



National Assembly of Belize

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The Women's Parliamentary Caucus joins the nation in observing March as Women's Month.

-Wednesday, 27th March 2024- As women parliamentarians, the Caucus takes a zero-tolerance policy on all forms of gender-based violence. We are determined to actively advocate for and vigorously champion the cause of women and girls towards creating a future where Belizean women and girls are safe in their homes, on the streets and at their jobs; a future where non-discriminatory laws are enforced as part of the social infrastructure and policies; and a future where women's leadership is amplified and encouraged.

All available research highlights our collective responsibility in striving for gender equality and equity. Government, civil society, youth, private sector and supporting international agencies are already working hard on several fronts including to:

- end poverty,
- break the vicious cycle of gender-based violence,
- accelerate progress towards equality and equity,
- enhance empowerment of women and girls,
- address climate justice, and
- increase opportunities of investment in, and by, women.

In Belize, the unabated and brutal violence being directed towards women and children, girls in particular, is a key indicator of the enormity of the task at hand. Some of Belize's most egregious femicides, committed by men they once trusted, have taken place this year. Too many women and girls are suffering in silence from crimes of rape, sexual abuse, and physical violence. Too many of us are forced to tolerate the sexually explicit harassment openly directed to women and girls of all ages in public spaces. The lack of participation by women and girls in leadership can be directly linked to the use of derogatory language and lack of decorum directed at women leaders and parliamentarians.

We must all do our part to change these dynamics if we want to create the enabling environment we need for women and girls to thrive. Because when women thrive, nations prosper. Within this context, the Caucus reiterates its commitment to supporting all legislative efforts, including incorporating gender budgeting initiatives to the national process, strengthening existing and implementing already identified necessary laws and policies to address core gender-based issues and reform of the Standing Orders and establishment of Codes of Conduct of both the Upper and Lower House so that members of parliament can set new standards and lead by example.

-The End-

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus is the space created by women parliamentarians from the government, the opposition, and social partners in the National Assembly to strengthen women's voices in parliament, to encourage gender perspectives in the day-to-day operations of the parliament, and to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality and inclusion in the parliament. For more information on the Caucus, contact the Chair of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus, Senator the Hon. Janelle Chanona.

