

The Belize Network of NGOs NEWSLETTER

2019 UPDATE

January 2020

Issue #3

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From the BNN Chairman

by Froyla Tzalam (SATIIM)

I ended 2018 so hopeful for 2019 but I am overwhelmed by the beginning of this new decade as global scale of events are truly epic. Climate change is here and we can see its impact in the unprecedented bush fires in Australia with catastrophic toll on humans and wildlife alike, and the fake snow that had to be trucked in the winter in Russia. In Belize, our farmers faced financial ruin in the face of drought and our schools next to the New River had to be closed as communities suffered from the impact of a slow moving river. Politically, we are seemingly at the brink of more wars. Make no mistake. At a time when we need more tolerance for inclusiveness and respecting human rights, walls both imagined and real are going up.

With experience comes confidence. That is clearly evident in the communication shared within BNN and outside of it. We discussed at great length Guatemala's territorial claim to Belize and respectfully came to a consensus on how we would participate in the ICJ Referendum. Another good result of this activity was that BNN partnered with the private sector on this nationally important issue demonstrating effective collaboration.

So have we achieved our strategic goals? I would say not in the manner we expected but in unforeseen forms. We have much to do as there have been challenges. For instance, we have not been able to forge ahead with UNCAC implementation despite a robust beginning. Corruption continues to be normalized. So we must review and re-strategize our engagement. Behavioural change is generational and we should not be disheartened but use the result as a learning tool.

I note that while we have more members this year, we also lost some due to some NGOs not being in good standing. So the need identified by our network clearly exists and we must try once more to address it this year. We signed another MOU in October 2019 with another civil society partner for support to the BNN as we could not move ahead with a previous MOU signed in 2018. We are hopeful that we will be successful this time. We will share the work plan as soon as we can. (Continued on page 2)



From the NGO Senator by Osmany Salas

Ten Senate meetings were held in 2019. Of these meetings, I attended nine. Abel Vargas (Hand in Hand Ministries) represented the NGO community at the 21st May 2019 session since I was out of the country at the time.

There have been at least three instances since the appointment of the NGO Senator in January 2017 that the Senate has demonstrated that it can serve as an effective check on the power of Government: 1) when the PACT (Amendment) Bill was voted down on 27th March 2017, 2) when the Contractor General Motion for Re-Appointment was pulled on 13th December 2017, and 3) when the Joshua Perdomo Write-Off Motion was rejected on 9th October 2019.

The Social Partners – the business community, the trade unions, the churches and the NGOs – led the opposition to the Bill and Motions in each of those three instances for well stated reasons. The support of the three Opposition Senators assured that in those three instances Government would not have its way. If the 13th Senate seat had not been in place, all Bills and Motions, whether flawed or not, tabled at the Senate would automatically sail through irrespective of the views of the non-Government Senators. Now that the Government Senators are no longer in the majority, the Government can no longer assume that it will always have its way. This fact should hopefully improve the quality of the legislative process.

The Senate cannot block Money Bills (such as the PACT Amendment) and can only slow down all other Bills for up to 6 months. However, as per Section 61A(2) of the Constitution, the Senate does have various important powers and functions, among others:

- Authorizing the ratification of any treaty by the Government of Belize;
- Approving the appointment of the Contractor General, the Ombudsman, a member of the Elections and Boundaries Commission and a member of the Integrity Commission;

- Instituting and conducting enquiries and investigations on any matter of public interest or importance, including inquiries into mismanagement or corruption by persons in the central government or public statutory bodies;
- Requiring the attendance before it of the Auditor General, the Contractor General or Ombudsman generally, in relation to the discharge of their duties and the execution of their functions;
- Requiring the attendance before it or any Committee of the Senate, any Chief Executive Officer in a Government Ministry, or of any Minister of Government.

The Senate therefore has a very important role to play in Belize's democracy. Its Constitutional role as the Upper Chamber of the National Assembly means that it must serve as the final check on Government's power to ensure that our democracy is not weakened.

It is worth noting that the role of the Social Partners in the Senate is not to oppose Government's every move. To the contrary, Social Partner Senators have on several occasions supported Bills and Motions that have been considered important and necessary. For example, I voted in support of the Belize Territorial Dispute Referendum Act which paved the way for the ICJ Referendum to be held.

It is therefore important for NGOs, as well as the other Social Partners, to be represented at the Senate to ensure that the legislative process considers the interests of civil society.

From the BNN Chairman (cont'd from page 1)

At the end of 2019, BNN participated in a country scenario building workshop and one of the questions asked was, "What is the plan if Belize loses the ICJ case?" "Unthinkable!" was the answer but we need a plan nonetheless. Burying our heads in the proverbial sand does not solve problems. Climate change continues to be denied in some quarters despite what is going on globally. Belize cannot afford to pander to easy money and continue to make questionable decisions on our natural resources. As has often proved to be the case, the most vulnerable people to disasters are the poorest and marginalized. As members of civil society, we have a duty to protect our people and one of the best ways to do so is always plan ahead; to act locally but think globally.

On behalf of the BNN Steering Committee, thank you for your hard work and vision and know that you have a network behind you. B'otik.

Photo:

Top (from L to R): Senator Elena Smith (Trade Unions), Senator Mark Lizarraga (Business Community), Jackie Castillo (Guest), Senator Osmany Salas, (NGOs) and Senator Ashley Rocke (Churches)



CPA Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures

The National Assembly of Belize participated in a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures from 24th to 30th April 2019. The objective of the self-assessment exercise was to enable Belize's parliament to measure its parliamentary effectiveness, assist in leveraging reforms and effect positive change through promoting enhanced transparency and developing democratic legislatures.

Mr. Anthony Staddon, Benchmarks Consultant from the CPA Secretariat, UK Branch, and Ms. Meenakshi Dhar, CPA Project Consultant, conducted a series of assessment exercises with the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate along with Members from the House of Representatives and the Senate. The CPA representatives met with Senators Osmany Salas and Elena Smith on 29th April 2019.

The Secretary-General of the CPA, Mr. Akbar Khan, submitted a Draft Report of the Self-Assessment of the Parliament of Belize produced by the CPA Consultants to the Speaker of the House in August 2019 for review and consideration. Senator Salas submitted his comments as requested by the Speaker. The final report of the Self-Assessment has not been submitted.

The Benchmarks exercise focused on the following areas: Organization, Functions and Value of the Legislature, as well as recommended next steps. The Draft Report recommended six areas of priority for reform, following consideration of this self-assessment, including: a) Review of the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives and the Senate to establish whether the rules for the conduct of the business remain relevant and whether changes need to be considered; and b) Consider Parliaments oversight function and the number and roles of Committees based on the resources available and prioritizing the Public Accounts Committee.

Photo:

Top (from L to R): Anthony Staddon (CPA-UK), Senator Elena Smith, Senator Osmany Salas, and Meenakshi Dhar (CPA) (29th April 2019)

NGO Senator writes to Senate President

NGO Senator Osmany Salas wrote to the President of the Senate on 12th December 2018 requesting that the Standing Orders Committee be appointed at the earliest possible time. The Clerk of the National Assembly responded on behalf of the President on 20th December 2018 indicating that the President would be addressing the request early in 2019. See both letters below.

Senator Salas subsequently wrote to the new President of the Senate on 25th July 2019 noting that the committee had not been appointed and that the need for an urgent review of the Senate Standing Orders was confirmed during the CPA Benchmarks self-assessment. The Standing Orders Committee had still not been appointed as of 31st December 2019.

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12th December 2018

President
 Hon. Lee Mark Chang
 Senate of Belize
 National Assembly Building
 Belmopan, Belize

Mr President,

I hereby respectfully request, pursuant to Standing Orders 64 and 65, that the Standing Orders Committee be appointed at the earliest possible time. I note that both you and the Clerk of the National Assembly have confirmed that such committee has not been appointed.

After serving in the Senate for almost two years, I have seen the need to improve, update and/or clarify the Standing Orders of the Senate.

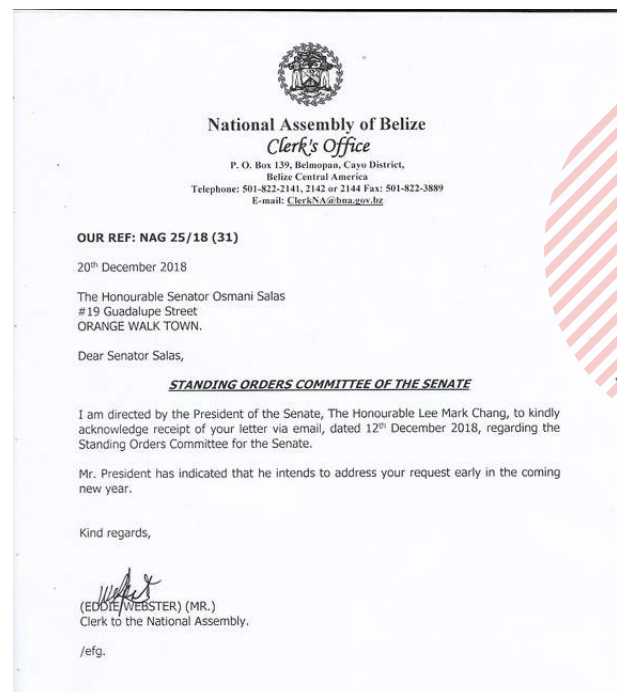
Standing Order 64(2) empowers you to appoint the Committee and Standing Order 65(1) specifies the composition of the Committee. With respect, I express my willingness to serve on the Committee, once it has been appointed.

I thank you in advance for your urgent attention to my request.

Sincerely,

Osmany Salas
 Senator

cc. Members of the Senate
 Clerk, National Assembly





Launching of the 1st BPAHM Chapter

By invitation of the Honorable Speaker of the House of Representatives, Senator Osmany Salas joined efforts to launch the first Chapter of the Belize Parliamentary Alliance against Hunger and Malnutrition (BPAHM).

This alliance seeks to support national efforts to eradicate hunger and malnutrition through the formulation of effective legislation and public policies, sensitization and alliances with civil society, academia, international organizations, and others.

A presentation on the Belize Chapter of the BPAHM was conducted on 12th June 2019 in the Committee Room of the National Assembly Building in Belmopan. The parliamentarians in attendance were: Hon. Laura Tucker-Longsworth, Madam Chair and Speaker of the House; Hon. Patrick Faber - Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Culture, Youth & Sports; Hon. Jose Mai; Hon. Orlando Habet; Senator Valerie Woods; and Senator Osmany Salas.

Members of the BPAHM gathered on the 8th November 2019 at the Marion Jones Conference Room in Belize City for a forum on Food and Nutrition Security for a Healthy Belize. The Coordinator for the Parliamentary Front against Hunger for the Caribbean, Hon. Hamlet Melo, shared with the BPAHM members the law on sovereignty and food and nutrition security for the Dominican Republic. Mr. Byron Gonzalez from the Ministry of Education in Guatemala shared the experiences of the implementation of sustainable school feeding programmes in San Marcos, Guatemala. The forum was also attended by the Speaker of the House who facilitated a discussion on the policies and legislation to advance and achieve the objectives of BPAHM for the development of its work plan and communication plan.

Pride Event hosted by the U.S. Embassy

U.S. Chargé d’Affaires, Keith Gilges, honored LGBTI Pride Month by holding a special event on 20th June 2019 at the US Chief of Mission Residence in Belmopan. Senator Osmany Salas was in attendance.

Derricia Jael (Our Circle) delivered the Keynote Address at the event. In her remarks, she expressed appreciation to Senator Valerie Woods, Ministry of Human Development CEO Ms. Judith Alpuche, and numerous other key influential forces who have supported human rights (including LGBTI+ rights) and anti-discrimination efforts in Belize.

She also acknowledged the support of NGO Senator Osmany Salas for being willing to assist in the production of Our Circle's LGBTI+ Rights Video.

"There is no need for an LGBT rights... There is no need for any rights but HUMAN RIGHTS!"

-- Derricia Jael (Our Circle)

She concluded her remarks by saying: "Let us not forget -- Anti-Discrimination Policies and Legislation aren't created only for LGBT persons and other vulnerable populations. Discrimination affects every single one of us, one way or the other. Therefore, we all have a personal responsibility to create a Belize where all Belizeans can flourish, all Belizeans are free and safe. I end by reminding you of the words of the great Martin Luther King Jr - 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.'"



Photos:

Top: Parliamentarians and Government officials at presentation of Belize Chapter of BPAHM (July 12, 2019)

Bottom: Senator Valerie Woods, Senator Osmany Salas and Derricia Jael (Our Circle) with other invited guests at the LGBTI+ Pride Event (June 20, 2019)



ICJ and the Referendum

by Senator Osmany Salas

As part of BNN's efforts to spread awareness about Guatemala's claim and the 8th May 2019 Referendum, an educational session was hosted on 20th February 2019 at the University of the West Indies Open Campus in Belize City.

This session was organized exclusively for BNN members. The following distinguished persons made presentations:

- Ambassador Dylan Vernon -- "The Road to Referendum 2019".
- George Myvett, Belize Peace Movement representative -- "Why we should vote No".
- Assad Shoman, Citizens for the Defence of Sovereignty -- "Why we should vote Yes".

The 30-minute presentations were followed by a lively one-hour Questions and Answers segment.

Board and Staff members of various NGOs attended the educational session, including the Belize Audubon Society, Belize Tourism Industry Association, Ecology Project International, Hand in Hand Ministries, Haven House, HelpAge Belize, National Garifuna Council, Oceana-Belize, Our Circle, RET International, Scouts Association, Southern Environmental Association, Turneffe Atoll Trust, and the Belize Visionary Foundation of Baseball and Softball.

Photos:

Top: BNN's ICJ educational session at the UWI Open Campus, Belize City (February 20, 2019)

Bottom: Training of NGO representatives to serve as Polling and Counting Monitors at the Inspirational Center, Belize City (March 1, 2019)

CSO Representatives trained to serve as Referendum Monitors

The Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) and Belize Network of NGOs (BNN) pooled their respective resources to provide Polling and Counting Monitors for the 8th May 2019 ICJ Referendum, i.e., the question of whether or not Belize should take the Guatemalan Territorial claim to the International Court of Justice.

This effort by the BCCI and BNN follows an invitation extended by the Election and Boundaries Department (EBD) to the organizations represented in the National Assembly to appoint volunteers to serve as monitors at the 344 polling and counting stations throughout the country.

The BCCI provided financial and in-kind support while the BNN contributed the necessary human resources required for the effort.

"Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of every democracy."

-- Elections & Boundaries Department

As a result, a total of 72 Monitors worked on Referendum Day in 22 electoral divisions across the country. These Monitors included representatives from BCVI, BELPO, BTIA, HelpAge, Humana, National Garifuna Council, SATIIM, Scouts and TIDE.

The Monitors were hosted by the EBD at a training session on 1st March 2019. Training topics included: Referendum Monitors appointment and roles, Referendum Management Rules, Flow Chart of Voting Procedures, and many other relevant topics.



Representation on Committees



Belize City Council Municipal Public Accounts Committee: In May 2019, Derricia Jael (Our Circle) was appointed as BNN's representative on a 5-person committee formed by the Belize City Council to act as an oversight committee made up of membership from the Belize City Council (CITCO), the BNN, the National Trade Union Congress of Belize, the Belize Chambers of Commerce & Industry, and the Belize Council of Churches. No meetings of the committee were held for 2019. A correspondence by CITCO's representative, Rafael Sosa, on 31st December 2019, stated that the Belize Council of Churches has not appointed its representative. The MPAC will convene a preliminary meeting in early 2020 with the four representatives (inclusive of CITCO's representative). No date has been set as yet.



Belize Social Investment Fund Board (BSIF): BNN's representative, Andrew "Mick" Castillo (NGC), attended one meeting of the BSIF Board since his appointment in November 2019. Mr. Castillo was introduced as the newest BSIF Board member on 6th December 2019 when he attended his first Board meeting. After getting an overview from the Board Chairman, Ms. Yvonne Hyde (CEO, Ministry of

Economic Development), Board operations for November 2019 and the accumulation from April-November 2019 were reviewed. Board Papers regarding various projects were also reviewed. A presentation about a school project that is underway was also made. Andre Carrillo (BERT) represented BNN on the BSIF Board up to November 2019.



National Council for Education (NCE): The inaugural meeting for the NCE was held on 27th November 2019. Members were inducted at this meeting. The members received a presentation about the roles and functions of NCE members, presented by Mr. Delvitt Samuels, Crown Counsel/Legal Officer. Elections were held for key positions, namely Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer. BNN's representative, Dr. Sharmayne Saunders (Haven House) was nominated for Chairman and she accepted nominations. At the end of elections, Dr. Saunders was elected to the post of Treasurer.

A request was made for a special meeting of the NCE to review the draft amendment regarding Christmas break for schools. At the direction of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, the special meeting was held on 9th December 2019 along with the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council, which included a consultation for two major amendments to the Education Rules.

BNN's representative on the NCE, Dr. Sharmayne Saunders, is concerned that the consultations are rushed, and notes that the Belize National Teachers Union is also very concerned. The Minister of Education is therefore urged to give careful consideration to the recommendations of the key education sector stakeholders.

Photos:

Top Left: Derricia Jael (Our Circle)

Above Right: Dr. Sharmayne Saunders (Haven House)

Bottom: Andrew "Mick" Castillo (National Garifuna Council)

Representation on Committees (continued)



REDD+ Technical Expert Group (TEG): An inaugural meeting of the TEG was held on 6th September 2019 where an overview of the REDD+ Project was presented. This update included the different components of the project: Component 1 - Readiness activities; Component 2 - REDD+ Strategy; Component 3 - Development of National Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL); Component 4 - Establishment of National Forest Monitoring and Safeguards System; Component 5 - Monitoring and Evaluation; Organogram of REDD+ Readiness project; and the upcoming and continuing activities. Valdemar Andrade (TASA) represents BNN on the REDD+ TEG.

The REDD+ Project will support the measures identified in the Second National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Such measures, part of the five REDD+ activities that can be considered for a REDD+ Strategy for Belize, includes the introduction of forest management plans, the promotion of agroforestry and a comprehensive REDD+ program, the restoration of abandoned agricultural lands, the establishment and maintenance of protected areas, the development of a national forest fire response team, among others.

A workshop was held on 23rd October 2019 in order to update the Technical Expert Group on the entire REDD+ Process. The main objective of the process was to build the capacity of the TEG and bring everyone up to date on the RED+ process.

Belize is a small country with relatively minor contributions to global greenhouse gas emissions and has limited capacity to contribute to mitigation of global climate change. However, Belize is committed to achieving the ultimate objective of the Convention and supports the even more ambitious target to limit the increase in global average temperature to 1.5 °C, compared to pre-industrial levels.



University of Belize Board of Trustees: Dr. Oxaku Tehu Kax'Oxo II (Tropical Rainforest Institute of Belize) was appointed on 3rd September 2019 by the Minister of Education to be BNN's representative on the University of Belize (UB) Board of Trustees for a period of three (3) years. Dr. Kax'Oxo II was born in Washington DC and is a Belizean citizen. His father is from Sierra Leone and his mother is a Cayetano from Stann Creek. He lives in Cristo Rey, Cayo.

The main functions of the UB Board of Trustees include: 1) defining and establishing policies for the efficient management, maintenance, and development of the University consistent with its mission; 2) establishing policies which will promote the educational programs of the University, among other functions.



Belize 11th European Development (EDF) Health Support Programme: This is a four year project funded by the European Union, implemented by the Ministry of Health with technical assistance and support from PAHO. This project commenced in 2019.

Joan Musa (BCVI) represents the BNN on the Project Steering Committee. (Continued on next page)

Photos:
Top Left: Valdemar Andrade (TASA)
Above Right: Dr. Oxaku Tehu Kax'Oxo II (Tropical Rainforest Institute of Belize)
Bottom: Joan Musa (BCVI)

Representation on Committees (continued)

EDF Health Support Programme (continued):

One of the main objectives is the retrofitting of three regional hospitals and three community hospitals based on the smart hospital concept and climate-disaster resilience. Assessments have taken place and requests for proposals have been put out for design and contract work. Project personnel have been hired, equipment and vehicles purchased and evaluation visits made.

Other activities in the project include:

- Health system reorganization - a workshop held and evaluation of 24 health facilities made;
- Refurbishment of Central Medical Laboratory - design to be completed in 2020;
- Development of a Multi-Hazard Preparedness and Response Plan and training of health staff - first training sessions held and will be repeated for the next three years;
- Development of an inter-sectoral approach for the management of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) to be integrated into the health service delivery network - this will involve the reactivation of the Belize National Commission on NCDs that will guide the implementation of a cancer plan, obesity plan tobacco bill and alcohol policy.

This is a wide ranging and ambitious project but has the necessary resources to enable it to make a much-needed impact on the Belizean Health System.



The National Gender & Gender Based Violence Committee (NGGBVC): Ivorine Bulwer (HelpAge) represents the BNN on this committee.

Following is an update on three committee initiatives.

The **Spotlight Initiative** is a partnership between the United Nations and the European Union to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

It galvanizes political commitment at the highest levels and contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and more specifically SDG 5 on Gender Equality. CARICOM countries including Belize will focus on Family Violence. Belize will receive €3 million of which 70% will be disbursed in the first phase (2 years). 50% of the funds will be used to strengthen civil society.

The final draft **National 25+ Beijing Report** was submitted to the CEO in the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation & Poverty Alleviation. The report outlines Belize’s commitment to the Beijing Declaration and elaborated on the country’s progress in some of the critical areas such as: 1) Education and training of women, 2) Women and health, 3) Addressing the structural issues that enable violence against women, 4) Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, and 5) Women and poverty.

The **16 Days of Activism** commenced on 25th November and concluded on 10th December 2019. The 2019 theme was: “From Awareness to Accountability; Unmasking the Many Faces of Violence.” The campaign sought to galvanize support in an effort to raise awareness and collective action to end violence against women and girls. It is important for the NGGBVC to collaborate with the National Women’s Commission in advocating for the implementation of key national and international commitments.



The National Sargassum Task Force (NSTF): The NSTF has worked on putting in place mitigation and adaptation measures to address the impacts of sargassum on four key tourism destinations: San Pedro, Caye Caulker, Hopkins and Placencia. Celso Cawich (Projects Abroad) and Alex Anderson (TASA) represent the BNN on the Task Force. (Continued on next page)

Photos:

Left: Ivorine Bulwer (HelpAge Belize) sits on the NGGBVC.

Right: Celso Cawich (Projects Abroad - Left) and Alex Anderson (Turneffe Atoll Trust - Right) sit on the National Sargassum Task Force.

Representation on Committees (continued)

National Sargassum Task Force (continued):

The two main areas of focus for the work carried out in 2019 were: 1) The immediate cleanup of Sargassum from beaches in these destinations, made possible through Government funding approved by Cabinet (2% Hotel Tax exemption); 2) The development of a framework that incorporated the selection of various equipment to reduce environmental impacts from beach cleanup as well as preventative equipment to protect beaches from Sargassum buildup, i.e., installation of booms for pilot testing in San Pedro.

Thus far over 299 properties have benefited from the Hotel Tax Relief, and an additional 10 properties from the four tourism destination areas are taking advantage of the Duty Exemption program for sargassum management equipment. Below is a brief synopsis of what has been done in 2019 and the way forward for 2020.

Main accomplishments in 2019:

- Forecasting and monitoring system has been set up with Meteorology Office and the Ministry of Tourism and with the support of Maya Airlines
- Cabinet Paper to secure additional support to private sector tourism stakeholders (2% hotel tax exemption, duty exemption on machine/equipment, and financial support to cleaning efforts in public beach areas)
- Regular and productive meetings

No containment booms have been purchased by the NSTF as yet, since experience from counterparts in Mexico has shown very little to no success with these equipment. A total of \$124,875 was provided in assistance which resulted in the removal of 75,908 cu ft. of Sargassum from the 4 tourism destinations during the period of February to July 2019. Further assistance was provided up to the month of September 2019. The level of assistance has not been disclosed as yet.

NSTF Goals for 2020:

- Complete National Sargassum Management Plan
- Suitable budget
- More data and research on impacts of sargassum
- Efficient methods to manage sargassum

Photos:

Top: Dr. Sharmayne Saunders (Haven House - Left) and Susan Ferguson (BERT - Right)



National Assessment Team (NAT): The Enhanced Country Poverty Assessment (ECPA) National Assessment Team has engaged in several training (2 to 3 day working forums) initiatives for the members. Training has been geared towards enhanced capacity to conduct the Country Poverty Assessment. NAT has now officially identified several subcommittees to carry out the major Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) survey.

There have been many meetings (follow-up discussions and to make decisions) on the following: Regarding an MPI in the census, use of Household Expenditure Survey to construct revised economic poverty lines, and start the work on planning the actual survey. Timelines have been established for deliverables.

A Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) Training took place from 11th-18th November 2019, with a day of fieldwork on 16th November 2019. The training was conducted by an experienced development professional and a sociologist.

The five components of the ECPA are: 1) Macro Social and Economic Analysis, 2) Survey of Living Conditions (SLC), 3) Participatory Poverty Assessment, 4) Poverty and Vulnerability Mapping, and 5) Institutional Assessment.

The National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL) will facilitate a workshop on MPI and Economic Poverty either at the end of January or early February 2020. The NAT had agreed to engage Ms. Elizabeth Talbert on a discussion of how the PPA and SLC can better inform each other. With elections scheduled for 2020, it was preferred that focus be placed on the MPI consultation within the first quarter of 2020 and a full PPA exercise carried out in 2021.

BNN is represented on the NAT by Dr. Sharmayne Saunders (Haven House) and Susan Ferguson (BERT).



UNCAC Update

In December 2016, the Government of Belize (GOB) signed the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), albeit after much pressure from the Belize National Teachers Union and the business community. After the signing of the convention, there was a flurry of activities steered by an UNCAC Project Board in 2017 and part of 2018. Most of the activities during this period were financed via grants from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the U.S. Embassy's CARSI initiative. The leadership at UNDP during that time also played a critical role in ensuring that project activities would move forward.

Since the change of leadership at UNDP in August 2018, and since the departure of the previous Solicitor General, very little has advanced.

In July 2019, the civil society organization (CSO) representatives on the UNCAC Project Board -- which includes Senator Osmany Salas (BNN) -- wrote to the UNCAC Focal Point (the Attorney General) requesting that a plan of action be formulated to restore confidence in Belize's administration of the UNCAC implementation process. Even though the CSO representatives sent several reminders to the Focal Point, no response has been received.

The last official meeting of the UNCAC Project Board was on 6th February 2019. Targets set at that meeting have had little to no follow up, and there has been little communication with the Board. Progress on the ground has lost its positive momentum since the beginning of this calendar year (2019). This year's (2019) funding completion date was on December 2019. GOB has not provided additional funding support which puts the UNCAC implementation process in peril. There were no budgetary allocations for UNCAC implementation in the National Budget for the Attorney General's Ministry for Fiscal Year 2019-2020.

At this critical juncture, Government should have already been working on discussing and analyzing a slew of anti-corruption legislation and, where needed, the strengthening of existing legislation. If this had been occurring by the last quarter of 2019, Belize would go through the process of writing and updating the relevant anti-corruption laws with a push for Cabinet approval in the second quarter of 2020 before advancing to Parliament. To his credit, the previous Solicitor General had started some discussions in 2018 with a Project Board Sub-Committee on whistle blowers and witness protection legislation. However, those discussions came to a stop when he departed at the end of 2018.

International Anti-Corruption Day (9th December 2019) was the third annual milestone since Belize started the UNCAC implementation process, but the country has not advanced beyond the Country Peer Review Assessment, a couple training sessions, as well public awareness campaigns which are being independently carried out by CSOs unrelated to the UNCAC Project.

UNCAC Advocacy Training

An UNCAC advocacy training session for CSOs sponsored by the UNCAC Project was held on 8th to 12th July 2019 at the UWI Open Campus in Belize City. The workshop aimed to enhance the capacity of CSOs in advocating on anti-corruption as a part of the implementation of UNCAC. In attendance were representatives from Helpage Belize, Belize Visionary Foundation of Baseball and Softball, Scouts Association, Our Circle, Belize Emergency Response Team, Belize Family Life Association, and the National Garifuna Council.



Photos:

Top Left: Giacomo Sanchez (BCCI) and Senator Osmany Salas (BNN) talk about the state of UNCAC implementation on Open Your Eyes (December 9, 2019)

Bottom: BNN representatives at UNCAC advocacy training session (July 10, 2019)

Newly Registered NGOs



Southern Peoples Movement (SPM): SPM is located in Punta Gorda Town, Toledo District. The NGO's mission statement is to alleviate poverty in southern Belize in particular for the persons of Garifuna and Maya ancestry. SPM also seeks to champion causes in the Economic, Cultural, Artistic and Basic Human Rights spheres.

The objectives of Southern Peoples Movement include, among others:

- Promote and advance all activities and seeking policies related to the social, cultural, religious, spiritual, and economic well-being of the groups of African Ancestry in particular the Garifuna settlements throughout the country of Belize.
- Support any other Indigenous community that has a similar agenda as this initiative.

The President of SPM is Dr. Franklin Christie Martinez (martinez.toussaint.christie97@gmail.com).



Nancy Marin Youth Foundation (NMYF): The mission of the NMYF is to transform the lives of youth and empower community leadership in western Belize by coordinating assistance with local and International partners, facilitating its sustainability through scholarships, training, and resource development. The NMYF is committed to matching educational/vocational training opportunities to the abilities of its volunteers from around the world. The NGO's core beliefs include, but are not limited to:

- Accurately assessing and developing the strengths of the youth helps link them to the appropriate educational and/or vocational training opportunities.
- Mentoring the youth provides them with a bridge between theoretical goals and practical experience.
- Cultural exchange between our youth and our International partners / volunteers, enriches the lives of both, building strong, meaningful, and lasting relationships.

Photos:

Top Left: Dr. Franklin Christie Martinez (President, Southern Peoples Movement)

Top Right: Kim Simplis Barrow (Chair, SCLAN)

Bottom: Nefretery Nancy Marin (Executive Director, NMYF)



Spouses of CARICOM Leaders Action Network

(SCLAN): First Ladies and Spouses of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) launched its network, SCLAN, to tackle issues related to the health and well being of women, adolescents and children in the Caribbean. SCLAN is the advocacy and action platform to advance the Every Caribbean Women Every Caribbean Child (ECWECC) initiative, now re-titled Caribbean Woman Caribbean Child (CariWaC)".

SCLAN is a non-governmental organization endorsed by CARICOM Heads of Government at their Inter-Sessional Meeting in Guyana in February 2017. It was formally established last September, with Mrs. Kim Simplis Barrow, spouse of the Prime Minister of Belize, being elected Chair. SCLAN's mission is a Caribbean free from HIV, gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy and cervical cancer, with long term goals set forth by the global community including former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Every Woman, Every Child Global Initiative and the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030).

Newly Registered NGOs (continued)



Amputees Are Awesome (AAA): AAA is a non-profit organization uniting amputees around the world where no one is left behind. Many individuals who have experienced amputation have the capacity to resume a normal life and function as a productive member of society. The NGO helps to make this a reality for all amputees by raising money and donations to help individuals with limb loss. Funds are used to purchase food, prosthetic devices, wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, shoes and create jobs so amputees will be able to live a full and productive life with no limitation because of an amputation.

AAA's founder, James Gouch, is an amputee himself. Over time, Mr. Gouch ran across others who did not have legs or the insurance to purchase prosthetics. As a result, Mr. Gouch started raising money on his own to help amputees get prosthetic legs. The contact person in Belize is Karen Anderson (babedarling69@gmail.com).

<https://amputeesareawesome.org>



Reef Conservation International (ReefCI): ReefCI's mission is to protect our oceans through science, action, and advocacy. ReefCI accomplishes this through ongoing conservation programs, education, and marine research. ReefCI's guiding principle is "Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean." The NGO welcomes international volunteers on Tom Owens Caye, Sapodilla Caye Marine Reserve, to participate in marine conservation activities and scuba diving.

Currently REEFCI's main activity is the local invasive Lionfish management and surveys for commercially relevant finfish, Caribbean Spiny Lobster and Queen Conch. The integral component of the NGO's vision and mission is the propagation of corals and the start of our Coral Reef Replenishment Project, which depends on approval from the Belize Fisheries Department. ReefCI's goal is to restore ecosystem services in Belize to increase sustainable tourism value through more coral cover and to provide sustainable fishing grounds for generations to come. ReefCI's Chairman is Anthony Saner, Email: anthony@reefci.com. The General Manager & Director of Marine Science is Frank S. Hachmann, Email: frank@reefci.com.



Belize Karst Habitat Conservation (BKHC): The BKHC is dedicated to inspire people to sustainably develop Belize's environment through tourism, education, research, and sustainable management of its resources. BKHC has received funding from the Protected Areas Conservation Trust to implement a project Improving the management of Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve in the Cayo District.



Se Konsa!: This NGO ministers at hospitals giving care packages to new moms. The Directors, Mark and Dana Emmons, also visit and pray with the patients at the hospitals giving them bibles and word puzzle books. Camp Se Konsa! is designed to be an adventure Summer Camp with campfires and cabins. Special needs children and their families are all welcome. A wide variety of fun opportunities for the special needs child are offered ensuring the inclusion of all. Se Konsa! is based in San Jose Succotz, Cayo District. See www.campsekonsa.com.



BNN's Strategic Direction

Goal #1: Be the Unified Voice of NGOs

Objective #1: All registered NGOs are in compliance with the NGO Act.

Strategic Actions:

- Determine reason for non-compliance;
- Conduct needs-based survey among the membership;
- Distribute brochure from Attorney General's Ministry on what makes an NGO and how to achieve compliance;
- Develop mechanism for supporting the NGOs to become compliant.

Goal #2: Advocate for sustainable human development

Objective #2: Become a conduit for effective public participation.

Strategic Actions:

- Seminars on national development issues;
- Prepare concise Information Papers on important national issues from a governance perspective (e.g., UNCAC, re-districting, human smuggling/trafficking, and indigenous land rights);
- Education campaign on important national issues;
- Panel Discussions with experts on Governance.

Photos:

Left: BNN General Meeting (July 19, 2019)

Right: Deidra Mahler, Education & Outreach Manager, SEA

Objective #3: Promote and advocate for effective institutions and good governance.

Strategic Actions:

- Support the implementation of UNCAC in Belize;
- Update the BNN membership on the status of UNCAC implementation;
- Participate in public policy development;
- Conduct institutional self-assessments of NGO members; and
- Board development and strengthening for member NGOs.

SEA Staff Member Awarded Scholarship



Deidra Mahler, Education & Outreach Manager for the Southern Environmental Association (SEA) from Placencia, was selected to participate in the 43rd UNEP/UNESCO/ BMU International Postgraduate course on Environmental Management for Developing Countries in Dresden, Germany.

The 6-month course, which starts in January 2020, follows an integrated and interdisciplinary approach covering the field of environmental management. The course will cover the following subjects: conservation and restoration ecology, water and atmosphere, soil and land resources, sustainable urban and regional development, waste management and circular economy, renewable energy and energy efficiency. Upon successful completion, Deidra will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Management for Developing Countries.

Deidra currently holds a Bachelor's degree in Natural Resource Management from the University of Belize and has been working with SEA for the past 3 years.

BNN Press Releases (2019)

As part of its advocacy role, BNN issued various position statements in 2019. Following is a sample of these statements.

Illegal Fishing

[25th April 2019] The impact of illegal incursions into Belizean territory and marine environment have featured prominently in the conversations related to the Guatemalan claim to Belize and the highly anticipated ICJ vote. Irrespective of the outcome of the vote on May 8th, Belizeans everywhere should be concerned about the pillaging of our fisheries resources by foreign fisherfolk and poachers given these illegal activities represent millions of dollars in economic loss and irrevocable damage to our world renowned marine environment. The consequences to both our commercial fisheries and tourism sector bodes ill for the Belizeans who depend on fishing and the tens of thousands of Belizeans who directly and indirectly depend on marine-based tourism activities for their livelihoods.

The BNN maintains that the impact of illegal fishing undermines Belizean jobs and threatens national food security interests. This matter has been ignored for far too long. We therefore call on the Government of Belize, through the Ministry of Fisheries, Forestry and the Environment and the Ministry of National Security to address illegal fishing activities as a matter of national priority and to immediately undertake all necessary steps to safeguard the Belizean jobs that are at risk, namely the 15,000 commercial fishing related jobs, the 2,700 commercial fishing jobs and 2,100 sport fishing tourism jobs.

An investigative article published April 7th, 2019 in The Reporter under the headline: Guatemala's Fishing Trade Spells Trouble for Belize, provides evidence of the large scale and daily incursions by Guatemalan gillnetters into Belizean waters; a decades-old and intensifying practice.

Guatemalan fishers primarily utilize gillnets and research conducted in 2007 reveals that the catch and export of Belize's marine resources by these fisherfolks directly to Guatemalan ports have escalated dramatically every year. This most recent investigative report estimates that at present between 100,000-200,000 pounds per year of all types of fish, including protected species, are being exported to Guatemala. That's millions of dollars of seafood not being accounted for in Belize's formal economy. The investigator has provided photos depicting fields of drying Belizean fish and rays, as well as giant barrels filled with salted (corned) Belizean fish, including protected sportfishing species like the Permit, and keystone species like shark, in Livingston, Guatemala.

In 2007, Dr. Rachel Graham documented the massive and illegal export of Belize's sharks in her research paper, Vulnerability Assessment of Sharks and Rays in Belize: Captures and Trade. The paper, commissioned by the World Conservation Society and permitted by the Fisheries Department, estimates that 1.7 million pounds of whole shark and nearly 26,000 pounds of shark fins were exported to Guatemala from Belize in 2007. She noted that "Sharks in Belize are scarce where they were once abundant". Do we dare imagine what current levels are now? As a keystone species, the health of shark populations is critical to the health of marine ecosystems. These disturbing images demonstrate the magnitude of this invasion and highlights that negative impact it poses to Belizean fishers and Belize's tourism industry.

Belize's fishermen are acutely aware of these massive incursions by Guatemalan gillnetters. They indicate that Guatemalan fishing boats operate at night in Belizean waters (including within Marine Protected Areas) with miles of gillnets.

According to data obtained by the Coalition for Sustainable Fisheries from the Belize Fisheries Department, 83 fishers were licensed to use gillnets in Belizean waters in 2018. Hundreds of illegal and unlicensed fishers are believed to be using miles of gillnets on a regular basis at sea. The BNN notes the Coalition's position that the 83 licensed Belizean fishers can be supported to transition away from this supplemental fishing gear. The Belize Coast Guard has already publicly stated that a phase-out/ban of gillnets would significantly boost enforcement efforts against illegal fishing activities. [END]

BNN Decries Bullying

[2nd April 2019] The Belize Network of NGOs (BNN) hereby condemns the threats of violence against Belizeans, in this the final days of education and awareness to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) vote. The beauty of a democracy is in demonstration of respect and tolerance for opposing views on issues of national importance.

We call on the appropriate authorities to take all threats of violence on social media and other public platforms seriously and to take all action necessary in this regard. Such behavior is unacceptable.

We also appeal to the general public to cease and desist from abusive and insulting behavior and attacks against anyone who expresses his/her opinion on whether or not we should take Guatemala's claim to the ICJ.

It is our civic duty to report any such threats of violence. As constructive citizens, we must do all we can to participate in all demonstrations of democracy in a calm and respectful manner. [END]

Press Releases (continued)

Modernized Fisheries Act

[7th October 2019] The Belize Network of NGOs (BNN) calls on the Government of Belize – through the Ministry of Fisheries, Forestry and the Environment, and the Ministry of National Security – to address illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities as a matter of national priority. Specifically, we urge the Government to enact the Fisheries Resources Bill by introducing it at the next meeting of the House of Representatives so that it can be passed into law without further delay.

Nine years in the making, the draft Fisheries Resources Bill and draft Fisheries Regulations is designed to support sustainable fisheries management efforts through managed access fisheries, the establishment of landing sites, traceability, vessel monitoring, etc. It aims to strengthen enforcement, bolster management, identify new species for protection, and adjusts fines to serve as a significant deterrent to illegal fishing. The new law will also create the necessary framework to address many aspects of the illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and improved fisheries management.

We also call on the Government of Belize to increase national investment in the enforcement capabilities to the Belize Fisheries Department and the Coast Guard, so that they can improve and increase patrols in Belizean waters to deter the illegal fishing of our marine resources year round.

More than 15,000 Belizeans depend on fishing and tens of thousands more directly and indirectly depend on marine-based tourism and fishing activities for their livelihoods. The impact of illegal fishing threatens national food security interests, fish stock management and undermines fisheries based livelihoods, which impacts the entire Belizean economy.[END]

Spiraling Crime

[25th September 2019] The Belize Network of NGOs (BNN) expresses its grave concern in relation to escalating incidents of gun violence, homicide rates and sexual offences in our nation.

The alarming frequency of homicides must be placed in the appropriate context: Per capita, Belize is one of the

most violent nations in the world. There were 142 murders in Belize in 2017 and 143 in 2018. Belize currently ranks at number 4 on the global list with a murder rate of 44.7 per 100,000 inhabitants (Source: WorldAtlas.com, 2019).

It is high time for the crime situation to be addressed in a multi-partisan and collaborative manner, involving the political parties and civil society organizations with a target of not just reducing murders, but to address the roots of violence, especially poverty.

In addition to enforcing existing laws, BNN encourages an approach that considers the following initiatives, among others:

- Find ways to integrate youth who are unattached and at risk, finding ways to involve them.
 - Increase resources for existing social programs implemented collaboratively with the Social Partners and NGOs.
 - Facilitate the use of counselling and psychiatric care for victims of violence, especially children suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of gun violence and sexual abuse.
 - Engage the public as respected partners in solving and deterring crime.
 - Develop targeted development projects in crime-ridden zones within the country.
 - Place more resources and effort on present and future rehabilitation initiatives in the prison system.
- [END]

New River Pollution

[25th September 2019] The Belize Network of NGOs (BNN) hereby commends the activism and resilience of people from Orange Walk Town who have been affected by the extended drought and stagnated waters of the New River. As a result of sustained public pressure, the relevant Government agencies have started to pay attention. In particular, we acknowledge the current efforts of the Department of the Environment (DOE) in placing much needed attention to the New River.

The BNN notes that the DOE has been trialling short-term remediation activities on the river hoping to alleviate the levels of hydrogen sulphide gas emanating from the river that have negatively affected the quality of life of residents from Orange Walk Town and surrounding communities. The BNN strongly recommends that any proposed remediation actions be carefully studied before they are implemented to ensure that the river situation does not worsen as a result of well-intended but ill-advised remediation action.

The New River crisis should be a serious wake up call. (Continued on next page)

Press Releases (continued)

New River Pollution (cont'd)

The BNN notes that the New River Task Force, with the support of the Ministry of Forests, Fisheries and the Environment, has initiated steps to develop a New River Watershed Management Plan with the involvement of key stakeholders. Many rivers in Belize, especially those near populated areas such as the Macal River, are already under severe pressure from industrial, agricultural and residential activities. As a matter of urgent priority, the BNN urges the Government of Belize (GOB) to coordinate the development of Management Plans for all of Belize's watersheds, like was done by the University of Belize for the Belize River Watershed in June 2018. People participation is key for the successful development and implementation of these plans. Likewise, the support of the Government of Belize is also essential.

BNN echoes the call of NGO Senator Osmany Salas: "River restoration and watershed management, which includes pollution prevention and reduction, costs money. A lot of money... Every year 'chump change' is allocated to the regulatory agencies... for field operations. That is unacceptable and irresponsible." We need a Department of the Environment in more than just name.

The BNN urges GOB to allocate the required financial resources to the DOE and other relevant agencies. Such resources should come from the Environmental Management Fund and proceeds from Environmental Tax, for example. Section 61 of the EPA establishes an Environmental Management Fund and section 62 sets out the objectives of the Fund, which include: to carry out programmes to prevent and reduce pollution; to provide support for laboratory analysis of samples collected for environmental monitoring; and to support [the DOE's] environmental monitoring and enforcement programmes. Section 68 of the Act states where the money for this Fund will come from, including from the charging of an Environmental Tax on imported items.

Section 7 of the Environmental Tax Act states that: "The proceeds of the tax shall be placed into a special fund and shall be used, among others: (a) to develop a national solid waste management programme;... (c) to assist in the collection and disposal of garbage throughout Belize; (d) to clean up rivers and canals and other internal waterways;... and (f) for strengthening the institutional capacity of the Department of the Environment."

The people living along polluted rivers have been suffering as a result of such pollution. Learning from the lessons of the New River and by working together, we can reverse this trend and work towards ensuring that our water resources, rivers and our watersheds are used and managed responsibly for the benefit of present and future generations. [END]

Gill Nets

[11th December 2019] For two decades, many Belizean fishers have been calling for a ban on gillnets. Over the past 18 months, following a number of meetings with Government officials and licensed gill-netters, a coalition of NGOs, including commercial fishermen, sports fishers, game fishers, and tourism and conservation organizations, drafted a comprehensive proposal to transition those 83 fishers who have a gillnet license away from the gear.

Based on fisher consultations, a \$1 million alternative livelihood program was ready to be launched in early 2020 to financially support the already identified endeavours that would have replaced the supplemental income derived from gillnetting. These funds were raised by the Coalition for Sustainable Fisheries. Transition choices would have included training in alternative fishing methods, tourism training and scholarships.

The coalition's proposal also asked the Government to announce a policy change that would nationally ban possession of gillnets by December 2020. During the one-year transition, a \$1 million gillnet buy-back component supported by Oceana-Belize would have been executed directly to fishers.

The proposal also asked the Government to implement strict penalties for violations of the ban, which would have assisted in enforcement efforts. It must be stated that these funds (just over \$2 million) were raised on the basis that mechanisms were in place to ensure funds went directly to licensed, Belizean fishers.

However, Government stopped far short of accepting a proposal that would have directly benefitted licensed, Belizean fishers and their families. The transition away from gillnets would have benefitted the thousands of Belizeans who also depend on fishing but do not use gillnets.

Instead, the Government has indicated that a ban "will be considered" in the future, which is far from the news that many had worked towards. Government announced a series of measures to regulate gillnets but these have been tried in the past without much success. Legislation to eventually restrict gillnet use to only Belizean citizens is a very positive step, but this does not address the fundamental problem - that gillnets are destroying our fisheries and negatively impacting Belize's economy. The Belize Network of NGOs therefore calls on Government to reconsider its decision and immediately convene a conversation to reconsider the coalition's proposal.

There is overwhelming support for a gillnet ban among commercial fishermen, who see the fish stocks seriously declining, and the tourism sector, which notes the damaging effects of gillnets on the tourism industry. Furthermore, a survey conducted by the Government-appointed Gillnet Task Force to evaluate this issue, indicated that 95% of respondents support a gillnet ban.

The gillnet issue has national implications and should be a priority for all Belizeans because as one former gillnet fisher noted, "gillnets will eventually be banned one way or the other because if the use of this destructive gear continues, there will be no fish left." [END]

General News



ABEL VARGAS REPRESENTS BNN IN THE SENATE

Abel Vargas (Hand in Hand Ministries - right) represented the NGO community in the Senate at the 21st May 2019 session. Senator Osmany Salas (left) was out of the country.



NGO SENATOR VISITS BERT

From L to R: Bob Tiarks, Senator Osmany Salas, Dr. Mark Bruce, and Andre Carrillo, BERT Executive Director, after meeting to discuss how to advance BERT's work in Belize to improve pre-hospital care and transport in Belize. Dr. Bruce is the Lead Ambassador of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) to Belize. (24th January 2019)



BNN REPRESENTED AT IDB WORKSHOP

BNN Chairman, Froyla Tzalam, and Senator Osmany Salas participated as external experts in an IDB Scenario Building Workshop in preparation for the IDB Group's new Country Strategy with Belize (2021-2025), on 5th-6th December 2019 in Belize City.



SENATOR MEETS NAC REPRESENTATIVES

Senator Osmany Salas (center) attended a presentation on 14th November 2019 on the Anti-Discrimination Legislation being proposed and developed by the National AIDS Commission (NAC) in collaboration with the Office of the Special Envoy for Women and Children. Enrique Romero (Executive Director - left) and Dwight Arnold (Monitoring & Evaluation Officer - right) of the NAC presented. The development of Belize's anti-discrimination legislation, which is intended to be comprehensive, will be largely based on the CARICOM Model Anti-Discrimination Bill.



NGO SENATOR MEETS WITH THE EDC

Senator Osmany Salas met with officials of the Economic Development Council (EDC) on 18th January 2019 to discuss the IDB-funded project "Design and Preparation of the Sustainable Development Plan for the Caracol Region". The project aims to create a Sustainable Development (and Management) Plan for the Chiquibul-Mountain Pine Ridge-Caracol Archaeological Complex inclusive of a multi-stakeholder Governance Framework. Given his training in natural resources policy and management, Senator Salas shared his expert advice related to the development of a Governance Structure as well as for the Sustainable Development Plan.



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NGOs in Good Standing

NGOs in Good Standing (2019 -- for submitting 2018 reports)			
1	AMJ Belize (pending)	31	Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
2	Amputees Are Awesome	32	Nancy Marin Youth Foundation
3	Belize Audubon Society	33	National Garifuna Council
4	Belize Bird Rescue	34	New Creation Sustainable Development
5	Belize Coalition to Save our Natural Heritage	35	Oceana in Belize
6	Belize Council for the Visually Impaired	36	Our Circle (pending)
7	Belize Emergency Response Team (pending)	37	Panthera Corporation (pending)
8	Belize Family Life Association	38	Panthera Wild Cat Conservation Belize
9	Belize Hotel Association	39	Projects Abroad (pending)
10	Belize Institute of Environmental Law & Policy (pending)	40	Reef Conservation International
11	Belize Karst Habitat Conservation	41	Reef Keeper Belize (pending)
12	Belize Tourism Industry Association	42	RET International (pending)
13	Belize Visionary Foundation of Baseball and Softball	43	Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management
14	Boys Country Club (pending)	44	Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation & Development
15	Cacao Agroforestry Institute of Belize	45	Se Konsa
16	Coalition for Sustainable Fisheries	46	Southern Environmental Association
17	Cornerstone Foundation	47	Southern Peoples Movement
18	Corozal Sustainable Future Initiative (pending)	48	Spouses of CARICOM Leaders Action Network
19	Ecology Project International	49	Sustainable Harvest International Belize (pending)
20	Friends for Conservation & Development	50	The Belize Gateway Trust Foundation
21	Friends of Corozal United for Sustainability (pending)	51	The Lifeline Foundation of Belize (pending)
22	Hand in Hand Ministries	52	The Scout Association of Belize
23	Harvest Caye Conservation Foundation	53	Toledo Institute for Development & Environment
24	Haven House	54	Tropical Rainforest Institute of Belize (pending)
25	HelpAge Belize	55	Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association (pending)
26	Helping Hands Resource and Intervention Center	56	Turneffe Atoll Trust
27	Humana People to People	57	Xe Tonil Cacao
28	Ixchel Tropical Research	58	Ya'axche Conservation Trust
29	Just a Gift Away (pending)	59	Young Women's Christian Association (pending)
30	Mesopotamia Human & Social Development Foundation		

BNN STEERING COMMITTEE:

Froyla Tzalam (SATIIM), Chair
 Janelle Chanona (Oceana-Belize), Vice Chair
 Armando Aban (Scouts Association), Treasurer
 Amanda Acosta (BAS), Secretary
 Evan Dakers (HelpAge), Director
 Osmany Salas (Senator), *ex officio*