

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 22nd August 2023

CARICHAM Chair Strengthens Business Collaborations in Belize



Caption (l to r): Ms. Margaret Ventura - EPA UK and EU officer, Ms. Petipha Lewis - Chair of CARICHAM and Executive Director of the Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Mrs. Kim Aikman- Vice Chair of CARICHAM and CEO of the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Andy Sutherland - Director General of the Directorate of Foreign Trade, Ms. Tricia Gideon - Trade Economist-Caricom /CSME unit.

BELIZE CITY, August 22, 2023

Ms. Petipha Lewis, the Chair of the Caribbean Chambers of Commerce (CARICHAM), recently concluded a significant visit to Belize, hosted by the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The visit aimed to strengthen relationships and support Belize's diverse business community.

During the 2-day visit, from 27-28 July, Ms. Lewis engaged in a welcome reception with the President and Senior Executives of the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a founding member of CARICHAM.

Ms. Lewis, together with Mrs. Kim Aikman, vice-chair of CARICHAM and CEO of the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, held constructive dialogues with key stakeholders, including Mr. Andy Sutherland, Director General of the Directorate General for Foreign Trade Belize. The discussions were focused on addressing trade and logistics challenges across the Caribbean, with a specific lens on Belize's unique situation as the only Central American country in the CARICOM bloc.

Mr. Sutherland expressed optimism about CARICHAM's potential to amplify trade in the Caribbean. He extended an invitation to Ms. Lewis to return for further engagements. "Our ultimate vision is the creation of a united and prosperous Caribbean region, characterized by robust businesses and nurturing ecosystems," Ms. Lewis shared, adding, "CARICHAM envisions achieving this through strategic partnerships, shared values, and responsible business practices."

The visit also included a meeting with Dr. Colin Young, Executive Director of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC). The discussions centered on topics including climate change, disaster risk reduction, and mitigation, all critical areas of focus for CARICHAM. The meeting underscored the commitment to deepen collaboration between the organizations.



A highlight of the trip was the appearance by Ms. Lewis and Mrs. Aikman on the highly regarded Belizean television program "Belize Open Your Eyes," broadcasted by Channel 5. This platform allowed

the leaders to spotlight the significant initiatives of CARICHAM, particularly its Center of Excellence initiative. They highlighted the availability of over 100 free resources set across five thematic areas via CARICHAM's official website: www.carichamchambers.net. The resource is designed to catalyze the growth and development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in the region.

The visit concluded with the signing in Belize City of a memorandum of understanding between CARICHAM and the Caribbean Agency for Justice Solutions (CAJS). Ms. Lewis and Mr. Bevil Wooding, Executive Director of CAJS, executed the signing to set in motion an important strategic collaboration between the regional organizations.


As CARICHAM continues to cultivate collaborations and drive regional economic prosperity, Ms. Lewis's visit to Belize stands as a resounding testament to the organization's commitment to uniting businesses and fortifying the Caribbean community.

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