as possible, in reaching a solution to improve the ongoing backlogs. He also noted that, indeed, public funds are the people's business and each government ministry and department should be held accountable and must give account of their spendings in a timely manner.

The Committee Members present at the JPAC meeting were the Chair, Hon. Tracy Panton, Hon. Kareem Musa, Hon. Kevin Bernard, and Senator Janelle Chanona.

The Prime Minister's attendance at the JPAC was historic, as the National Assembly's records indicate that no other Prime Minister has participated in a Committee meeting.

**Joint Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly of Belize
Belmopan**

5th December 2023

