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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Belize and European Union Hold Partnership Dialogue**

*Placencia, May 27, 2024.*

Today, Belize and the European Union (EU) held their first Partnership Dialogue in Placencia, under Article 3 of the new Partnership Agreement between the EU and members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States, the '**Samoa Agreement**'. This Partnership Dialogue is the successor of the Political Dialogue held under Article 8 of the 'Cotonou Agreement'.

The discussions were held in a constructive atmosphere, addressing the multifaceted relationship between Belize and the EU. Both parties are aligned on many critical global issues and are committed to respecting the international legal order and promoting multilateralism. They reiterated their commitment to further strengthening their partnership, grounded in shared values and interests.

The dialogue reviewed development cooperation, assessing the progress of ongoing projects under the 11th European Development Fund and new initiatives under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) on green growth in the south and border management. The EU also provided updates on its regional programs, such as Environment and Climate Change, Trade, and Good Governance, benefiting Belize, within the Caribbean and Central America.

Discussions also covered the implementation of the EU's Global Gateway Investment Agenda, which aims to boost investment in Belize in digital transformation, climate and energy, transport, health, and education. Updates on the EU-Economic Partnership Agreement, including its challenges and opportunities, were also provided.

Belize and the EU reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening their partnership at the multilateral level, particularly in the ongoing Fourth International Conference on Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) in Antigua and Barbuda and the UNGA Summit of the Future in September 2024.

Belize's interest in being added to the list of countries benefiting from the Schengen visa waiver was also discussed. Other topics included good governance, human rights, the situation in Haiti, the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the war in Gaza. Belize shared an update on regional integration initiatives in CARICOM and SICA.

Another significant topic was the ongoing case before the International Court of Justice regarding Guatemala's territorial, maritime, and insular claim on Belize, along with the EU's support for confidence-building measures in the Adjacency Zone between Belize and Guatemala ahead of the ICJ's ruling.

The Partnership Dialogue was co-chaired by Hon. Francis Fonseca, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, and H.E. Marianne Van Steen, Ambassador of the European Union. They were joined by H.E. Amalia Mai, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, and Directors Ayesha Borland, Alfonso Gahona, Luis Salazar, and Andy Sutherland. Ambassadors Johan Verkammen of the Kingdom of Belgium; Zdeněk Kubánek of Czechia; Maeve von Heynitz of the Republic of Ireland; Alessandro Modiano of Italy; Wilfred Mohr of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; Manuel Carvalho of Portugal; María Clara Girbau Ronda of the Kingdom of Spain; Anders Bengtson of the Kingdom of Sweden and Mr. Sébastien Bulot, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of France in Guatemala.

**Ends**