



CAPITAL WEEKLY

"From the Heart of the Nation to the Soul of the People."



No. 048

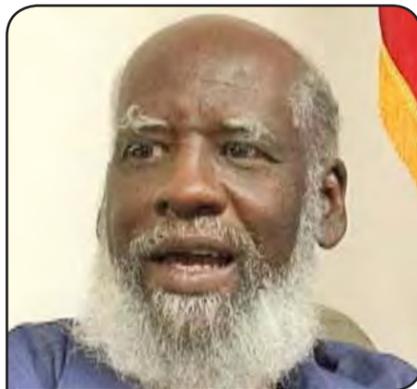
Wednesday - March 2 - 2016

Online Publication

BELIZE AND GUATEMALA Sarstoon Expedition Sparks Mixed Reaction



Wil Maheia - Leader of Belize Territorial Volunteers



Hon. Wilfred 'Sedi' Elrington
Current Foreign Minister



Assad Shoman
Former Foreign Minister



Eamon Courtenay
Former Foreign Minister

On Saturday, February 27, 2016, a small delegation led by Belize Territorial Volunteers (BTV) Leader Wil Maheia ventured on yet another expedition to Sarstoon Island, this time to commemorate the anniversary of a previous expedition which had resulted in a number of Belizeans being detained overnight by Guatemalan authorities.

A heavy presence by the Guatemalan Military prevented the Belizean contingent from making its way to the Island which is firmly within Belize's territory. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs while doing its best in advance to discourage the expedition, nevertheless acknowledged

that the Guatemalan Military appeared to have violated Belize's sovereignty by entering our territorial waters without permission, and expressed its intention to send a diplomatic note of protest to the Guatemalan Government and the OAS.

Foreign Affairs Minister Wilfred Elrington explained, "Certainly the military forces have no business entering into the space of sovereign independent nations. That is normally regarded as an act of aggression. It's tantamount to initiation of hostile action, and that is contrary to international law...But when you have that kind of thing, it is resolved by forceful diplomatic

Continued on Page 14

Prime Minister & Opposition Leader

A sign of political maturity, Opposition Leader John Briceno met with Prime Minister Dean Barrow Wednesday morning, March 2, 2016 in the PM's Belize City Office. They discussed a number of national issues, including

Belize-Guatemala relations, the Sarstoon situation, the Economy, De-risking/Correspondent Banking and Crime. Both leaders agreed in principle to work in national unity to address these issues for the good of the People and Nation of Belize.



Prime Minister Dean Barrow



Opposition Leader John Briceno

Chester Williams Promoted

New Assistant Commissioner of Police



Newly Promoted Assistant Commissioner of Police Chester Williams

He has received many accolades of late for the leadership demonstrated as a senior member of the Belize Police Force. And now, Chester Williams has received a well-earned, much-deserved promotion from Senior Superintendent to Assistant Commissioner of Police.

After years of police work, rising up through the ranks, he returned home in the middle of 2015 with a law degree and was placed in charge of Eastern Division South. With a heavy emphasis on community policing, he quickly made his mark as the crime situation in what was the most murderous part of the country improved remarkably within the last six months of 2015 under his command.

Speaking of his promotion, Williams, remarked, "I am very pleased to have been promoted to the rank of Assistant Commissioner of Police. I remain the Officer Commanding South-Side Belize City, and pledge to continue to do my best in preserving law and order on this side of the city, with a view to make the citizenry feel safe in their respective neighborhoods. I thank the Minister of National Security, Honourable John Saldivar, and the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Allen Whyllie, for entrusting me with the responsibility I currently have, and for my long-deserved promotion."

A native of Stann Creek, Assistant Commissioner Chester Williams is making the South proud and the Nation safe.

EDITORIAL

WHO'S RIGHT - WHO'S WRONG

The latest Sarstoon expedition by the Belize Territorial Volunteers, the provocative response by the Guatemalan Military, and the mixed reaction from Belizean diplomats past and present, highlight once again the need for National Unity on the Belize-Guatemala Territorial Dispute and efforts to resolve it.

In our view, the words and actions of Belizeans on all sides of this issue are well-meaning and motivated by patriotism. Prime Minister Dean Barrow, while questioning the wisdom of the series of expeditions by the Belize Territorial Volunteers, acknowledged in a press conference on August 19, 2015, "Their decision arose from feelings of patriotism that are not just commendable but inspirational."

Our acquaintance with Foreign Minister Wilfred Elrington and our knowledge of his personal historical record on the Belize-Guatemala issue convinces us his mission of mutual friendship and peaceful resolution is derived from a degree of nationalism that is no less passionate.

The caution from the Opposition and insightful recommendations from former foreign ministers such as Assad Shoman, whom history records as an architect of Belize's Independence movement back in the seventies and eighties, we are compelled to conclude are offered with the most fervent desire to safeguard the sovereignty and security of our beloved nation.

Lest we begin once again to point fingers at each other, let us be reminded where the problem actually originated and resides, and who really is to blame. As Belizeans, we are all in the right on this issue. Those who are completely in the wrong are the Guatemalans who continue to hold on to an unfounded, outdated and un-neighborly claim.

ICJ or not, for now we rest our case!

TRANSFORMATION

ISIDORO BEATON STADIUM



Isidoro Beaton Football Stadium Nearing Completion in Belmopan

The Isidoro Beaton Football Stadium in Belmopan is nearing completion, and it is already a beauty to behold. The spectacular image above was captured at night and shared through social media by Honourable John Saldivar, Area Representative for Belmopan. It shows the stadium with its synthetic surface and professional lighting already installed.

The upgrading of the Isidoro Football Stadium is one of several projects which form part of the Government's nationwide investment in Sports Infrastructure. The contract for this project was awarded back in February of 2015 to a Santa Elena based firm, Pedro R. Lizarraga & Sons, headed by General Contractor Mr. Pedro Lizarraga.

Other projects nationwide include the construction in Belize City of an innovative, well equipped state-of-the-art Arena and Cultural Complex at the location of the Old Civic Center on Central American Boulevard, which will serve not just the residents of Belize City but the entire country; construction of a new Multi-Complex Auditorium and upgrading of Carl Ramos Football Stadium in Dangriga; and construction of a new Multi-Complex Building in Punta Gorda. The contract for the new Belize City Center was awarded to the local JVCA of Medina's Construction Limited/International Environments Ltd in October, 2015 at a cost of BZ\$32,940,261.34; signing of the contract for the

Dangriga Multi-Complex Auditorium took place in August, 2015, awarded to Salvador Habet of BCG Ltd for \$2,991,544.07; and the contract for the Punta Gorda Multi-Complex Auditorium was awarded in August, 2015 to Daniel and Carlo Arguelles of International Environments Limited at a cost of \$3,190,063.47.

In his 2016 New Year's Message, Prime Minister Dean Barrow assured that Government's trademark infrastructure drive will continue through a mix of funding sources, and with respect to the investment in sports infrastructure, he stated, "There is enough that we have set aside from the PetroCaribe days of plenty to complete the countrywide BIL sporting projects."

CAPITAL WEEKLY

Published By:
Roots & Rhythm Limited

Editor:
Delroy Cuthkelvin

Email:
e.capwklybmpelize@gmail.com

FIFA President Gianni Infantino Marks First Day In The Office With Star-Studded Match



FIFA's New Chief Gianni Infantino (left) Holds a Football with FIFA World Football Museum Director, Stefan Jost

New FIFA president Gianni Infantino has kick-started his reign with a friendly football match. Past World Cup stars and two current players, Kelly Smith of Arsenal Ladies and Julia Simic of Wolfsburg, were invited to join Infantino and FIFA staff on his first day in office for the informal kick around.

The Swiss-Italian was elected on Friday, ahead of Bahraini Sheik Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, to become only the ninth president in FIFA's 112-year history.

The 45 year-old, previously General Secretary of European football's governing body UEFA, inherited an organisation in disarray.

However, Infantino had insisted that FIFA's reform package would close the door on a chapter of pain at world football's governing body and usher in an era of joy.

That was certainly the case on Monday as a host of footballing names including Fabio Cannavaro, Robert Pires, Clarence Seedorf, Paolo Maldini, Deco and Michel Salgado joined in with the jovial contest just before the snow arrived in Zurich.

Infantino could be seen demonstrating a competitive streak on the field and putting in the ground work against his esteemed opponents.

Speaking after the informal match at FIFA HQ, Infantino said he had still not

discussed his salary following his election on Friday.

"I have no idea yet," he told reporters. "I know you can't believe it but it's not (for the) money that I was candidate to become FIFA president. I have not discussed with anyone about my pay or what my pay will be. We will see."

The salary of Infantino's predecessor Sepp Blatter, suspended from the game for six years, has never been made public. But reforms agreed by FIFA last week to overcome the corruption scandal included provision for salaries to be open to scrutiny.

He said bidding for the 2026 World Cup hosting, which was supposed to have started in 2015 with a decision due in Kuala Lumpur next year, should begin before the

Mexico City congress in May.

"Definitely, I think we need to launch the bidding process in the next couple of months, probably before the next Congress in May," Infantino said.

"Concerning Qatar and Russia, the decisions were taken in 2010 by the executive committee, but since 2010 there has been speculation and allegations and noise."

"It's now necessary to organise the best World Cup in history in Russia in 2018 and in 2022 in Qatar."

FIFA has been forced to investigate the decision to grant the 2018 World Cup to Russia and the 2022 finals to Qatar and an investigation is also under way by the Swiss Attorney General's office.

- Reprinted From Mail Online <http://www.dailymail.co.uk>



FIFA president Gianni Infantino (centre) poses for a photo during his first day in charge in Zurich

Montreal Impact Signs Belizean Michael Salazar

The Montreal Impact announced on Tuesday the signing of forward Michael Salazar, the club's second selection at the 2016 Super Draft (24th overall), upon receiving his International Transfer Certificate.

"We are pleased to have signed Michael to our club," said Impact technical director Adam Braz. "He is someone who integrated well with the group during our preseason camp. He has impressed the staff with his performance on the field, as well as his strong work ethic and willingness to learn." Salazar, 23, distinguished himself in the 2015 Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup, earning the Cup's Lower Division Player of the



Michael Salazar, Belizean Football Player from San Ignacio, Cayo signed up by Montreal Impact Football Club in Major League Soccer

Tournament honours and finishing tied for the lead with four assists while scoring three goals in four games. He also helped amateur club PSA Elite (USASA)

to its second consecutive appearance in the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup fourth round.

He played two seasons with the California Baptist University Lancers in 2011 and 2012, helping the team win the Division 1 National Championship in 2012. He then played two seasons with UC Riverside in 2014 and 2015.

Internationally, he has appeared in four games with the Belize National Team, taking part in the 2013 CONCACAF Gold Cup. (Montreal Impact Website)

READ CAPITAL WEEKLY ONLINE
www.belizenews.com/CapitalWeekly

New Riding Mower for San Ignacio

Handover by Minister of Sports Elodio Aragon

On February 16, 2016, Minister of State for Youth and Sports, Honourable Elodio Aragon was in San Ignacio, Cayo where he handed over a much-needed riding mower to the Sports Council in that western municipality.

Speaking of the equipment handed over, Minister Aragon says, "This equipment, which is not cheap as we ensured we got the bigger engine, will go a long way in maintaining the facilities in San Ignacio. Just a



Minister of State Hon. Elodio Aragon with Football Federation Official Sergio Chuc and other Sports Coordinators in Cayo

month ago, they also received a motorcycle. Slowly we are working to make a difference in sports countrywide. Congrats to our new National Sports Director, Mr. Dominguez, and his staff that are working to make things happen. I'm confident things will only get better in sports, and I ask for the communities to get involved at all levels."

On hand for the hand-over was Area Representative for Cayo North, Hon. Omar Figueroa and Director of the National Sports Council Ritchell Dominguez.

Aragon & Figueroa Cayo Sports Working Tour



Minister of State Hon. Elodio Aragon with Football Federation Official Sergio Chuc and other Sports Coordinators in Cayo

While in San Ignacio, Minister of State for Youth and Sports Hon. Elodio Aragon took the opportunity to visit sporting facilities in the area along with the Area Representative for Cayo North, Hon. Omar Figueroa and Director of the National Sports Council Ritchell Dominguez.

They visited the Victor Galvez Stadium, where they discussed plans for the promotion and development of sports in the communities throughout the constituency. Honourable

Elodio Aragon later commented, "We are a hundred percent behind him because only by working with the community can we get sports moving."

They also visited the village of Bullet Tree, which Hon. Aragon says will be provided with new lights for their sports fields. "This was a good working visit, and it motivates us to get things going in sports in Belize and for all our young people," he said. "Slowly, things are getting done, and we look forward to impacting sports in all municipalities across this country."



Minister of State Hon. Elodio Aragon with Cayo North Area Rep Hon. Omar Figueroa and Football Federation Official Sergio Chuc

Rejuvenation at Youth Ministry

Hon. Elodio Aragon At The Helm

The new Minister of State with responsibility for Youth, Sports and Culture, Honourable Elodio Aragon, has really made his presence felt in the short three months and a half since he was appointed immediately following the November 4, 2016 general Elections.

working visit to Dangriga where he met with Department of Youth personnel in that area, Hon. Aragon remarked, "The opportunity to visit the youth Ministry in Dangriga and our Youth Coordinators was a pleasure. There is much work that needs to be done, and I am glad to know that we have people



Minister of State Hon. Elodio Aragon and CEO Adele Catzim along with Department of Youth Coordinators in Dangriga

Highly motivated, the Minister of State and his team from the Ministry and the Departments which fall under his command have been moving around the country assessing the work being done and identifying what else needs to occur for the development of Youth and Sports throughout our communities.

Speaking on a recent

who are interested to make it happen. We will continue to find ways to support them so that we move forward with creating the opportunities, the enabling environment and empowerment of our young people across this Country."

As a Minister of State, Honourable Elodio Aragon also has responsibility for Culture.

CODICADER GAMES COMING TO BELIZE

Sports Minister Aragon Attends Reunion in Nicaragua

Minister of State with responsibility for Youth and Sports, Honourable Elodio Aragon, recently attended the CODICADER (Consejo Del Istmo Centro-Americano de Deportes y Recreación) Reunion in Nicaragua along with representatives from Central America. There they discussed matters relating to the CODICADER Games which will be played in Belize in the month of July, 2016.

Upon his return, Honourable Aragon remarked, "Things are shaping up and Belize will host football, basketball, volleyball and ping pong. A lot more has to be done with regards to fund raising, logistics and preparations. This event will see well over 1,000 participants in Belize for four days of competition."



Hon. Elodio Aragon with other officials at CODICADER Reunion

It is the first time that the CODICADER Games will be held in Belize and Honourable Aragon says, "It is a task we are willing to take on at the Ministry and at the National Sports Council along with support from our associations and federations".

He has expressed thanks to everyone who is involved in the planning and execution, and to all who will participate in the events as athletes or spectators.

A Walk Through Dangriga

Co-Authored By Mayor Francis Humphreys & Ifasina Efunyemi

On Monday, February 15, 2016, the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) and the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) launched a publication entitled "A WALK THROUGH DANGRIGA".

It is the third publication in the 'Walk Through' series which features key landmarks and heritage sites in the various municipalities of Belize.



Dangriga Area Rep. Hon. Frank Mena; Mayor Francis Humphreys and Culture Minister Elodio Aragon holding a copy of publication

Belizeans, particularly students, teachers, and tour guides, are invited to purchase a copy of the publication at their nearest bookstore. Research featuring the other municipalities of Belize remains ongoing.

The launch was held at the BTL Princess Royal Park. The date chosen for



Culture Minister Hon. Elodio Aragon at Publication Launch

marks and heritage sites in the various municipalities of Belize.

Mayor Francis Humphreys and Ifasina Efunyemi, two well-known educators in Dangriga, are co-authors of the manuscript. The book was edited and produced by the Institute for Social and Cultural Research (ISCR), a branch of NICH.

'A WALK THROUGH DANGRIGA' traces the development of historic locations and sites of memory within the town. The information was compiled using oral history, documentary sources, accompanied by photographs dating from the late 1890's to the present.



Amidst the audience of invited guests, Cultural Icon Pen Cayetano

Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, Hon. Elodio Aragon Jr., delivered the keynote address. He emphasized the importance of community history, both for educational and tourism purposes.

the event, February 15, 2016 was symbolic as it marked the 120th Anniversary of the town which was officially named Dangriga on February 15, 1895.

(The publication, A WALK THROUGH DANGRIGA, is now available for sale at book stores throughout Dangriga, and at the Dangriga Town Council, at an affordable price of BZE \$20.00)



Audience of Invited Guests at Publication Book Launch in Dangriga

Jamaica Labour Party Wins Tight Race in Polls Marked by Low Voter Turnout

Jamaica Observer
Friday, February 26, 2016

Andrew Holness returned the favour, handing Portia Simpson Miller's People's National Party (PNP) its first one-term government Thursday in the country's 17th general election that ended with the tightest majority in Jamaica's history — 33 - 30 seats.

The polls will be memorable for the low voter turnout — barely more than one-third of the electorate. But they also sent a message to politicians that Holness acknowledged in his acceptance speech at Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) headquarters in Kingston last night.

"I know from my travels around Jamaica that you wanted to change the Government, but I also picked up from going around the country that you want to change the way that Government works," Holness told cheering supporters. "And so, from this platform, I make the commitment to you that your new Government will not be Government as usual. We don't take it that we have won a prize. We have been given stewardship of the country, and we stand to be held to account for our stewardship," he said. "We know that the cost of victory is accountability. The cost of victory is the responsiveness of the Government that we will form. The cost of victory is to keep the commitments that we have made. "We are under no illusions as to the ability of the Jamaican people to hold their Government to account," he added.

"Our campaign was issues-based. We focused on the things that you told us were important to you. We developed plans around them, and we discussed those plans with you, and we intend to be faithful to those plans. We will grow the Jamaican economy. We will create jobs. We will give you an accountable and responsive Government," Holness said.

In conceding defeat, PNP President Simpson Miller commended the JLP, but warned that her party would not allow them to wreck the economy.

"We have done our



*Andrew Holness - Leader of the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP)
New Prime Minister of Jamaica, victorious in the General Elections*

best. I hope and pray that what we achieved on behalf of this country will not be ruined. I hope those who succeed us will not throw away the gains made by the People's National Party Government," she said.

"We have regained the respect of international governments and the international community. The fact is, we are not quarrelling with anyone. This is Jamaica, and we have a responsibility," Simpson Miller added.

"I am not watching any of them. As a woman, I don't watch man. What our team is going to do is monitor everything that happens and every decision taken. We did all we could to make it easier for the Jamaican people," she said.

"If anything, we are stronger than yesterday. This is a time for us to get back to the draw-

ing board," Simpson Miller said.

Analysts immediately attributed the JLP win to Holness's eleventh-hour ten-point plan and its centerpiece income tax proposal, as well as the refusal of the governing party to participate in national political debates.

Holness's proposal that a Government led by him would "get rid of personal income tax for everyone who earns a gross salary of \$1.5 million or less" created the biggest buzz during the campaign, as the PNP and some financial analysts slammed it as unworkable. They also argued that it would derail the economic reform programme approved by the International Monetary Fund.

The income tax proposal is part of a ten-point plan that Holness said his Government would implement to spur economic growth.



JLP Leader Andrew Holness (right) is congratulated by Former Party Leader and Prime Minister Edward Seaga at the Jamaica Labour Party's Headquarters Election Night

Under the plan, people earning above \$1.5 million and less than \$5 million will continue being subjected to the 25 per cent tax on income in excess of the current \$592,800 threshold, while anyone earning income in excess of \$5 million per year will be taxed at the rate of 25 per cent of their entire income.

But Holness said he and his team were confident in their numbers, because they have been thoroughly researched.

"Moreover, our plan will not affect government revenue. It will not be inflationary because there is productive capacity in Jamaica to respond to increased demand. In fact, there will be a positive impact for your household and for our economy. Together we can build a better Jamaica," Holness said at his party's final mass rally in Half-Way-Tree last Sunday.

The election was also marked by questions raised by PNP campaign director Dr. Peter Phillips about the house being built by Holness and his wife in Beverly Hills, St. Andrew. The questions have resulted in Holness's wife filing a lawsuit against Phillips for defamation.

The PNP apparently also lost support among the electorate for its refusal to participate in national debates unless Holness apologized to Simpson Miller for comments he made about her on nomination day.

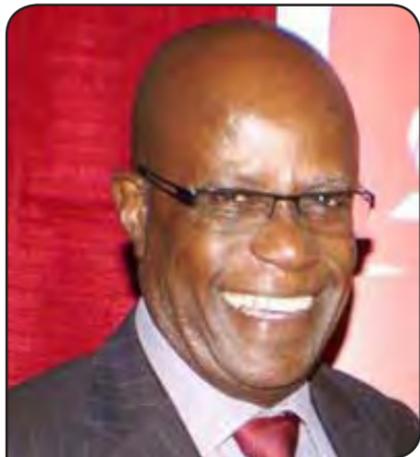
The party had also placed as a condition of its participation in the debates, a demand that Holness answer the questions about the funding of his house. But even after Holness answered the questions, the PNP insisted that he needed to say more. The PNP also entered the election with disaffection among its ranks, as supporters in a number of constituencies were unhappy with the party's candidates and made their anger known publicly.

The PNP's defeat came just over four years after it took power in December, 2011 to make the JLP the first one-term Government since Independence.

(Reprinted from the
Jamaica Observer)

IMPACT Justice Holds Media Workshop in Barbados

Attended by 68 Journalists & Law Students from Caribbean Region



Julian Rogers, Managing Director, MEDIAROBERS Antigua and Barbuda

ernment of Canada were delivered by Dr. Margaret Gail Miller, Senior Director to the Caribbean Regional Programme and Director for Canada to the Caribbean

BDS \$62 million to two projects delivered by two regional institutions, the Caribbean Court of Justice and the University of the West Indies,” Doctor Miller said.



Andrew Smith, Lecturer, University of Technology, Jamaica



Dr. Margaret Gail Miller Director for Canada to the Caribbean Development Bank

Members of the media and law students from across the Caribbean region, 68 of them, attended a two-day workshop in Bridge Town, Barbados, hosted by Improved Access to Justice in the Caribbean

Development Bank (CDB). “And we maintain that commitment today with funding of just over

She explained that the UWI - IMPACT Justice project is aimed at ensuring better ac-

reporter of his own newscast, it has become more critical for journalists and broadcasters to set the example of ethical, accurate and fair journalism.

Presentations were made by accomplished personalities from the Caribbean, includ-



Judy Raymond, Senior Trinidadian Journalist, one of the presenters



Members of the Regional Media at the Workshop in Barbados

(IMPACT Justice), a project funded by the Canadian Government.

The workshop, conducted on February 24 and 25, 2016 at the Radisson Aquatica Resort, Barbados, is part of the project’s Public Legal Education Component. Topics covered included, the Rights of Journalists; Confidentiality of Sources; Defamation in the context of Media Law; Online Reporting; Parliamentary and Government reporting; and Reporting on Family Matters and Gender Issues.

At the Opening Ceremony, remarks on behalf of the Gov-



Prof. Velma Newton of Barbados Regional Project Director

cess to justice for communities that are vulnerable and marginalized within the CARICOM region, and for governments, the private sector and civil society.

“Long gone are the days when the print media and other traditional news providers were the predominant source of information to the public,” she remarked.

She explained that in an era characterized by the rapid development of technology and growth of social media, enabling any member of the public with a smart phone to become the lead

ing Julian Rogers of Antigua and Barbuda, Professor Velma Newton of Barbados, Andrew Smith of Jamaica and Judy Raymond of Trinidad.

It is hoped that the workshop has helped to increase knowledge of the rights of journalists, with respect to the legal parameters allowed in the environment in which they operate.

Impact Justice is a regional justice sector reform project and is being implemented through the Caribbean Law Institute Centre, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus.



Sixty Eight Members of the Media and Law Students from across the Caribbean Region attending Two-Day Workshop in Bridgetown, Barbados

CARICOM Secretary General Gets Second Term

Announcement Made at Heads of Government Meeting in Belize

CARICOM Secretary-General Ambassador Irwin LaRocque has been re-appointed to a second term of office.

CARICOM Chairman, Prime Minister of Belize, Hon. Dean Barrow, made the announcement during the Closing Press Conference of the CARICOM Heads of Government Inter-sessional Meeting in Belize, Wednesday, February 17, 2016.

The Secretary-General's initial five-year appointment ends in August, and Heads of Government decided to deal with the matter of his reappointment now because they felt the



Belize Prime Minister and CARICOM Chairman Hon. Dean Barrow and CARICOM Secretary-General Ambassador Irwin LaRocque

next meeting in July is too close to the August expiration date, the Chairman told the media.

"I'm pleased to say that there was unanimous agreement for the SG's reappointment",

Prime Minister Barrow disclosed.

"I want to make clear that on a personal note, I am as convinced as anyone else, and perhaps more so, that the Secretary-General has done an exemplary job. His commitment to reform, the changes he has already made along the lines of obliging the Secretariat and the Community to become more productive, more efficacious, are well known, and he has done all this while remaining throughout, extremely even tempered and accessible.

I am pleased to say what a tremendous job of work this Secretary-General has done," the Prime Minister said.

Insight into Gang Culture in Belize

LAUNCH OF NEW BOOK WRITTEN BY NURI MUHAMMAD



Nuri Muhammad, Author of 'Insights into Gang Culture in Belize'

Well known Belizean Television and Radio Talk Show host, Nuri Muhammad has just launched a new book. Titled "Insights into Gang Culture in Belize", the book was inspired by Nuri's intimate knowledge and extensive experience working with at risk youths.

In an interview with Channel Seven News, Nuri Muhammad explained, "The book is called 'Insights' and I think the word indicates that it is a reflective look at the challenge that we face with youth crime and violence in this country. We tried to look at it over a spectrum of 25 to 30 years, so that we could see its generational issue

as opposed to simply reporting it as various incidents that take place on a nightly and weekly basis. So the book is called 'Insights into Gang Culture'.

Again, culture is an important aspect of looking at it, because if we look at crime and violence simply as various incidents then it remains just a front page story or a nightly story on the news; but we look at it as a culture; it then requires us to start looking at the depth of what is creating that nightly news, and there is depth to it when we take the cultural approach."

Asked what he expects the book will achieve, Muhammad responded, "I think clearly what we see, from my perspec-

tive, is that we are not learning the lessons of what we have done before, and we continue to approach the problem as though it is a new problem, and clearly it is a problem that is reoccurring, and so what we hope that this book will encourage is this research-based approach and also that we do some continuation of programs as opposed to what appears to be a starting over every couple of years to solve the exact same problems."

An avid reader and seasoned writer himself, veteran journalist Glenn Tillett has given the book a good review and a strong recommendation. Tillett told Channel Seven News, "It is not a salacious reading; it's not something that you will read for its sensation. You must read it for its wisdom and the consideration that it brings. If we are to have a better society, we need to be able to consider, understand, discuss and even debate some

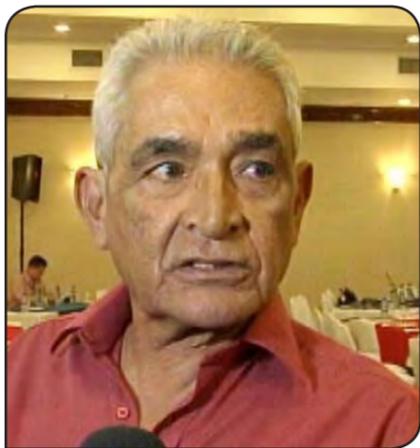
of what he's putting forward in his book...I will say, just read the book because it will take, I think, most people a brief period of time to read, to contemplate, to consider it to look at the problems from Mr. Muhammad's perspective, and then to start come to conclusion that, yes, this is a problem that require all of us to first of all be better citizens, to be more compassionate, to be more understanding and, most of all, to be good parents and stewards of this society."

Nuri Muhammad's intimate knowledge of the issues confronting at risk youths was gained through his experience in various capacities such as Director of Youth and Manager of the Youth for the Future Program. He was instrumental in the historic Gang Truce signed at Birds Isle back in the mid 1990's and the much acclaimed Conscious Youth Development Program (CYDP) which developed out of it.



When and How Do We Draw the Line?

Annual Law Conference Attended by Members of the Bar and the Bench



Assad Shoman
Former Foreign Minister

The Belize-Guatemala Dispute and efforts to resolve it is an issue that transcends partisan politics and requires national unity. If there's one class of persons in our community that has the training, discipline and incentive to reach across political lines, it is our attorneys. On Friday February 19, 2016, attorneys of opposite persuasions, all persuasions and no persuasion came together at their Annual Law Conference, and the top issue on their agenda was the Belize-Guatemala Dispute.

President of the Bar Association, Jacqueline Marshalleck, explained, "The Belize-Guatemala Dispute certainly has its diplomatic elements, but it also has its legal elements. I think that as the discussion becomes more public and the education exercise progresses, the Bar Association and attorneys at large will generally be expected to comment or assist people in understanding the process. There will be questions about the Court and what should happen, and I think there is an assumption that because we are attorneys that we know and that we have all the answers. There are certainly some attorneys in the Bar who are very well-versed in international law and on the Belize Guatemala dispute, but we also recognize that there are attorneys who are not that familiar with the details of the dispute. We also wanted an

opportunity to determine what was fact from what might be fiction, so that people are clear on what are the facts on the ground; people are clear on what are the facts in terms of the diplomatic process and how things have moved along over the years."

The conference was attended by members of the Bar and Bench, among them former foreign ministers, such as the

on this existential issue, Shoman asserted, "The Belizean people have to wake up a little more. They don't seem to realize that we have an imminent threat. Things are getting worse. The Sarstoon is just the tip of the iceberg of what can happen if we don't have an international presence. The O.A.S office is there as a result of the facilitation process. The O.A.S office will



Foreign Affairs Minister Wilfred Elrington addressing the Conference

now venerable Assad Shoman, whose involvement in negotiations surrounding the Belize-Guatemala dispute dates back to the pre-Independence era. Shoman remarked, "I think we need to take back the agenda, take back the initiative. I think for the last few years, Guatemala has been pushing the envelope. They have been saying what we should do and what we shouldn't do. They have been saying we should go to referendum, we can't go to referendum, they keep postponing dates and then they came up with the idea of let's

not stay there if they don't see an end to this thing; and they are running out of funding, and the funding comes from international bodies and governments that have faith that this thing is going somewhere. If they feel that it is going nowhere, either because of Guatemala or Belize's position, then we will lose that presence."

Another former Foreign Minister attending the conference was Eamon Courtenay. He also offered his perspective on the history and current challenges arising from the issue. "Taking back the agenda, to my mind,

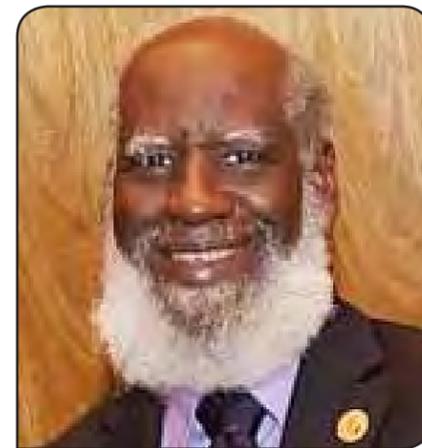


Former Foreign Minister Assad Shoman Addressing the Conference

get a little more cozy, sign agreements between ourselves, and we get to trust each other more, and then it'll be more likely for us to go to referendum. I don't think that's true. I think we need to take back the initiative and decide ourselves what we're going to do to push this thing forward and finally end that claim."

As to the response and awareness of the Belizean People

means dealing with what is happening on the ground. There are security threats in the Sarstoon and on the Western border. There is serious contraband, trafficking in persons, trafficking in drugs, degradation of the forest. Those are the things that need to be dealt with and we need to deal with them aggressively; do it aggressively with the support of the international community. Inter-



Hon. Wilfred 'Sedi' Elrington
Current Foreign Minister

nationalization to me means that we want to have a negotiation that leads to the ground, what is really happening, and what is affecting people's lives improving. That is what is a pre-condition, in my view, to a resolution."

Commenting further on recommendations to address specific challenges arising from the issue and towards a lasting solution, Courtenay stated, "The suggestion from Assad, which I think we all agree with, is that we may need new confidence building measures for the Sarstoon, one specially designed for the Sarstoon; then after that, the question is, how do we get to the ICJ, if that is what the people in Guatemala and the people in Belize want? My view has been that we need to build confidence on both sides of the borders...To put it very succinctly, we need circumstances that are going to be conducive to both sides to vote, yes, in the referendum, because I think we all agree that we will never have a negotiated settlement. It's just now for the people to decide whether they want to go to the Court or not."

One of the highlights of the conference was a presentation by the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Honourable Wilfred Elrington. The conference was titled, The Belize Guatemala Border Dispute – When and How Do We Draw the Line? It was held at the Biltmore Plaza Hotel in Belize City.



Eamon Courtenay
Former Foreign Minister



Jacqueline Marshalleck
President - Bar Association

GREAT Program scores Great Success

TRAINS AND GRUADUTES ANOTHER 35 POLICE OFFICERS



Officers undergoing training under GREAT Program



Police Officers in Training Session under GREAT Program

The Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) Program, funded by the United States, has become a key component of the overall strategy by the Belize Police Force in its fight against crime. It started off in Belize City and has now expanded to the districts.

The latest group of police officers to receive training under the program includes 35 men and women, and they will be deployed countrywide to work

skills and basically to keep them away from gangs. The Government of the United States is very happy to support this kind of programme over the years."

Belize's Commissioner of Police Mr. Allen Whylye, for his part, expressed gratitude for the assistance by the United States Government, and he provided some additional background information on the program, its origin and its success to date. "The GREAT Program first stemmed from within the Community Po-

lity Policing Unit, who have received training in this GREAT Program," he explained.

Commissioner Whylye said he is very interested in seeing the program continue and further expand. "This was the third graduating class for the Belize Police Department. With the 35 new officers who graduated today, we have approximately 150 officers trained in the Great Program.

We also have three international trainers, and we have another constable who is about to complete his training and also be the fourth international trainer; so the Great Program is here to stay within the Belize Police Department.

It is a very beneficial program that has police officers going into the various schools and imparting their knowledge in terms of teaching young people, students how to resist peer pressure, how to handle peer pressure; how to deal with issues of gangs and drugs and a lot of the other social issues that normally affect young people," The Commissioner explained.

"We've seen where students who have gone through the Great Program, there has been improvement in their grades, confirmed by students, their parents as well as school administrators. We've seen where parents have spoken highly in terms of the change in the lives of their kids who have successfully par-

ticipated in the Great Program. No program will have 100% success, but I think it's a very beneficial program and it will continue to expand in Belize," he said.

Also speaking at the graduation ceremonies was GREAT Regional Director, Ron Doyle. He stated, "The goal of the GREAT Program is prevention. We want to stave off problems before they get started. When children are influenced to participate in criminal activity, to use violence to achieve their goals, to become members of gangs, the cost for everyone involved is great.

The cost to the individual child is huge. Besides having to live with the constant fear of arrest or reprisal, we know that those who live by violence usually die by violence. The cost to their victims is great, as they suffer personal loss, sometimes irreparable. And there is a great cost for all of us as a society, not only the cost of the damage is done, but the loss of the positive contribution that these failed citizens could have made. So every child that we can keep from starting down this wrong path makes us much more effective and far less costly than trying to redirect them after they've already gone astray."

As Police Commissioner Allen Whylye noted, the GREAT program started in Belize out of an initiative by the Community Policing Unit back in 2009.



Officers receiving certificates at Graduation for GREAT Program

with children and youths to help steer them away from a culture of gang violence and crime.

The graduation ceremony was attended by United States Ambassador in Belize, Carlos Moreno, who commented, "The Great Program is a program that the embassy has been supporting for at least the last 5 years. We've trained over 130 officers to work in the schools. The officers are assigned to particular schools where they interact with the youths and encourage them to stay away from gangs.

They involve the students in other activities, field trips and, as mentioned earlier, it's really essential that the kids have an adult mentor, someone they can turn to resolve problems, to teach them good citizenship

licensing Unit in 2009 where seven police officers were first trained and this program was then piloted within Belize City. We saw the benefits of the GREAT Program and since then the GREAT Program has taken root within the department and it is now being conducted countrywide.

It also includes police officers from other units other than just the Commu-



Mr. Allen Whylye, Belize's Commissioner of Police



H.E. Carlos Moreno
United States Ambassador



Mr. Ron Doyle
Regional Director - GREAT

New Strategy for Business Services Sector

BELIZE'S FIRST BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING SUMMIT

Government and private sector officials from Belize converged at the Radisson Fort George Hotel in Belize City on Wednesday, February 17, 2016 to discuss a new strategy to improve the country's business services sector. The meeting, which was dubbed as the first BPO Summit in Belize, was the brain child of BelizeINVEST, a division of the Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE). It provided participants the opportunity to examine the benefits of increasing the country's business services and identify priorities for policy and institutional reform. Participants also agreed to revive the Business Outsourcing Association of Belize (BOAB), establish a standards framework and to increase the development and promotion of IT Education in Belize. The strategy was developed in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat and had as its main objective to assess the potential for higher-value IT Enabled



Hon. Tracy Taegar
Minister of State - Economic Development, Petroleum, Investment, Trade & Commerce



Mr. Nicolas Ruiz
Managing Director, Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE)

ards Framework and Road-map for Implementation, which will serve as the mechanisms for the successful execution of the framework. The study was conducted through various visits to Belize in engaging key public and private stakeholders.

"The BPO industry has grown substantially over the last couple of years in particular and it is expected to continue on an upward growth trajectory, and so for us as a govern-

ment, Trade and Commerce.

Historically, the offshore outsourcing sector of Belize has experienced tremendous growth of over 80% in the past few years, starting with only one (1) center opening its doors in 2005 to over 23 centers presently employing over 2,300 agents. Most centers in Belize currently focus on inbound and outbound call center operations, since it is the only Latin American and Caribbean location of-

ing accounting, data processing, IT-related services and telecommunications. Governments and businesses around the world out-source a proportion of these services to make efficiency gains or as part of a wider corporate strategy. The global business services outsourcing industry is expanding in the Latin America and Caribbean region and accounts for 9% of all foreign investment in business outsourcing. More companies in large markets, such as the United States, are opting to out-source non-core business activities to countries close by that can offer services at a lower cost, creating opportunity for Belize and other countries in the region. As the Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) sector becomes more competitive and globalized amidst escalating costs to out-source in Asia, organizations are quickly looking to re-locate their outsourcing operations to offshore destinations like Belize, which offers the same agility, access to new markets, talent and, ultimately, cost



Members of the Private and Public Sectors at the BPO Summit



Members of the Private and Public Sectors at the BPO Summit

Services (ITES) and to establish the framework for an industry standard in preserving and continuing to develop the country's outsourcing industry. Through this partnership, OCO Global was contracted to develop key documents, such as a Comprehensive Outsourcing Strategy Action Plan and a BPO Stand-

ment, it is important that we look at investment facilitation and creating the enabling environment in terms of regulations and standards to allow the sector to continue to grow and to prosper," said Hon. Tracy Taegar, Minister of State in the Ministry of Economic Development, Petroleum, Invest-

ment, it is important that we look at investment facilitation and creating the enabling environment in terms of regulations and standards to allow the sector to continue to grow and to prosper," said Hon. Tracy Taegar, Minister of State in the Ministry of Economic Development, Petroleum, Invest-

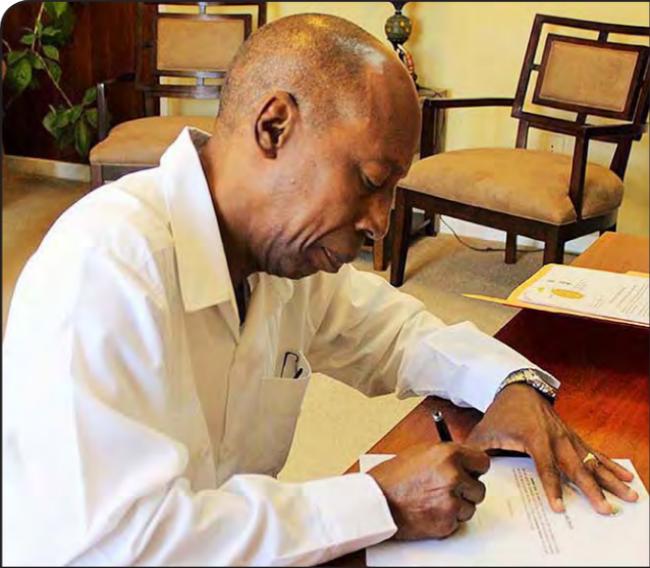
savings. The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry has specifically been recognized as a specialized "niche" area and priority industry for Belize's socio-economic growth by the Government of Belize (GOB) as well as the private sector.

(Information and photos from Mike Hernandez - BELTRAIDE)



Members of the Private and Public Sectors who attended Belize's First BPO Summit at the Fort George Hotel in Belize City on February 17, 2016

Swear-in of Ombudsman and Contractor General



Contractor General Godwin Arzu signing Oath



Ombudsman Lionel Arzu signing his Oath

In a brief ceremony held Monday, February 22, 2016 at Belize House in Belmopan, Mr. Lionel Arzu and Mr. Godwin Arzu were sworn in for their new terms as Ombudsman and Contractor General respectively, following the Prime Minister's announcement of their re-appointments at the Sitting of the House of Representatives on Friday January 22, 2016. Both men were joined by their families as they took the oath of allegiance before the Governor General, H.E. Sir Colville Young.

This is Mr. Godwin Arzu's third term as Contrac-

tor General. It is Mr. Lionel Arzu's second term as Ombudsman, he having held that position since January 2013.

The re-appointment of the Ombudsman had sparked some debate in the National Assembly upon the announcement

by the Prime Minister on January 22, 2016. The Opposition Leader at that time, Honourable Francis Fonseca, took objection to his re-appointment, remarking, "Our sense is, and it's certainly not personal at all, we believe Mr. Arzu is a decent man, but certainly our sense is that he does not enjoy as Ombudsman the level of trust and confidence (from the public) that his predecessors enjoyed."

Prime Minister Honourable Dean Barrow defended the decision, stating, "As far as we are able to determine, Mr. Arzu has discharged his duties vigorously and is well respected, not only at home, but abroad."



Re-appointed Ombudsman, Lionel Arzu and Governor General of Belize Sir Colville Young



Re-appointed Contractor General Godwin Arzu and Governor General of Belize Sir Colville Young

Vital Statistics discusses Vital Issues

The Vital Statistics Unit, which is responsible for registering births, deaths and marriages, held a meeting on Thursday February 18, 2016 to emphasize the importance of birth registration and to evaluate the registration system in Belize.

Registrar General Velda Flowers, explained, "This morning what is happening is the launching of this bottleneck analysis that was conducted by Miss Patricia Holness, a consultant from Jamaica. This effort came about as a result of the partnership we have with UNICEF and OAS in order to try and ascertain and address the issue of the 6% non-registration of persons born in Belize. Currently Belize has about 94-95% of all persons born in Belize registered and this effort was put in place to try and close that gap, that 6% gap that currently exists."

The consultant from Jamaica, Patricia Holness, em-

phasized, "It is very important that birth registration be taken seriously in any country. And, a mother, as you just said, bonds with her child; but then that child has to be a citizen. That child has to live in the country and reap the rewards of being a citizen. So the government of that country needs to know that this is a citizen for whom we must care and also to ensure that all that goes with citizenship will go to that child."

One recommendation to the Vital Statistics Unit is to digi-

tize its records and adopt a technologically advanced system. The Registrar General noted, "Many attempts have been made and efforts have been made to address that situation. We have introduced a new software system to accommodate the registration, the preparation of births and deaths and marriage certificates. The office itself has been renovated to make provisions for persons to access its services. We have changed the system in such a way that you can apply in the morning and collect the birth

certificate in the afternoon to accommodate and to avoid all the problems we've been having. One has to appreciate that the information that comes out of the Registry - birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates - are very vital and important information; and we have to take time to ensure that they are properly checked and that they are properly verified before we issue it, because the implications can be very serious and very devastating. What we try to do is to facilitate the public in an expeditious manner as we possibly can; and sometimes it may mean that we have to do further research in relation to a particular birth certificate or certificate that is being requested; and hence, that would consume some time and create a little bit of fuss where the public is concerned. But we aim to try and improve that situation."

The meeting was held at Biltmore Plaza Hotel, Belize City.



*Miss Patricia Holness
Consultant from Jamaica*



*Miss Velda Flowers
Belize's Registrar General*

CARICOM Development Fund in BELIZE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER DISCUSSES PROJECTS AND FUNCTIONS

When CARICOM Heads of Government meet, as they did in Belize two weeks ago, those meetings are always supplemented and supported by a number of sessions involving the technical experts from the regional body and the various member countries.

One of those persons who came to Belize for the Twenty-Seventh Intersessional Meeting was the executive head of the CARICOM Development Fund (CDF), which is funding a number of very important projects in Belize, including rehabilitation of the Phillip Goldson Highway and the Haulover Bridge.

Chief Executive Officer of the CDF, Mr. Rodinald Soomer, in interview with the local media, elaborated, "Belize happens to be the first country that met the requirements to access resources under the fund. We signed the first country assistance program with Belize towards the end of 2010 and we started activities

with Belize in early 2011. We are now towards the end of the program with Belize; we've approved a portfolio of projects totalling just over 6 Million US Dollars.

We are at a very high percentage execution on that program. In fact, now as we speak, we have some of the officers of the organization in Belize City and Belmopan working with our partners here to iron out any final glitches to ensure that we have full implementation of these projects, and we expect them to be fully implemented towards the end of 2017, but they are very, very far advanced now.

In terms of the programs with Belize, we have a 3 Million US Dollar line of funding with the Development Finance Corporation (DFC) which they then on-lend to small and medium enterprises. We have an allocation towards the rehabilitation and the expansion of the Phillip Goldson Highway. The specific component of that we'll be focusing on is the Haulover Bridge. We are partnering with the Carib-



Rodinald Soomer - CEO of the CARICOM Development Fund

bean Development Bank (CDB) in getting that project implemented. So our resources from the fund for Belize would go towards the bridge, getting the bridge restructured, rebuilt. So these are the two major elements of our program, but we've also assisted the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development at the time with improving the process of managing the public sector investment program."

Speaking generally about his role as CEO and the function of the CDF, Soomer explained,

"Well, we take our mandates from the conference of heads. Any major policy decisions that are to be made to establish a fund have to be done at the wider CARICOM level, so we work through the councils of CARICOM.

So it's always important for us to understand what priorities of the governments are; what are the major issues that they are grappling with at the policy level, economic and social issues so that our development program that we then roll out to the countries, fit that context. It is not disconnected from the economic and social realities and priorities that the countries are grappling with. So it is important that we be there to understand that broader context, but also to look for specific opportunities to partner with other agencies to help to meet the pressing economic and social needs of the region through our programs."

Mr. Soomer's working visit to Belize included a round of meetings with public and private sector officials in the country.

Helping 'Seenagers' to Live Longer

Workshop by the National Council on Aging

On Thursday, February 18, 2016, the National Council on Aging held a workshop in Belize City addressing issues affecting older persons throughout the country.

Speaking with the media at the opening, Executive Director of the council, Ix-Chel Poot, explained, "Some of the specific areas we are looking at today, we've talked about normal aging, we are looking at how to collaborate and how to get all the organizations together working as one and moving forward in one voice.

So there is a lot of planning that will be taking place. We will be looking at the situation of older persons across Belize. So that all the branches are up to date and abreast of what's happening with older persons



Ix-Chel Poot, Executive Director National Council On Aging

and the population that they are serving. They are looking at things like the Older Persons' Act; how do we maintain the safety of our older persons and the care of our older persons. Last year, the National Council on Aging along with BTEC had a care-givers training here in Belize. We've been working with the YWCA, having care-givers'



Maria Elena Sylvestre Patroness of HelpAge Belize

training in Belmopan. So we are looking at building a capacity, a resource of persons who are able to be in the community to work with older persons in such a way."

Well represented at that workshop was HelpAge Belize, which has a nationwide network serving the elderly, and was also holding its own two-day workshop for board mem-

bers of its nine branches from around the country in order to equip them with better skills to execute their function. Patroness of HelpAge, Maria Elena Sylvestre, elaborated on the role and reach of the organization:

"HelpAge has branches in all the districts and in two villages, Hopkins and Seine Bight. And, in all the country, we have day-care centers and we have home visits, meals on wheels, medical clinics. We also have two residential homes, the Sister Cecilia Home and the Octavia Waight Center. So the services of HelpAge are holistic; it goes across the board, and we are part of the communities in which we live."

The workshop organized by the National Council on Aging, was held at the Inspiration Center in Belize City.

Preventing Crimes Against Women

HANDING OVER OF EQUIPMENT TO STRENGTHEN DATA PRODUCING UNITS



Hon. A. Martinez, Martha Rhys, Domestic Violence Unit, Sheila Roseau (UNFPA)



Hon. A. Martinez; Mark Antrobus, Social Planner & Sheila Roseau (UNFPA)



Hon. A. Martinez; Tisa Grant, Health Planner & Sheila Roseau of (UNFPA)

The Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation, in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), provided data gathering equipment valued at approximately BZ\$184,000.00 to relevant government departments, including the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of National Security.

The official handing over of the equipment took place today, February 19, 2016 at the Raccoon Street Police Station

in Belize City. The purpose of the equipment is to strengthen the capacity of those government units in charge of collecting and analysing data on violence against women and human trafficking and ensure improved access to reliable data for programme planning and decision-making in this area.

The hand-over of equipment takes place under the BA1 Project: Prevention of Violence Against Women, Human Trafficking and Femicide in Belize that falls under the Central American Security Strategy

(ESCA,) which seeks to address at local, national and regional levels, risk factors of violence and protection mechanisms, focusing on violence affecting youth, armed violence, gender-based violence, smuggling of migrants and trafficking, drug use, and climate change. Presenters at the handing-over ceremony were: Hon. Anthony Martinez, Minister of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation; Ms. Judith Alpuche, Chief Executive Officer in the MHDSTPA, Chair of the National Management

Commission of the ESCA project; Ms. Sheila Roseau, Sub-Regional Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Receiving on behalf of Government Ministries were: Ms. Tisa Grant, Health Planner – Gender Focal Point, Ministry of Health; Mr. Mark Antrobus, Social Planner, Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation; and Ms. Martha Rhys, Non-Commissioned Officer (in charge of Domestic Violence Unit), Belize Police Department, Ministry of National Security.

BELIZE AND GUATEMALA

Sarstoon Expedition Sparks Mixed Reaction

Continued from Page 1

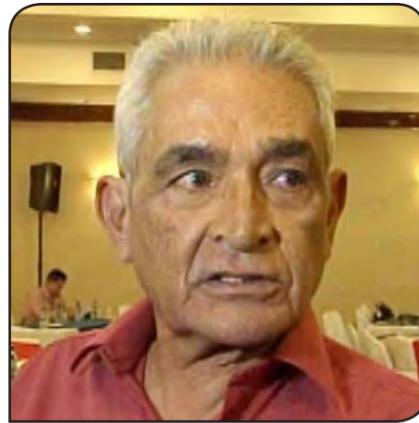
notes to try to get them not to repeat it, and then if it continues to be repeated, then it has to be addressed in these multinational forums like the OAS and the UN.”

The Opposition People's United Party condemned the actions by the Guatemalan Military, calling on the Belize Government to register a strong protest. Former Foreign Minister Eamon Courtenay explained, “It seems to us, based on what we have been made to understand, that Guatemalan naval vessels were in Belizean territorial waters, which constitutes a grave violation of our national sovereignty. Secondly, for Belizeans not to be allowed to go into the Sarstoon River on our side of the border is again a direct attack on our territorial integrity and a violation of International Law. So we, in the very strongest terms, condemn the actions by the Guatemalan military, the Guatemalan navy, and we call on the government to take appropriate actions. We have called on our Ambassador to be recalled from Guatemala for consultations, which is a very clear signal to the Guatemalans that we find this to be a very grave



Eamon Courtenay

infraction. We also believe that it is important that a meeting be held at the Ministerial level at the Organization of American States in order to reduce tensions. Obviously the objective will be to have confidence building measures that would be applicable at the Sarstoon in order to avoid any incident like this in the future. That meeting would have to be premised on the respect of Guatemala for Belize's borders and there should be absolutely no mistake about that. We believe that the government needs to underline, in the very clearest possible terms and very strongest way, our national sovereignty, our territorial integrity, and to make known not only to Guatemala but to our friends



Assad Shoman

that Guatemala has recently adopted a course that is designed to provoke an international incident. The Government ought to take very strong action, very serious action; and the People's United Party has said in our release that we are prepared to join a national effort in this regard.”

In a recent Law Conference, former Foreign Minister Assad Shoman offered pertinent insight and advice, remarking, “I think we need to take back the agenda, take back the initiative. I think for the last few years, Guatemala has been pushing the envelope. They have been saying what we should do and what we shouldn't do. They have been saying we should go to referendum, we can't go to referendum,

they keep postponing dates, and then they come up with the idea of let's get a little more cozy, sign agreements between ourselves...I think we need to take back the initiative and decide ourselves what we're going to do to push this thing forward and finally end that claim...The Sarstoon is just the tip of the iceberg of what can happen if we don't have an international presence. The O.A.S office is there as a result of the facilitation process. The O.A.S office will not stay there if they don't see an end to this thing, and they are running out of funding and the funding comes from international bodies and governments that have faith that this thing is going somewhere. If they feel that it is going nowhere, either because of Guatemala or Belize's position, then we will lose that presence.”

BTV Leader Wil Maheia concluded, “have absolutely no dislike for my neighbors. But my neighbors have got to play by the rules. They have got to respect our borders. My neighbor who lives next to me, I like him, but he cannot come into my yard and cut down what tree he wants. That is the bottom-line.”

Belize Gets Down To Business

Minister Contreras Talks Trade Opportunities With SoFla entrepreneurs

BELTRAIDE Representative Hero Balani, OESBD Economic Development Specialist Paola Isaac Baraya and Belizean Minister of International Trade Erwin Contreras.

Belize was at the top of the business agenda this week, as Belizean Minister of International Trade Erwin Contreras stopped by at the Lauderdale Lakes Educational and Cultural Center for the “Doing Business in Belize” workshop.

During a special meet and greet session with workshop attendees, the Minister outlined the nation’s many commercial and trading opportunities in renewable energy, agro-processing, tourism, and food and beverage production and packaging. The Minister also encouraged participants



(L-R) Beltraide Representative Hero Balani, OESBD Economic Development Specialist Paola Isaac Baraya and Belizean Minister of International Trade Hon. Erwin Contreras

to attend the upcoming trade mission, hosted by the Miramar based Belize American Chamber of Commerce of Florida.

The trade workshop, hosted by the Broward County Office of Economic and Small

Business Development (OESBD), is part of a year-long series highlighting trading opportunities with many key partners of South Florida’s economy. Representative Hero Balani from the Belize Trade and Investment

Development Service (Beltraide) was on hand to update participants on the latest initiatives. He highlighted the country’s unique and respected reputation in the rapidly expanding fair trade and eco-label market.

A spotlight was also shone on the country’s competitive investment incentives. This includes an export processing zone, offering multiple tax exemptions, including full import and export duty exemptions.

The Fiscal Incentives Program also encourages investments in Belize through duty exemptions and tax holidays, providing both current and new investors with the legal and fiscal framework to stimulate productive economic activities.

(REPRINTED FROM CARIBBEAN NATIONAL WEEKLY.COM)

Elevating & Upgrading Bomba Access Road

Belize Rural North Area Representative and NEMO Minister at Work

As Area Representative for Belize Rural North and Minister of National Emergency Management, Hon. Edmond Castro has undertaken a flood mitigation project in the Maskall-Bomba area.

The project entails the elevation of the access road from Maskall to Bomba village with a number of cement culverts across the ‘Quashy Banner’ Creek. The area had been plagued by seasonal flooding which severely affects accessibility to and from Bomba, thereby



One of the new Culverts installed on the Bomba Access Road

inconveniencing residents of the village and farmers in the general area. The project is being funded with monies secured by

Hon. Edmond Castro through the Government of Belize. It is well underway and should be completed in a couple weeks.

The residents and farmers of the area are happy for the project and are expressing tremendous gratitude to their Area Representative, Hon. Castro, and to Prime Minister Hon. Dean Barrow for making the funds available to improve and transform their community and lives. Honorable Edmond Castro says he and the government intend to carry out several similar projects throughout the constituency prior to the start of the next Hurricane Season on June 1, 2016 to mitigate flooding which occurs on an annual basis.



Honourable Edmond Castro Inspecting a new culvert installed



Honourable Castro Inspecting work on elevated Bomba Access Road



CHAN PINE RIDGE AGRI-CULTURE & TRADE FAIR 2016

■ SATURDAY MARCH 5TH

11:00 am - Under 15 Female/
Male Marathon
5:00 pm - Domino Competition

■ SUNDAY MARCH 6TH

9:00 am - Gates Open
11:00 am - Official Ceremonies

CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS

1. TRADITIONAL MESTIZO PRESENTATIONS

Sugar City Artisans Dance Group
Masewal Dance Group - Yo Creek Village
Kich Pan Shan - Palmar Village
Raices Yucatecas Retoños Beliceños - Corozal

2. CUBAN DANCERS

Daryl Caballero Ramos
Karina Marrero Marcane

3. CCC MARCHING BAND

GAMES

1. Friendly Championship Football Game
Deportivo Pasuco vs Progreso
2. Under 15 Finals - Male/Female
3. Volleyball Competition
4. Domino Competition

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE Livestock

DISPLAYS

K-9 UNIT, COMMUNITY POLICING BOOTH,
INFORMATIONAL BOOTHS, BFLA, HIV,
SUGAR CITY ARTISANS GROUP

ENTERTAINMENT

Youth Connection Band, Continental Cat, Captain Roby,
Morelia Pop, OZZIE the Clown, Go Carts, Fireworks Displays

MC
DILLON JONES

COLLABORATORS

CHAN PINE RIDGE VILLAGE COUNCIL, NICH, MINISTER ELODIO ARAGON JR, MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT,
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, BOWEN AND BOWEN, CARIBBEAN RUMS, GRACE KENEDY, CARIB BEVERAGES,
NEW RIVER ENTERPRISE, JOAQUINS CRUSH ICE, MR. CELIZ GLASS SHOP, UNIVERSAL RADIO, HOTEL DE LA FUENTE, SCRS,
JB & SONS, CAMPOS MEAT SHOP, MARTIN STEEL SUPPLIES, ATLANTIC BANK, ASR/BSI, SIRD!



LOTS TO
EAT & DRINK

**ORANGE WALK EAST REPRESENTATIVE & MINISTER OF STATE FOR
YOUTH, SPORTS & CULTURE HON. ELODIO ARAGON WISHES
EVERYONE A HAPPY BENEFACTORS' DAY & INVITES ALL TO
ATTEND CHAN PINE RIDGE AGRI-CULTURE & TRADE FAIR 2016**