



# UNITED NATIONS BELIZE

MARCH 2012

**COMMON COUNTRY ASSESSMENT**





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## MESSAGE FROM THE UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR

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This second Common Country Assessment (CCA) represents the culmination of a participatory and extensive process of consultations with government, civil society, private sector and UN agencies, both resident and non-resident to Belize. The priority areas for our development cooperation for the period 2013 – 2016 are firmly anchored to Belize's long term development goals as expressed in Horizon 2030 and presents the United Nations System's comparative advantage to meaningfully contribute to the achievement of these laudable goals.

The priority areas for development cooperation were guided by our analysis of the various development challenges and opportunities facing Belize at this time, to advance human rights with equity, equality and non-discrimination; promote economic and social well-being, citizen security and justice; environmental and natural resource management, disaster risk reduction and climate change mainstreaming as well as the promotion of democratic governance. These priority intervention areas of the UN System will allow for meaningful support to the priority thematic areas expressly desired by the people and Government of Belize as outlined in Horizon 2030.

On behalf of the Belize United Nations Team, I express gratitude to the Government, civil society organizations and private sector partners as well as all other development partners, both national and international, whose contributions and support during the consultation process was critical to the finalization of this Common Country Assessment and, ultimately, the formulation of the second United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

The United Nations will collaboratively work to implement the UNDAF as a means to support Belize and its people in the achievement of sustainable human development and wellbeing.



Roberto Valent  
Resident Coordinator

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## Acronyms

ABA	American Bar Association
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries
BEO	Belize Environmental Outlook 2009
BSO	Belize Scorecard and Outlook
CAT	Convention Against Torture
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CDERA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPA	Country Poverty Assessment
CMW	Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families
CFZ	Corozal Free Zone (CFZ)
CPA	Country Poverty Assessment
CPD	Country Programme Document
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CRC-OP-AC	Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict
CRC-OP-SC	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
GA	General Assembly
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
GOB	Government of Belize
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Office
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Survey
NWC	National Women's Commission
NCFC	National Committee for Families and Children
MAFC	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Cooperatives



MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoH	Ministry of Health
MHDSI	Ministry of Human Development and Social Transformation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MLLGRD	Ministry of Labour, Local Government and Rural Development
MoPPS	Ministry of Police and Public Safety
MTDS	Medium Term Development Strategy
MTE	Medium Term Evaluation
NGP	National Gender Policy
NPA	National Plan of Action
NPESAP	National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plans
OAS	Organisation of American States
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAHO/WHO	Pan-American Health Organization/World Health Organization
PRC	Political Reform Commission
PUP	People's United Party
SICA	Central American Integration System
UDP	United Democratic Party
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	UN Entity for Gender Equity and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

This Common Country Assessment (CCA) for Belize provides a strategic analysis of Belize's current development challenges and serves as the key analytical instrument upon which to base the second United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The CCA's underlying analysis is informed by five core programming principles that are mandated by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and are universally applicable, grounded in international law and are deemed centrally relevant to government-UN development cooperation relationships across space and time. These principles include the human rights-based approach (HRBA), gender equality, environmental sustainability, results-based management and capacity development. The priorities that emerge in this CCA will provide the necessary strategic guidance to shape the four-year UNDAF (2013-2016), to be agreed with the Government of Belize and synchronized with the Medium Term Development Strategic Plan of the Government of Belize.

The first UNDAF (2007-2011) had three prioritized programme areas: poverty elimination by investing in people; the reversal of the spread of HIV and AIDS and to improve sustainable development practices. The

programmatic activities schedule developed for the achievement of the UNDAF (2007-2011) identified 12 outcomes and a series of expected outputs which were explicitly articulated to ensure a coordinated and collaborative approach from all relevant UN agencies and notably incorporated a human rights based approach to programming, with specific attention to gender and culture, and a strong results-based orientation. The current UNDAF covered the period 2007-2011, but was extended to 2012 to ensure alignment with the national planning process.

The current UNDAF preparatory process, is the principal vehicle through which the United Nations (UN) system supports the efforts of the Government of Belize (GOB) as it strives to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other national development objectives. It serves as a joint strategic planning framework to ensure that the UN agencies harmonize, articulate and maximize the complementarities of their interventions. As its overarching aim is to support member states' efforts to attain their development objectives. An important feature of the UNDAF preparatory process is that it is participatory and consultative, reflecting the inputs and vision

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*The current UNDAF preparatory process, is the principal vehicle through which the United Nations (UN) system supports the efforts of the Government of Belize (GOB)*

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*the 2012 CCA aims to present a synopsis of the development challenges, focusing on people as both the means and end of development efforts*

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of a wide range of national stakeholders, including the Government, civil society organizations (CSO) and the private sector. The quantitative and qualitative analyses derived from a variety of sources, including a database constituted by key national and sub-national indicators as they relate to national development priorities and to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as indicators, which specifically serve as a means to measure progress with respect to specific UN treaties and conventions. As established by the UNDAF "roadmap", the principal national planning documents were utilized as orienting frameworks for the CCA.

The 2012 CCA benefitted from the rigorous analysis and vast wealth of data in the recently released "Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Belize 2011: An Ecological Review", a study commissioned by UNICEF in collaboration with the Government of Belize and the "Belize MDG Scorecard and Outlook Report 2010" on progress toward the MDGs. Utilizing an integrated analysis based on these documents and other data sources, the 2012 CCA aims to present a synopsis of the development challenges, focusing on people as both the means and end of development efforts. The strategic analysis in the CCA focuses on the various development challenges as identified by the UN Country Team (UNCT) and national stakeholders and incorporates a causal analysis that explores the main effects and root causes of the challenges and a capacity gap analysis that serves to

review the roles, accountabilities and capacities of different actors at the local, national and international level. This CCA, like the previous 2005 CCA, has been presented to stakeholders (government ministries, private sector, CSO and international donor community) in order to obtain feedback regarding the document's alignment with national development priorities and its content has been discussed and validated at various levels. The CCA document consists of four chapters. This introductory section provides background, and a guiding theoretical framework based on UNDG programming principles and the employed methodological approach followed by a snapshot the UN System's comparative advantage in Belize. Chapter 2 explores the country context, covering national development analysis, plans and policies, the political situation and principal governance issues, outlines the macroeconomic environment and socioeconomic situation and examines the nation's vulnerabilities, both from the perspective of natural disasters and environmental sustainability, as well as violence and citizen insecurity concerns. Chapter 3 covers the sectoral and thematic analyses which are broadly linked to the national progress made toward achieving the MDGs and furthermore discusses Belize's compliance with international conventions thereby providing a constitutional framework, as such, for each thematic area. Chapter 3 also analyses the principal challenges and opportunities for each thematic area and

sector and analytically reviews the institutional arrangements governing each area and the critical institutional and organizational capacities for performance and development impact. Finally, Chapter 4 presents the main binding constraints to development and broadly defines priority areas for cooperation.

## A. CCA Conceptual Framework

During the last twenty years, the extensive cycle of UN international conferences and summits illustrated a growing social and political consensus regarding human development, human rights and gender equality. The cumulative impact and synergy generated by these conferences has increasingly transformed what was previously seen as merely a set of inspirational principles into concrete agendas for national action plans with established criteria and benchmarks to measure compliance with international commitments. Among the most far-reaching of these global efforts was the 2000 Millennium Declaration, where 189 world leaders met at the United Nations and approved a commitment to a global partnership to transform the lives of the world's poor. The MDGs became the permanent guiding force behind the UN system's international development agenda, establishing eight quantifiable objectives with concrete deadlines to be achieved by 2015. The first and foremost of these objectives is the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Others cover education, health, gender equality, environmen-

tal sustainability, and partnerships for development. Achievement of the MDGs, and the human rights-based approach, are not only compatible and congruous, but also tightly linked, mutually reinforcing and interdependent. Furthermore, results-based management and capacity development are also fundamental to these approaches and as such, they have become the cornerstones of the CCA's analytical approach.

The CCA's analysis is guided by five programming principles mandated by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), including three normative principles (human rights-based approach, gender equality and environmental sustainability) which connect international norms and standards and agreed development goals to the UNDAF process and two enabling principles (results-based management and capacity development) which help to make the normative principles operational in the UNDAF by reinforcing accountability and effectiveness. Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of this guiding conceptual framework and the interplay and interrelationships of the five programming principles. The CCA also places an evaluative focus on inequality, a significant development challenge facing many Latin American and Caribbean countries including Belize. In doing so, it additionally integrates the comprehensive notion of well-being as an assessment filter that seeks to capture the full range of dimensions contributing to human development and highlights the

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*The CCA's analysis is guided by five programming principles: **Human Rights Based Approach, Gender Equality, Environmental Sustainability, Results Based Management and Capacity Development***

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*The human rights based approach, the primary normative principle for the CCA, and human development are closely related concepts as both are premised on securing basic human freedoms, the well-being of people and maintaining human dignity*

importance of social protection in the struggle against poverty. In the respective situational analyses of development challenges, discussions on causality will explore the main effects and root causes of the challenges and their complexities and inter-linkages in order to assist in providing a more comprehensive roadmap for the multiple entry points for UN development assistance. In the reviews of the national responses to the various thematic areas and development sector challenges, capacity gap analyses will serve to establish the roles, accountabilities and capacities of different national actors at the various institutional and organizational levels thereby identifying areas for programmatic support more precisely.

enhancement of personal freedoms and the fulfillment of human rights. Foundationally, human development has four conceptual pillars: equality, sustainability, productivity and empowerment. If the basic purpose of development is to enlarge people's choices then enlarging choices depends on building human capabilities or the range of things people can do or be in life. Basic capabilities or dimensions for human development include being knowledgeable and acquiring knowledge; living long, healthy lives; garnering the necessary economic and natural resources for a decent quality of life and community involvement and citizen participation in community activities and local governance. The human development paradigm therefore advocates for the increase of available opportunities for humans, especially the poor; within these four broad dimensions. The formation of human capabilities and enabling the use people make of them for various productive and life enhancing activities are critical aspects of human development.

The human rights based approach, the primary normative principle for the CCA, and human development are closely related concepts as both are premised on securing basic human freedoms, the well-being of people and maintaining human dignity. They are also complementary concepts, as human development is essential for realizing human rights, and human rights are essential for full human de-

**Figure 1: The CCA Conceptual Framework: Normative and Enabling Principle**



Human development, the broad paradigmatic umbrella for the CCA, is defined as an expansion of human capabilities, a widening of choices, the



velopment. While the human development approach has promoted social development and economic progress, the human rights approach has advocated for reformation of laws and supported citizen advocacy and ethical questioning through a claims-based perspective in order to effect change and social justice. Human development, for its part, identifies the need for feasible socio-economic contexts within which human rights can flourish as well as the resources necessary for human rights to be protected. Capacity development, the key enabling principle for the CCA, has essentially encompassed a vast array of issues related to organizational development and individual human capital formation for development effectiveness. The comprehensive cross-cutting nature of the concept allows it to be an attractive analytical and evaluative frame as it encompasses most critical core development dilemmas. Annex 1 is the summarized version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Annex 2 explores in greater depth the programming principles.

## **B. The UN System's Comparative Advantage in Belize**

The UN system's wide range of technical expertise and resource mobilization capabilities across many specialized agencies continues to provide excellent opportunities for international cooperation programming between the UN and Belize, in order to address the myriad of development challenges facing the country. The UN system, because of its default role as the globe's pre-eminent intergovernmental system, has a powerful and respected convener role which should be strategically leveraged by small developing states like Belize. This relationship can be used effectively to have international partners achieve consensus on what Belizean development challenges can be prioritized for resource allocations and obtain high-value technical advisory services across many important sectors and issues. In summary, the UN system can support institutional strengthening through capacity development, sharing of best practices, innovative thought leadership in many development areas and partnership-building through South-South cooperation.

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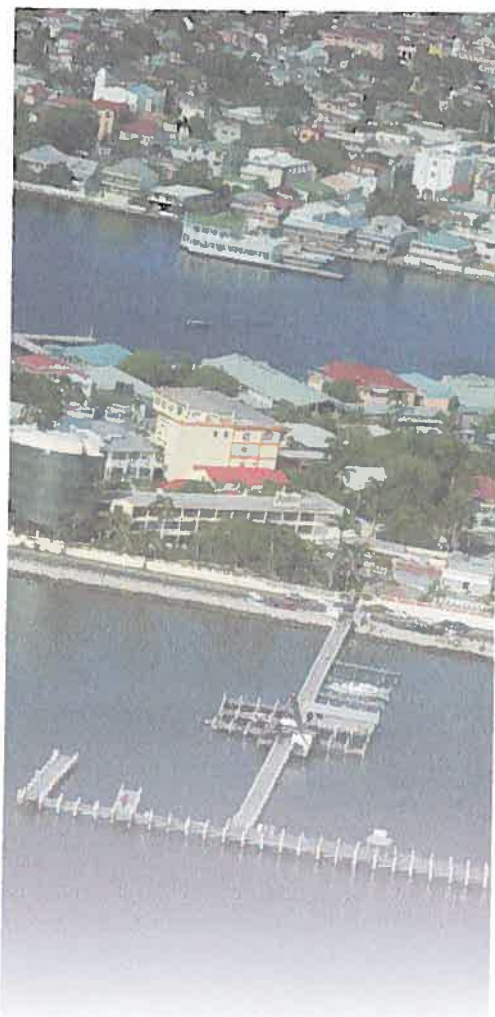
This section of the CCA provides a country profile, a review of the human rights situation in Belize and the analytical review of trends, achievements and challenges across several prioritized cross-cutting development issue groupings namely governance and justice, environmental and social vulnerabilities (disaster risk, climate change, environmental sustainability and citizen security) and the economy. Additional aspects of these cross-cutting issues will also be addressed in further detail in the thematic and sectoral chapter.

### A. Country Overview

Belize is situated on the Caribbean coast of Central America, bordered on the north by Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and in the south and west by Guatemala. Belize due to its geographic location as a Caribbean coastal country in the "hurricane belt" with large areas of low-lying wetlands crossed by rivers is vulnerable to hurricane damage and flooding. It has a territorial water boundary with a narrow direct sea link to Honduras in the south. Just off its coast lies the Belize barrier reef (formally known as the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System), the second largest in the world and one of its greatest tourism and ecological assets (a UNESCO World Heritage

Site) spanning 185 miles and including seven of its marine protected areas. It is a relatively small country, with a diverse land mass of almost 23,000 square kilometers, but with only a population of 312,698 as of the year 2010 (SIB, 2010). Children and adolescents comprised 43.86% of the total Belizean population (ibid.). The country is divided into 6 districts: Corozal and Orange Walk in the north, Cayo located in the west, Belize in the centre and coast, Stann Creek on the southern coastal area, and Toledo in the far south.

The largest proportion of residents live in the Belize district (app. 29%) followed secondly by the Cayo district (app. 23%), the Orange Walk district (app. 15%) and lastly by the Corozal district (app. 13%) (SIB, 2010). The Toledo district is the least populated with 30,538 residents and the Stann Creek district is the second least populated with 32,166 residents thereby reflecting that both districts each have approximately 10% of the total national population (ibid.). Each district is further divided into "urban" and "rural" areas. The geography of Belize plays an influential role to many of the socio-economic, environmental, and political characteristics that are an important determinant of its past and present situation. Bridg-



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*The socio-cultural geography of the country is an interesting mosaic of complex ethnic and linguistic groupings with the ethno-cultural population mix.*

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ing geographic disparities in terms of access to resources will play a major role in how Belize successfully meets the challenges of achieving equity. The northern districts of Corozal and Orange Walk have a high percentage of Hispanic (Mestizo) populations. In Corozal, there is the Corozal Free Zone (CFZ), which facilitates trade between Mexico and Belize.

The socio-cultural geography of the country is an interesting mosaic of complex ethnic and linguistic groupings with the ethno-cultural population mix mirrored to some extent by economic geography. Corozal and Orange Walk are primarily agricultural, with sugar cane the dominant crop, and other produce such as corn, rice and tropical fruits. These districts are thus vulnerable to fluctuations in the global market for sugar. Belize district (including the barrier reef and the cayes) is the centre of the tourist industry and other core commercial activity, though it does include some rural agricultural communities along the Belize River. Cayo is the largest district with a significant agricultural sector. Nestled in abundant and lush forest areas and with several Mayan archeological sites, it serves as one of the main inland ecotourism destination and includes the capital city of Belmopan. Belmopan is home to all government ministries/agencies, international organizations and most of the diplomatic missions. More recently, oil discoveries have led to the growth of oil extraction near Spanish Lookout. While the Stann Creek District has tourist business (Placencia

and Hopkins) and is the country's major producing area for bananas, citrus and shrimp. Toledo is rural, generally more remote from the country's business and tourist centres and characterized by small villages widely dispersed as well as small agricultural landholdings. At the same time, it is the centre of expanding organic cacao production.

The political context for Belize reflects its location and multiple populations. It is an active member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP). These memberships suggest a sense of bifurcated identity – SICA and OAS represent ties to Central America, while CARICOM and ACP represent the historical linkages to the English Caribbean. Belize is unique in Central America with respect to these issues of political, social and cultural identity.

The English-Caribbean influence is retained in the governance system which is a parliamentary democracy based on the Westminster governmental model. The Governor General represents the Queen of England and is the head of state, with a Prime Minister as head of government via the National Assembly. There is a bicameral legislative body with an elected House of Representatives and a Senate composed of members appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the political parties. There are two major political parties, the

People's United Party (PUP) and the United Democratic Party (UDP), who are dominant having shared political power and government administrations since independence in 1981.

#### **(i) Recognition of Human Rights in Belize: Key Trends and Challenges**

Belize has signed and ratified 7 major international human rights treaties to date. These include the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention Against Torture (CAT), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), both optional protocols for CRC (OP-CRC-AC and OP-CRC-SC), the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families (CRMW) and most recently, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Not yet ratified are the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPAPED) as well as the Optional Protocol of ICESCR, both Optional Protocols to the ICCPR, the Optional Protocol to CAT and the Optional Protocol to CRPD. Consultative feedback from local indigenous groups into the CCA development process have indicated that state obligations with respect to the rights of indigenous peoples under the American Declaration on the

Rights and Duties of Man, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights have not been fully met for years and requires attention. Furthermore, the State's obligations in this respect and the need to address the policy shortcomings have also been specially noted and advocated for by several human rights bodies including the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People.

It should be clearly noted that ratification of international conventions no longer simply reflects a moral affirmation of intentions as it also obliges nations to make congruent their legislation, public policy and resource allocations with the content of the conventions and provides indicators by which to judge progress. As a recent UNICEF study noted "while the GOB is a signatory on multiple international conventions, actual policy and follow-through is selective, in part because of a process that often begins and ends in planning, without sufficient or appropriate operationalization and allocation of resources" (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 142). Further, Belize has experienced significant bottlenecks in their human rights reporting system over the last decade. In response, the country received technical assistance in June 2011 from the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) on reporting to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) further

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to a specific request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2010. With consistent delays in submitting reports to treaty monitoring bodies and with three of the five bodies never having received reports, there is concern on the part of international human rights bodies that the national reporting system in Belize is dysfunctional or perhaps even non-functional.

In 2011, UNDP carried out a "Rapid Capacity Assessment on Belize Human Rights Reporting Capabilities" in order to determine the principal challenges and capacity gaps. To this end, the analysis looked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Ministry of Human Development and Social Transformation (MHDST), the Women's Department, the National Women's Commission (NWC) and the National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC) to examine principal issues. The interviews revealed a number of challenges in the organization of the human rights reporting system, and uncovered issues related to less than optimal institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge and accountability patterns. The report came to the following conclusions: (a) there is a lack of clarity of mandates of relevant ministries in regard to human rights convention reporting; (b) the respective conventions are insufficiently mainstreamed into the work of the ministries; (c) progress in the reporting system is hampered by insufficient staff numbers and (d) the generalisation of duties of ministry staff means that responsibilities for ensuring human

rights reporting inevitably does not get assigned to particular job posts. Leadership challenges in this area include (a) a lack of institutionalized communication channels to move relevant information into the reporting framework; (b) overreliance on the personal interest of the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) in key ministries for the assigned level of importance for human rights reporting and (c) the lack of publicity from the MoFA on Belize's human rights obligations. Knowledge deficits include (a) a lack of human rights training for staff at relevant ministries; (b) frequent data limitations and (c) a lack of public awareness of their fundamental human rights. Finally, challenges of accountability include a systemic lack of follow-up interventions and an absence of quality control mechanisms for reports.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for Belize took place in May 2009 at which time twenty council members and observers raised a number of issues pertaining to the human rights situation in the country. Belize was encouraged to implement the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to prioritize effective measures to reduce poverty amongst indigenous and minority children; to seek technical assistance to fully implement the Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents 2004-2015; to review legislation with a view to prohibit all forms of corporal punishment of children; to abolish corporal punishment for children; to change legislation con-



cerning the age of criminal responsibility of children and to raise the age limit to 18 years and finally to rectify the possible shortcomings in the registration procedure of all new born children (ABA 2010, pg. 10). To date, Belize has not implemented the UPR recommendations which suggested establishing a national human rights institution in conformity with the Paris Principles. Overall, It is asserted that the CCA's analytical application of the human rights-based approach and result-based management as programmatic principles, can assist with the identification of the critical capacity gaps which impede duty-bearers in meeting obligations and maximize the relevance and sustainability of supporting development strategies which place human rights fulfillment and recognition of rights as an absolute national development priority for Belize.

## B. National Development Analyses, Plans and Policy Context

Belize has identified development priorities and challenges through a variety of analyses and planning processes, some of which included broad stakeholder consultations. Among them are the 2002 and 2009 Country Poverty Assessments; the 2007-2010 and 2009-2013 National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plans (NPESAP); Horizon 2030; and the Medium-Term Development Strategy (MTDS) (2010-2013). In addition, specific plans and policies such as the National Health Plan and Policy,

National Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents, National Plan 'Toward Eradicating Child Malnutrition in Belize, and the Food and Security National Policy also identify key areas for action. While the documents have slightly different emphases and time-frames, their initiatives and actions are closely linked and aligned.

In September 2010, Belize completed a comprehensive long-term planning initiative titled *Horizon 2030: Belize for All*, the result of extensive stakeholder consultations both at the community level in every district and at the sector level. This ambitious undertaking sought to produce a National Development Framework with clearly established goals and development targets. It identified “critical sectors for long term sustained policy actions during the next 20 years...as well as presenting proposals for converting the long term vision and goals into medium term strategies and for which targets can be set and implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes defined” (Barnett et al 2010, pg.1). Horizon 2030 identified two principal pillars for long-term development: Democratic Governance and Education for Development. Firstly, Democratic Governance was identified as a principal pillar both from the perspective of good governance as the critical foundation of development and from the perspective of the growing challenges of crime, citizen security and access to justice. The second key pillar was entitled Education for Development, encompassing a broad human capital concept with the no-

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tion of Education for Life and Lifelong Learning.

The MTDS, titled *Building Resilience Against Social, Economic and Physical Vulnerabilities* presented five sectoral focus areas and a series of cross-cutting issues. Sectoral focus areas included:

- **Enterprise Development.** This objective will be realized through measures that support the continued development of traditional and emerging industries and expansion of small, medium and micro-enterprises.
- **International Trade Capacity and Competitiveness.** This area covers measures to increase Belize's market access through better negotiating capacity and improvements in quality management and in the national quality certification capacity.
- **Environment and Disaster Risk Management.** Confronting economic and physical shocks requires the ability to plan adequately and to make adjustments at the individual, institutional and community level. Furthermore, ensuring that individuals have decent living conditions, sources of income and an assurance of resources for future consumption will require the sustainable use of natural resources.
- **Human Development.** The ability of each citizen to reach his or her full development potential and to make meaningful contributions to his or her community requires

a sound foundation. The human and social development objectives of the MTDS will be achieved through investments in education and health delivery and in social safety net provisions. The latter will include measures aimed at specific groups, such as women, youth and the aging.

- **National and Citizen Security.** Increasing levels of crime as well as continuing interest in securing citizens' well-being require focus on national as well as international citizen security issues. This area will therefore encompass those measures that will lend to improved border security and reduced levels of crime (MTDS pg. 14).

The MTDS also identified six cross cutting focus issues including: 1) Fiscal Discipline and Effective Debt Management; 2) Public Sector Institutional Strengthening; 3) Improved Governance Systems; 4) Citizen Participation, Gender Focus and Equitable Development; 5) Transportation; Building and Public Utilities; and Information and Communication Technology. These issues were deemed critical to enabling or propelling development and achieving development objectives in the aforementioned sectoral focus areas. Technical content reviews of the MTDS and the ongoing NPESAP (2009-2013) strongly indicate programmatic alignment between the wider development plans and strategies and national poverty reduction strategies and objectives.

United Nations Common Country Assessment (CCA) of Belize





The core analyses from these aforementioned national development plans formulation documents identified that the central binding constraints of development in Belize were the performance of the economy and garnering national resources necessary for investing in development. Associated analytical conclusions and recommendations stressed the need to develop a resilient economy to face social and economic shocks along with a strong focus on energizing key productive sectors. It was envisioned that the “bricks and mortar” for the development effort would be founded on ensuring healthy citizens, and sustainable natural resources management with an emphasis on climate change and natural disaster risk reduction.

It should be importantly underscored that the CCA’s conceptual framework including the mandated programming principles of the UN system are entirely compatible with and supportive of the existing national development planning initiatives and guiding documents. Furthermore, Belize’s ongoing commitment to achieving the MDGs is increasingly an integral and guiding feature of both the MTDS and the NPESAP.

### C. Governance and Justice

Governance systems refer to the institutions, traditions and processes that determine how power is exercised, how citizens are given a “voice” and how decisions are made on issues of public concern. Good governance is embedded in four key characteristics:

accountability, transparency, participation and rule of law.

#### *(i) Rule of Law and Access to Justice*

There is evidence that while Belize’s judicial system does contribute to the consolidation of democratic principles and practices through the basic delivery of the rule of law in Belize, there are systemic capacity challenges and resource constraints that hamper the optimal institutional effectiveness of the judiciary in Belize (BCDL, 2010a, pg. 20). Systemic constraints include relatively low resource allocations for judicial operations, the lack of a formal performance assessment system for judicial effectiveness, relatively weak public confidence in the judicial system to mete out justice effectively and efficiently and the lack of substantive alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to complement the formal judiciary in reducing caseloads (ibid. pg. 20). Particularly difficult operational challenges include caseload levels increasing at a disproportionate rate to the number of assigned judges and magistrates thereby leading to major case backlogs and judicial delays, the infrastructural capacity of the judiciary being close to reaching its structural limits throughout the system; a high concentration of legal personnel and resources in Belize City making accessibility to justice difficult for those living in districts; weak administrative and procedural systems and an on going dilemma of judges and magistrates taking extremely long periods of time to render judgments on cases (ibid., pg. 20).



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*On the issue of political tolerance, Belize came in fourth after Canada, Argentina and the US, but with a 65% positive rating, the country ranked higher than any other nation in Central America*

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High levels of impunity and low conviction rates have been attributed to poor investigation; poor case preparation; poor communication between the police and the courts; corruption among magistrates and solicitors and political interference in cases (Gayle, 2010, pg. 12). With respect to youth, the justice system is challenged by a number of capacity deficits including: 1) withdrawal of cases due to financial and other pressures exerted on the victims; 2) lack of sensitization training for prosecutors; 3) lack of training of doctors and police in the collection and presentation of forensic evidence; 4) lack of early collaboration between prosecution and police; 5) lack of uniformity of procedure in family court; and 6) the lack of legal aid for foster parents in seeking adoptions (UNICEF, 2011 pg. 114). UNICEF has recommended the need for more investment in the juvenile justice system to implement a prevention-oriented approach that ensures that young offenders receive early attention and rehabilitation.

## ***(ii) Democracy and Politics***

### **a. Citizen Support for Democracy**

The 2008 Americas Barometer survey of political values and attitudes in Latin America explored support for democracy in the region and aimed to gauge public opinion on a number of issues such as support for the right of public contestation, extent of political tolerance and the political legitimacy of core democratic institutions. Regarding the issue of overall public support for democracy, Belize's score

was 71.9% which ranked the country approximately in the middle of the 23 countries in Latin America and the third highest in Central America (Seligson and Zephyr, 2009, pg. 2). With respect to the right of public contestation, Belize scored 76% and was in the top third of the Americas, but ranked first in the region along with Costa Rica (ibid. pg. 3). On the issue of political tolerance, Belize came in fourth after Canada, Argentina and the US, but with a 65% positive rating, the country ranked higher than any other nation in Central America (ibid. pg. 3). With respect to the political legitimacy of core institutions, a key value in democracy support, Belize scored the highest of all 23 countries in the Americas, with 55.9% (ibid. pg. 4). Despite solid public support for democratic institutions, there is also public unease about the full capacity of the existing formal democracy to provide an effective legal, political and policy framework to ensure citizen participation, the accountability of political leaders and the effective management of public resources to meet public needs (Barnett et al. 2010, pg 60).

### **b. Political Reform**

Improved governance was identified in Horizon 2030 as one of the two critical pillars for long-term development. Particular concern was expressed in Horizon 2030 regarding party politics and political reform, accountability and corruption, and the need for public sector modernisation. It noted that "election processes are

not marked by serious discussion of policy options, instead the focus is on promises with little prior analysis of feasibility. Furthermore, the party political process promotes dependency with many persons *expecting politicians to address personal problems and deliver solutions at the individual level....Politicians appear to be judged on their ability to meet these demands, rather than on their effectiveness in administering official responsibilities, addressing national and community development issues, making and implementing policies and managing public funds...* (Barnett et al., 2010, pg. 10).

Efforts at broader political reform have yielded mixed results. The PRC report, reflecting multi-stakeholder participation, formulated 103 separate recommendations for political reform; however while a significant number have been implemented, the majority of recommendations which would have resulted in substantive and transformative change of the political system remain unadopted. Among the most significant PRC recommendations not yet adopted by the legislature are: 1) replacement of the bicameral parliament with a unicameral parliament; 2) senate election via proportional representation system; 3) regulation of campaign financing legislation; 4) replacement of Prime Ministerial selection process by winning electoral party, to majority of House of Representatives; and 5) the establishment of the Office of the Leader of the Opposition with operational funds (Barnett et al, 2010, pg. 11).

### **c, Promoting and Ensuring Good Governance**

Despite efforts at strengthening the accountability framework with the Prevention of Corruption Act of 2007 and the adoption of a 2010 Plan of Action to implement the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, the administrative and legal machinery around the ethics and corruption issue remains a weak feature of the democratic framework in Belize. Corruption is perceived as being widespread and Belize was ranked 109th out of 179 countries in 'Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2008 (the last year that the country was listed on the CPI). As corruption is generally conceptualized as a "crime of opportunity" regardless of the traditional "cultural" explanations, strong institutional mechanisms are required for any effective response to ensure transparency.

Globally, the impact of corruption on governance, democracy and development is profound. It undermines the basic concept of the state at the service of the public, and replaces it with the privatization of public goods and services whereby state functionaries instead directly access the economic and political benefits of political power and executive decision making. It dissolves the fundamental social contract between the government and the governed upon which the legitimacy of state institutions is based and chips away at efforts to develop a culture of civic commitment and instead contributes to social con-

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flict. It also serves as a major obstacle to foreign investment as a key tenet of a well-functioning market must be the predictability of the judiciary and its ability to serve as an institutional countermeasure to executive and legislative abuses.

In response to the national challenges to manage and reduce corruption in Belize, Horizon 2030 proposed three central components to an anti-corruption strategy: 1) establish a zero tolerance anti-corruption policy and reform laws to strengthen oversight mechanisms and to administer strong penalties to offenders; 2) ensure transparent and fair hiring of public officers so that merit and competence are the core performance management and hiring assessment criteria respectively for the public sector and 3) modernization of government departments/ministries through the institutionalization of monitoring and evaluation systems and practices (Barnett et al. 2010, pg. 17). At present, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) is the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument. Belize is not a signatory to the UNCAC, and ratification of that instrument would be an important step for the country as the convention serves as a vital tool for developing a comprehensive response. It covers five main areas: 1) prevention; 2) criminalization and law enforcement measures; 3) international cooperation; 4) asset recovery; and 5) technical assistance and information exchange.

#### **d. Civil Society in Belize: Looking at Citizen Involvement**

For the state to remain broadly attentive to public concerns and fully transparent, a vibrant civil society needs to play a fundamental role in the monitoring of public policy, the activities of political parties and engage in meaningful advocacy. The 2005 CCA pointed to declining participation levels of civil society organizations (CSO) in weakening governance mechanisms, noting that *“the expanded civil society space and networks that national and community-based civil society organizations (CSOs) had carved out in the course of the 1990s and which resulted in a meaningful engagement in policy debates on national development directions, began to erode at the start of the new millennium. Major barriers formed over the past 5-8 years obstructing CSOs from having a real impact on people’s development”*(CCA 2005, pg. 21). This trend has not been reversed. Although funding cuts, weak leadership and ineffective mechanisms for participation contributed to this trend, public concern has been expressed regarding the need to enhance participatory strategies to ensure a healthier power balance between political parties relative to civil society, as they play distinct yet complementary roles. Based on the levels of engagement in policy dialogues and amount of media coverage of various program initiatives, It has been observed that membership supported organizations (MSOs) from the private sector and environmental intermediary NGOs have the most no-



table advocacy strength and emerging policy advocacy roles within the current civil society sphere in Belize (BCDL 2010b, pg. 8). Overall, there is a clear need for increased civil society participation as “watchdogs” in the policy formulation arena, monitoring and evaluation of development outcomes and in the implementation of development projects and programming.

#### e. Political Role of Women

The role of women in politics, particularly at the national level, is notable largely for the fact that very few women serve as government leaders in the bicameral legislature in Belize. In fact, at present (2012) there is only one woman serving as an elected member of the national parliament and two appointed, non-elected female ministers in the new Cabinet. The National Women’s Commission (NWC) noted in their revised Gender Policy 2010 report that “since 1984, only 14 women have offered themselves as candidates in national general elections. Of these women, 4 have won seats in the National Assembly. Of those who won, only 2 were appointed as Cabinet Ministers with full Ministerial powers. In 1998, an additional woman was appointed as a Minister of State and had limited access to Cabinet proceedings. Of those who won in national general elections, all were relegated to social sector Ministries, mainly the Ministry of Human Development. In one other case, a woman who was defeated in the national general election, was ap-

pointed Special Envoy for Gender and HIV (2003) and was named Senator (2005)” (NWC, 2010, pg. 40). However, it should be noted that there are on-going initiatives of the NWC such as the Women in Politics programme, which provide training in political skills and encourage women to engage in the political arena at various levels. It should also be underscored that in the Senate there is female representation, though not to the level expected based on population proportionality. Notably, there is a higher level of female participation in municipal politics with women occupying mayoral and councillor positions in several municipal councils over the last decade. While women are few in the political arena, they are vibrant and leading members of civil society organizations and networks, the public administration system and within the private sector.

#### D. Environmental and Social Vulnerabilities: Disaster Risk and Climate Change; Violence and Citizen Insecurity

All societies reflect degrees of physical, social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities and the development challenge is to limit or manage risks from a range of threats to the greatest extent possible. In Belize, this is of significant importance when one considers that the strength of the Belizean economy depends on the health of its natural resource base, making it mandatory that closer consideration be given to those cross cutting issues dealing with pov-



##### Box 1: Climate and Disaster Risk

Belize is the 8th ranked country from 167 for climate risk, according to the World Bank. Located in one of the most active hurricane areas of the world, Belize’s population of only 300,000 is exposed to the impacts of major storm systems on an average of once every three years equating to over 50 strikes since formal record keeping began in 1871. Between the periods of 1990-2008 Belize has experienced both human and economic losses. There have been eleven disaster events; a total of 63 persons were killed; the average number of persons killed per year is 3. The number of people affected in total was 175,170 persons with the average number affected per year are 9,219. Economic damages as a result of natural disasters [within] the same period are estimated at [US\$] 547,307 (US\$ x 1,000[]); economic damages per year amount to [US\$] 28,806 (US\$ x 1,000).

Source: (UNDP 2009)



erty, natural resources degradation and economic development. This in turn, demands that environmental protection and sustainable development policies and strategies be mainstreamed into the various sectoral national plans and programmes.

While the Government of Belize, with the support of active NGO and CBO community partnership, has been able to accomplish much in addressing critical issues impacting the management of Belize's natural resources and its environment, additional work remains in ensuring that Belize's national economic development framework more closely reflects the mainstreaming of sustainable development issues in the various sectoral policies and plans. Belize's Medium Term Evaluation (MTE) identified two very different challenges that have a wide range of ramifications across the Belizean society. The first challenge is the country's inherent exposure to natural hazards and its potential environmental fragility and the second challenge is the rapid elevation of levels of violence and citizen insecurity. Belize's major environmental vulnerabilities include the sustainable use of land, minerals, water, and energy, issues associated with biodiversity and ecosystem loss from deforestation and the unsustainable use of these resources. This is further exacerbated by climate change related issues and the increased impacts of natural phenomena (hurricanes and storms) and by cross border incursions for the harvesting of forest products such as xate and illegal

farming. This section examines these issues and the national coping capacities for responding and building resilience.

#### **(i) Sustainable Development, Disaster Risk and Climate Change**

There are strong causal relationships among the state of the environment, human well-being and vulnerability. The vulnerability of a population is dependent on the extent of their exposure to environmental changes, their sensitivity to impacts and the ability or inability to cope, adapt and maintain resiliency. Vulnerability patterns show an unequal distribution of risks across specific groups of people with the most vulnerable being the poor, indigenous populations, women and children and other marginalized social groups.

Finding this balance between people and the environment in Belize will depend on how well the country can realize its long-standing commitment to achieve sustainable development. The sustainable development approach, traditionally identified with the 1987 Brundtland Report commissioned by the UN, puts forth a vision of future development that would not only be economically rational in terms of resource use and efficiency but would also be fair in terms of resource use and access between and among those presently in society as well as those generations yet to come (intergenerational equity). The fundamental underpinnings of sustainable development (environmental integrity, social equity and economic

self-reliance) collectively provide a solid conceptual foundation for devising and implementing strategies that will enhance human development globally and at the national level in countries like Belize.

The cycle of poverty, environmental degradation and vulnerabilities must be closely examined in the Belizean context. The 2009 Country Poverty Assessment cited the frequent recurrences of natural disasters in northern Belize as being a key trigger to the dramatic increases in poor and indigent households as the coping capacities of communities are constantly eroded with insufficient recovery period between events (GOB 2010, pg. 51). For many rural communities this is magnified due to damages to woodland forest, mangroves and other natural resources which are often relied upon for traditional economic sustenance. Therefore, reducing urban and rural poverty becomes a critical part of a viable strategy to effective disaster risk reduction (DRR). Integrating development, environmental policies, environmental health and education for effective DRR provides an opportunity for a joint response by UN and non UN partners.

Climate change is predicted to increase population's exposure to natural hazards. Unsustainable management practices such as unchecked mangrove clearance, unmanaged slope agriculture and the continued concentration of people in highly exposed areas are set to magnify the predicted impacts associated to climate change. Climate change can

magnify disaster risk, not only because of the increase of extreme climatic events, but because of how it influences the drivers of vulnerability, among them food insecurity, loss of ecosystem, migration and poverty. Given that approximately one half of Belize's population is concentrated in coastal population centers and that the country's economy is highly dependent on commodity exports and tourism, the nation's economic and social exposure becomes significantly increased to the compounding effects of climate change.

While tropical cyclones and accompanying storm surges have historically inflicted the greatest damage, a major threat is recurrent flooding due to heavy and persistent rainfall and the altering of natural drainage, wetlands and water catchment areas. Recent hydro-meteorological events have resulted in significant losses to the country's productive sectors. The vulnerability of concentrated populations in exposed areas such as in Belize City (Belize City is home to approximately 17% of the country's population) is exacerbated by inadequacies in housing and support infrastructure. This notable environmental fragility is an aggregate result of the city's location, climate, and topography.

Climate change research publications have generated evidence that sea surface temperatures have increased for many years and that mean sea level has risen in the Mesoamerican region. This has a range of implications for Belize. The 2007 Vul-







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*With an accompanying increase in the intensive use of land and water resources, the impact on natural eco-systems becomes increasingly clear as climate change would progressively undermine these same ecosystems supporting many of the present food-producing systems*

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nerability Assessment by the Belize Coastal Zone detailed a range of possible effects of climate change, based on modeled scenarios developed by the National Meteorological Service (NMS). According to the study, the major impacts predicted on Belize's biophysical resources will be from sea level rise, increased sea surface temperatures, changes in weather patterns and increased storm activity. Corals are the most susceptible to increased sea surface temperature and frequent storm events. Corals will be lost due to bleaching, disease and physical damage. Mangroves and sea grass beds will be most susceptible to changes in weather patterns and storm events that will result in physical damage and changes in biological processes such as reproduction. Mangroves are expected to retreat sequentially to maintain their position within the ecosystem. Coastal areas, beaches and cayes will be most susceptible to increasing sea levels and increase in storm events. These areas would suffer from inundation, erosion and storm surges. The socioeconomic impacts will be from loss of habitat and coastal areas which in turn will directly affect the tourism and fisheries industries (Neal et al., pg.9). There are also noted links between climate change impacts and health outcomes that need to be monitored. There are indications that some vector-borne diseases (chagas and dengue) and water/food borne diseases may increase as negative climate change impacts mount. With reference to dengue in particular, vulnerability

assessment studies have shown that there would be increases in the range of the diseases in Belize due to projected increases in precipitation and temperature levels (Vanzie, 2008).

Development planners need to explore the potential range of risks and costs of climate change for human beings, including water stress, loss of important ecosystems, changes in agricultural productivity, malnutrition and infectious diseases, increased morbidity and mortality from heat stress, flooding, and drought. Studies on climate change and food security have indicated that under increasing pressure to satisfy the food needs of a rapidly growing and progressively wealthier world, the anticipated impacts of climate change can place particular stress on food production systems (FAO 2007, FAO 2011). With an accompanying increase in the intensive use of land and water resources, the impact on natural ecosystems becomes increasingly clear as climate change would progressively undermine these same ecosystems supporting many of the present food-producing systems.

A 2009 UNDP Development Studies paper analyzed the costs of inaction on climate change for Belize, characterizing the vulnerability of three economic sectors (agriculture and fisheries, energy and tourism) in Belize to the effects of climate change. With regard to three staple crops (rice, maize and beans) that are important to Belize's food security as well as for export income, the report concluded that reductions in yield for these crops alone would repre-



sent BZ\$13-18 million in lost revenue (UNDP 2009, pgs. 29-30). While specific yield loss predictions for fisheries was complex, exports have ranged between BZ\$85 and \$100 million, indicating its importance to the Belize economy. With respect to the energy sector, the losses to Belize just for the electricity sector were estimated at approximately BZ\$58 million by 2080 (ibid. pg. 38). The economic impact of climate change for the tourism sector in Belize were estimated at BZ\$48.3 million, and includes the effects of reduced tourism demand, loss of facilities (from sea-level rise), loss of beaches (from coastal erosion), and loss of reef-based ecotourism (ibid. pgs. 44-45).

#### **a. Institutional Response**

Responding to these vulnerabilities requires making simultaneous advances on adaptation, disaster risk reduction, environmental sustainability and poverty reduction. This requires an integrated approach which addresses the underlying causes of disaster risk, seeks to improve preparedness for future disasters, ensures integration and alignment with national development programmes and MDGs tied to sustainable development and the environment. Belize's disaster risk management framework is principally addressed by the Disaster Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, which established the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO). NEMO's formal mandate is to coordinate the general policy of the government related to the mitigation of, preparedness for, response to and

recovery from emergencies and disasters. Other important pieces of legislation linking other sectors with disaster management, include the Land Utilization Act; the Environmental Protection Act; the Coastal Zone Management Act; the Insurance Act; the Belize Building Act which enabled the Central Building Authority (CBA); the Property Protection (Fire) Act and the Harbours and Merchant Shipping Act.

The GFDRR analysis of risk management practice suggests that the policy framework is fragmented and that the public sector organization approach has been predominantly focused on the emergency management cycle. An important step addressing these issues was the 2004 National Hazard Mitigation Policy, an effort which sought to formulate an integrated approach to hazard risk management and sustainable development that had national, sectoral and community dimensions. This effort was undertaken by the Government of Belize, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) to address hazard reduction issues within a broader national development framework. In 2007, Belize adopted a 10-year National Hazard Mitigation Plan to implement the policy, which sought to ensure a more integrated, coordinated and multi-sectoral approach to hazard mitigation. Several other key national policy documents explicitly promote the integration of disaster risk management (DRM) into the planning process.

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As an overall response to these emerging challenges posed to the national health sector by increased climate change driven disaster frequency, the Ministry of Health is implementing the Safe Hospital Initiative that focuses on strengthening the resiliency of health facilities in times of disaster. At present, three regional hospitals and the national referral hospital have been assessed and recommendations are in the process of being implemented. Overall, the explicit integration of the broader mandate of adaptive capacity to climate change is an ongoing challenge across sectors.

## E. Violence and Citizen Security

In 2009, UNDP reported in its regional Human Development Report for Central America that the seven countries of the Central American isthmus—Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama—registered the highest levels of non-political violence in the world (UNDP, 2009). Based on a consolidated review of policy reports covering citizen security in Belize, the major dimensions relating to citizen security in Belize can be identified as: 1) Crime: a high and rising crime and murder rate, combined with understaffed and poorly resourced police and justice administration institutions; 2) Gangs: there is a potential trend toward the new presence of high profile Central American gangs (MS-13 and MS-18), in addition to gangs already in operation in Belize;

3) Concentration of violence: the Belize District, which includes San Pedro and Caye Caulker, had the majority of the offences with 36%; the western and northern regions had 22% each and the south maintained the lowest crime rate with 20%. Belize City constitutes the nation's most dangerous zone (2009 data); 4) Drug Trade: Belize, due a range of factors including its geographical location, is being increasingly exposed to the relentless dynamic of regional drug-trafficking, with an influx of money, arms and efforts to recruit youth; 5) Gender and intra-family violence; increased reporting of domestic violence, growing trend of sex crimes against children and women including sexual assault, and trafficking.

The murder rate in Belize is currently one of the highest in the world (41.7 per 100,000) (UNODC, pg. 93). The 2009 CPA noted that approximately half the murders nationally occurred in Belize City and principally in the South Side area (40% of national homicides) (GoB, 2009, pg. 159). Motives for the murders included robbery, altercations/disputes and feuds, drug dealings and domestic disputes (ibid.). Overall, the conviction rate for murder cases is well below 10% signaling serious policing and judicial weaknesses. Police data on youth involvement in crime suggests that the number of crimes committed by youths has been slowly but steadily rising over time. There is anecdotal evidence that Belizean deportees, particularly from the US, are also contributing to the growing



crime problem; however since data on crimes committed by deportees are not officially recorded as such, it is difficult to ascertain how deportees are exacerbating crime levels in Belize.

While crimes are often committed by individuals associated with gangs, little analysis has been done on gangs in Belize. A significant impediment is the dearth of credible longitudinal data on gang activity in Belize which can provide a statistical baseline for undertaking necessary analysis. As a result, crime analyses on gangs are usually based on strong anecdotal evidence which may not provide all the historical and existing data sources and information needed for a complete understanding of the many interconnected individuals and organizations, formal and informal, which make up the vast criminal landscape and may not lend to easily constructed formal crime trend analyses.

UNODC analysis suggests that at present, gangs, as the term is used in Belize do not represent an organized or orchestrated criminal organization but rather youth clusters whose criminal activity is incidental rather than purposeful. While the gangs may exhibit some form of organized behavior at the street level by using illegal arms, extortion and other modus operandi common to the region, their activities have been described by experts as "disorganized crime". When such gangs begin to exhibit other organized criminal skills such as delivering and participating in larger trafficking operations linked to larger players in

the area, then they are categorized as organized crime. According to police statements from local policing authorities in Belize however, the cases are few. While some analysts have argued that gangs represent structures that can be potentially exploited by organized crime, and that an incipient Salvadoran gang presence could contribute to this, the UNODC World Drug Report 2010 noted: *"For most forms of crime in the region, the blame often falls on two street gang confederations founded by deportees from the USA: Mara Salvatrucha (MS13) and Calle 18 (M18). But there is little evidence that these groups, comprised of street youth intensely focused on neighborhood issues, are widely engaged in large-scale transnational drug trafficking.....They are certainly culpable in street sales in the areas they control, but their capacity to engage in bulk transnational smuggling is questionable (pg. 239)."*

Gang-related criminal activity has produced considerable levels of citizen insecurity particularly in Belize City due mainly to the brazen nature of serious crime, the occasional randomness of criminality and the frightening problem of stolen ammunitions and firearms being occasionally utilized in gang confrontations. At the same time, a recent assessment of juvenile justice in Belize noted that the police view "juvenile crime as an area of growing concern" (ABA, 2010, pg. xiv). Members of the senior police rank in the districts indicated that they have seen an increase in the number of gang related crimes and more organization in the crimes being

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*The country's strategic location as well as porous borders and extensive coastlines make it highly vulnerable to exploitation by organized criminal groups*

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committed by juveniles and furthermore stated that the United States of America federal government's policy of deporting experienced criminals from the U.S. is seriously contributing to the increase of criminality among minors.

#### **(i) Drug Trafficking**

Increased narcotics trafficking, already a major contributing factor to crime and violence in Belize represents a substantial threat to the future of the country. Belize is already a prime transshipment location and is a significant route for illicit drugs, human and arms trafficking. Belize is newly listed as one of the 22 major illicit drugs traffic/producing countries in the world in a recent US Presidential Memorandum -- Major Illicit Drug Traffic report, released in September, 2011. The country's strategic location as well as porous borders and extensive coastlines make it highly vulnerable to exploitation by organized criminal groups. While crime and violence clearly have numerous drivers, drug trafficking is a major factor behind rising levels of violence in the region and Belize. In addition to its geographical characteristics, other elements which make Belize vulnerable to penetration by organized criminal groups are the weaknesses in its criminal justice system, high levels of youth unemployment, school dropout rates for males and poverty.

#### **(ii) Gender-based Violence**

The National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action (2010-2013) notes that *"violence against women and girls is a global phenomenon. It happens every day, every hour, and every minute. It is an infringement of women's fundamental human rights. It not only affects women who are battered, raped or sexually abused, it affects all women. It has serious economic and non-economic costs for society"* (Lewis, 2010, pg. 2). Gender-based violence goes beyond women to include all forms of domestic violence, child abuse, commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, commercial sex work, human trafficking, rape and sexual assault. Aspects of gender-based violence will be explored further in the thematic section on health issues.

Gender-based violence is also a feature of the violence profile in Belizean society. While it is unclear whether or not it is on the rise, there is more reporting because of the work of women's organizations and more services by the state. One area of gender-based violence is the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents (CSEC). Catzim-Sanchez and Haylock (2006), in a study sponsored by the International Labour Organization (ILO), revealed the extent and nature of the phenomena through extensive interviews with community members and with victims. CSEC was identified in a range of different circumstances, including in brothels, on the streets, and even affecting school children and adoles-



cents. The report noted that victims not only received money in exchange for sexual activity, but also received payment “in kind” in the form of food, payment of school expenses, clothing, etc. Many of the children come from backgrounds permeated by violence, including domestic abuse, neglect, alcohol consumption, and fractured families (ibid.).

Currently, CSEC is not explicitly a crime under the laws of Belize. The criminal justice system is hampered in prosecuting in part because the Criminal Code does not specifically address commercial sexual exploitation, only addressing carnal knowledge, rape, and sexual assault as criminal offences. A number of analysts have argued that the law is both hostile to children as well as gender-biased, given that in carnal knowledge cases regarding sexual contact with underage persons, the victim’s character is explored in the court and is used to determine whether the sexual act was illegal. (NWC, 2010), in response to this, NWC asserted that “this approach violates the fundamental rights of victims and even more so, of the children whose lives are affected by CSEC” (pg. 34). They further argued that current legislation used to deal with sexual exploitation does not afford adequate protection to boys and males who are raped or prostituted (ibid.,pg.35). Sexual offence cases show high levels of impunity with approximately one-half of all sexual offence cases dropped before they went to trial (ibid.).

Important national efforts have been underway with the 2007 Domestic Violence Act and a National Plan of Action for Gender-based Violence which sought to provide coordination and an integrated approach to deal with the many types of challenges faced by survivors of gender based violence. Principal goals and objectives were to: 1) to reduce the number of gender-based violent crimes in Belize; 2) promote a Zero-Tolerance approach to gender-based violence; 3) to provide a comprehensive and supportive service to victims of gender-based violence in Belize; 4) rehabilitate perpetrators of gender-based violent crimes; and 5) reduce the number of re-rehabilitation (Lewis, 2010, pgs. 4-5).

The abuse of children is also a critically important dimension of the profile of violence, and a key to its perpetuation. It has been observed that boys are more routinely abused than girls, however girls (approximately 58%) have a higher referral rate than boys (approximately 43%) (Gayle and Mortis, 2010). While younger children, ages 5 to 9 tend to be referred for neglect, abandonment, physical and emotional abuse, the older cohort 10-14 are most vulnerable to sexual abuse. NWC noted that mothers are the main perpetrators of neglect while both mothers and fathers perpetrate physical and emotional abuse and that non-familial persons (not related to the family) are the main alleged perpetrators of sexual abuse (NWC 2010).

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*Crime and violence have multiple drivers, but increasingly in stakeholders' analysis of principal factors underlying its multiple manifestations, the role of poverty consistently emerges as a key cause.*

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### **(iii) Other Citizen Security Issues**

Other citizen security issues relate to road traffic accidents and the need to strengthen the epidemiological surveillance systems. Sixty-one people died due to road traffic injuries during 2007, 338 were hospitalized, and 565 people were estimated to be slightly injured (Perez-Nunez et al., 2010, pg. 326). Based on road traffic injury data provided for the year 2007, an estimated total of 2,501 years of potential life were lost in Belize due to premature death, with a total economic cost of US\$11,062,544 representing 0.9% of Belize gross domestic product (Perez-Nunez et al., 2010, pg. 335). Direct cost was estimated at US\$163,503 of which 2.4% was spent on fatalities, 46.7% on the severely injured, and 50.9% on the slightly injured (ibid. pg. 331). The economic cost estimations make clear the need to prevent road traffic injuries with a strategic and multi-sectoral approach that focuses on addressing the main problems identified.

#### **a. Institutional Response**

Crime and violence have multiple drivers, but increasingly in stakeholders' analysis of principal factors underlying its multiple manifestations, the role of poverty consistently emerges as a key cause. Unemployment, marginalization, poor education, poor housing and living conditions all play an important role. Gender norms also clearly play a prominent role. Another key element has to do with capacity gaps in state institutions that relate to rule of law,

such as the criminal justice system. Consequently, strategies to respond to these challenges need to combine a social prevention dimension in addition to strengthening capabilities of justice administration, including consolidation of mechanisms for greater coordination and oversight functions.

With regard to health related citizen security issues, it is important to point out that the strengthening of the epidemiological surveillance systems, outbreak response, and the implementation of the International Health Regulations of the country remain a challenge. There is a need to strengthen the institutional capacities such as human resources in the area of epidemiology and laboratory capacity to support outbreak investigation. Implication of not doing so could affect the overall economic development of the country and in particular, the tourism sector. Health surveillance is also considered a national security issue as failure to strengthen measures at the border crossing and ports of entry could result in serious public health dilemmas.

#### **b. Policing**

The last CPA (2009) noted that *"the police are adamant that the crime problems of the country cannot be resolved by conventional preventive policing and zero tolerance. They see the causes as being deep-seated, complex and interrelated where continued poverty and lack of employment prospects over a prolonged period have led to a process of social decay..."* (GOB 2010, pg. 162). The Belize Police Depart-

ment sought to increase effectiveness through a national Policing Plan 2006-2010 with the following strategic priorities: increasing the effectiveness of preventive patrols; improving traffic and road safety; continuing to target drug traffickers, transnational and organized crime; improving investigative procedures to increase detection and conviction of offenders; improving morale and welfare of all members of the department in order to deliver a more efficient and professional level of service to the community; enhancing overall quality of service to foster better support and cooperation from the public (BPD 2006). A number of recent initiatives which seek to implement crime prevention activities, including the Yabra Community Policing Centre; the Zone Beat Liaison Officers Program; Police Crime Prevention Educational Program; Police Citizen Liaison Committees; Citizen on Patrol/Special Constables Programme; Belize Police Youth Cadet Corp; and the Drug Abuse Resistance Education. There are few formal evaluative initiatives however which seek to properly assess the effectiveness of these various interventions.

### c. Crime Prevention

In 2010, the government of Belize launched RESTORE Belize Programme, a crime prevention initiative, which operates directly out of the Office of the Prime Minister. In keeping with the recommendations of the Gayle Report and the Crooks Report, the programme functions primarily

as a coordinating agency that pulls together all government agencies to address the complex array of institutional, social and economic issues that have given rise to the high levels of violent crime in Belize. The majority of the actions are executed by existing government, non-governmental or private agencies. The Programme Coordination Unit assists in the coordination of plans and resources, the identification and securing of new resources, and the facilitation of public-private partnerships. Since the establishment of RESTORE Belize, the Government has developed a Strategic Plan for the initiative, which will require a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy to enable its full and effective implementation. The complexity and multi-causal nature of the issues of citizen insecurity, crime and violence underscore the necessity of an integrated human rights approach to the problem, which takes into consideration the range and interdependence of the rights involved.

## F. The Economy

Belize faces a number of challenges in attaining high standards of economic development and reducing poverty, mainly due to significant external vulnerabilities such as natural disasters and heavy dependency on international market conditions and prices, as well as the results of a historically weak institutional framework for the management of fiscal policy. Belize's low population density in relation to an abundance of land has contributed to structur-



### Box 2: Belize's Productive Sector

Tourism accounted for 22% of GDP, 40% of exports of goods and services (XG&S) [excluding the free zones] and 25% of employment in 2007. The tourism product is diverse, reflecting Belize's rich natural and cultural heritage. There is growth potential in the sector particularly in the overnight segment, which accounts for the majority of tourism expenditures. The sector faces some challenges: (i) visitor congestion and environmental degradation in popular sites in protected areas; (ii) little planning and coordination between decisions on public infrastructure and private investments (iii) limitations in the provision of basic infrastructure in tourism destinations (solid waste, water and sanitation, road improvements and rural airports) (iv) high costs of doing business, such as expensive utilities and local credit; weak property rights, infrastructure bottlenecks, and supply constraints; and (v) lack of a sustainable human resources development program.

In agriculture there are also opportunities for new investment and growth. Currently agriculture represents 12% of GDP and 20% of XG&S. Belize needs to upgrade its export basket, particularly to non-traditional agriculture for export, given the eroding preferences for banana and sugar exports as well as explore other potential areas such as high value foodstuffs consumed by the tourism trade, and bio fuel crops. The main challenges for export competitiveness are compliance with sanitary and phyto-sanitary international standards, production technology, infrastructure, and difficulties obtaining long-term capital.

The discovery of oil in 2005 after half a century of exploration activities, poses both challenges and opportunities for Belize. The industry has growth potential, even in the current context of low prices. As a percentage of GDP, oil production increased from 3% in 2006 to 6% in 2008, and as a share of exports, it increased from 10% to 16% in the same period. The main challenge the sector faces is the creation of an institutional framework that attracts foreign investors and at the same time generates a fair share of government revenues and adequately manages the environmental impact.

Source: IDB Country Strategy 2008-2012

ing an economy based on its natural resources: tourism, agriculture, and increasingly petroleum. Low population density also explains constraints on the size of the internal market and high per capita infrastructure costs. The tertiary sector, or service industry, provides almost two thirds of all jobs in Belize and the retail sector provides a fifth of all jobs (CPA 2009, pg. 32).

### (i) Economic Growth Patterns

It has been noted that Belize's long-term growth performance, measured in GDP per capita, over the past three decades has been comparatively good when measured against its Central American neighbours but not so good when compared to its Caribbean counterparts (IDB 2010, pg. 3). Over the last twenty years, Belize has oscillated between periods of high growth and periods of retrenchment and economic stasis, with significant limitations to economic opportunity and structural inequities in education, health and income. The poverty level for Belizeans in 2009 was 43%, a burden that falls unequally on children, who experience a poverty rate of 52% (CPA, 2009, pg. 48-62).

Although GDP per capita during the ten-year period from 1999 (US\$ 3,045.60) to 2010 (US \$4,153.00) increased by about 36%, the average tended to mask the overall stagnation over the last five years. Short-term growth periods, such as from 1999-2003, were the product of expansionary fiscal policies, financed largely by external commercial borrowing. By

2004, public debt had risen to 100% of GDP (US\$ 1,056.30 million), requiring an urgent debt restructuring in 2007 to avoid crisis and default (IDB 2010, pgs. 10-12). At the time, Belize ranked eighth out of 19 countries with regard to total debt ratio to GDP among Latin American nations. The impact of the restructuring served to reduce debt service payments from 47% of government expenditure in 2006 to 31% in 2008 (CPA, 2009). While more manageable, debt service still represents almost 10% of exports and the total public debt burden remaining at close to 80% of GDP by the end of 2010.

Future economic growth will thus depend on rising public and national saving rates that are encouraged through sustained fiscal strengthening and a reduction of the debt overhang. While prospects for growth are challenging to predict due to externalities (including natural disasters and the volatility of the global economy), the IMF's baseline scenario projection of real GDP growth for Belize is an estimated 2.5% annually through the medium term (IMF, 2011, pg. 5). Based on current population trends, this implies at best, a continuing stagnation in real per capita income for the next 10 years, and, at worst, a decline. Improving economic performance based on private sector investment and job creation will be an important contribution to poverty reduction. In 2010 however, Belize's economy showed some positive trends, experiencing a GDP growth rate of 2.4% thereby outstripping the economic growth rates



in the rest of the Caribbean. This has been attributed to expansion in services, utilities, sugarcane, non-traditional crops, livestock and an increase in tourism (UNICEF 2011).

Despite increases in real GDP per capita levels from 1990 to 2009 which is a trend usually associated with a decline in the rate of poverty; in Belize the national poverty rate rose from 33.5% in 2002 to 41.3% in 2009 (UNDP 2010, pg. 16). The explanation for this lies partly with the fact that income inequality worsened, which undermined the usual correlation between growth rates and poverty reduction. The Belize MDG Scorecard and Outlook Report 2010 asserted that:

*"one of the causes of impoverishment was the decline in gross real investment, especially investment in domestic capital, accompanied at the same time by an increase in foreign claims on the output and income produced by the economy. In the absence of a strong programme of rapid domestic capital formation, globalization and integration into the global financial system was not accompanied by adequate measures to improve the absolute and relative capacity of the local community – especially the poor the vulnerable and the local middle classes – to win opportunities for investment, income and consumption"* (UNDP 2010a, pg. 32).

Unemployment in Belize has increased significantly over the last few years. 2008, the unemployment rate was 8.2%, in 2009 it rose to 14% and in 2010 it has further increased

to 23.1% with males accounting for 16.7% and females 33.1% of those unemployed (CPA 2009; GOB 2010). The CPA 2009 noted that the unemployment rate for young adults (20-24) was particularly high at 20% and that the pattern of unemployment has affected women more than men, with the female unemployment rate increasing by 8% from 2008 to 2009 (pg. 32). Women's employment is almost entirely in the tertiary sector, representing over 80% of their jobs while 29% of men are employed in the agricultural sector and 12% work in construction (CPA 2009, pg. 32).

**Table 1: Employment by Sex and Industry 2009**

Industry	Female	Male	Both sexes	Male/ Female ratio *
Agriculture – sugarcane	0.9	8.1	5.5	16.3
Other agriculture	1.3	13.5	9.1	19.2
<b>Primary Industries</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>11.8</b>
Manufacturing of food products	3.4	2.6	2.9	1.4
Manufacturing	0.8	2.7	2	6.3
Construction	1.2	12.2	8.2	18.3
<b>Secondary Industries</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>5.1</b>
Wholesale/retail trade and repair	22.7	17	19	1.3
Tourism	15.4	7.9	10.6	0.9
Transport	4.2	5.5	5	2.4
Other business services	1.8	2.8	2.5	2.7
Government	12.9	8	9.7	1.1
Community & Personal Services	20	9.1	16.2	0.6
<b>Tertiary Industries</b>	<b>88.8</b>	<b>51.7</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total employed</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.7</b>

\*Male employment / female employment

NB. Sectors employing less than 2% of all employees have been omitted; about 10% did not state their industry

(Source: CPA 2009, pg. 33)

**Table 2: Employment by Industry and District, 2009**

Industry	Belize	Cayo	Corozal	Orange Wall	Stann Creek	Toledo
Agriculture	1.8%	17.8%	32.2%	24.9%	25.6%	46.1%
Construction	8.5%	7.2%	6.9%	11.8%	5.4%	8.6%
Retail	22.4%	15.8%	22.7%	22.2%	14.5%	6.5%
Tourism - Hotels, Restaurants etc.	13.4%	10.6%	6.3%	6.4%	14.0%	8.6%
Government	10.3%	14.8%	4.5%	4.9%	10.3%	9.8%
Personal Services	19.3%	18.4%	12.5%	11.3%	17.4%	10.2%
All other sectors	24.3%	15.4%	14.9%	18.5%	12.8%	10.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

(Source: CPA 2009, pg. 34).

It has been noted that rather than the number of working poor decreasing over time with economic expansion, the number of employed persons living below the poverty line has grown considerably since 1995 along with the rate of poverty (UNDP 2010a, pg. 37). It is further suggested that the new jobs being created in the Belizean economy during the same time period "have been very low-end jobs which yielded incomes that are not adequate to lift the families of those earners above the Belize poverty and indigence lines (ibid. pg. 36). Exacerbating the weak economic growth outlook is statistical evidence that overall labour productivity has also been falling as the number of working poor has risen (ibid. pg 35). To redress this situation, it is suggested that *"in a context of growing international competition, the capacity-building process is not adequately equipping Belizeans with increasing capacity to win employment opportunity at incomes above the poverty rate"* (ibid. pg. 37). Suggested strategies for addressing capacity gaps include a robust social assistance program,

education subsidies, a program for returning transnationals so that they can invest and improve local human capita, support for entrepreneurship initiatives and quality housing.

Remittances, mainly from family members, have traditionally been a major source of economic sustenance for many Belizean households. Data on remittances show that in 2007, tracked remittances totaled almost US\$ 75 million which was 5.8% of the total estimated GDP (US\$ 1,276.65 million) for that same year (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 42). This reflects the proportionate importance these transnational flows of monies from Belizeans living abroad have on the economic wherewithal of the country.

A particularly notable state policy directed at improving the economic growth trajectory of the country has been the 2011 decisions to nationalize/re-nationalize the water, electricity and telecommunications utility providers. At least two of these utility nationalization initiatives have resulted in considerable litigation between the Government of Belize and the for-



mer owners of the utilities resulting in notable amounts of technical time and financial resources being expended to deal with the legal challenges.

## (ii) Agriculture

Belize's natural endowment for undertaking agricultural is comparatively excellent as climactic conditions are very favourable, water resources are fairly abundant (est. 68,000 cubic meters per capita) and a relatively substantial proportion of the land area (38% of total land mass/800,000 hectares) is suitable for farming and livestock rearing (IDB, 2010, pg. 107). However, unlike other countries in Latin America which have high arable land usage rates, only approximately 10% of arable land in Belize is used for agriculture (ibid. pg 107). Systemic challenges and constraints identified include the high cost of developing agricultural land because of having to build costly access roads, independently provide potable water and electricity in most cases, constructing irrigation facilities, land clearing that infringes on the vast protected area system, lack of secure markets for agricultural produce and the reality that there are few new profitable farming options to be had (ibid. pg. 107).

Key results and outcomes of the agricultural context in Belize are that farms are small in average size (57% of farms have less than 20 acres), have relatively low production yields and what is produced is mainly low value commodities that are input and capital intensive. The progressive decline of profitability and competitiveness

of the agricultural sector has proven to be a significant development constraint. Since the majority of agricultural commodity exports fall under preferred trading regimes, the agricultural sector in Belize is unduly vulnerable to exogenous market shocks. There is also a gap between the development of sound agricultural policies and strategies and effective implementation and evidenced results and impacts. Additionally, there are areas that require improvement in inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination.

Despite historically low levels of innovation in the local agricultural sector, past growth in the sector was based on the use of modern inputs such as irrigation, fertilizers and herbicides. This creates difficulties for improving product exportation opportunities and market diversification in foreign markets. Production and export concentration in only a few basic commodities and agro-processed food items and the lack of dynamism in identifying and developing new products has led to the slow growth momentum in the sector. On the domestic front, there has been ongoing policy and program efforts to link agriculture with the tourism sector. However there have been historical difficulties in realizing impactful results in this dual sector arrangement due to weak incentives-based policies, the lack of an institutional focal point to drive this strategy and the ongoing difficulties of achieving consistent quality standards and reliable supply quantities for a tourism sector that requires both.







This section looks at the current development challenges and progress in Belize across sectors, from a human rights-based approach. It employs a systematic analysis of causality to examine factors that promote or inhibit achievement of rights, using a capacity gap analysis and an institutional analysis to explore both the individual and institutional capacity of duty-bearers to fulfill rights. Specifically, the next sections will explore in detail the challenges in the achievement of the Millennium Goals in the areas of poverty reduction, education, health, and gender equality and the need for investment to transform the capacity of the population to address the intractable social and economic dilemmas the country faces. Besides using the MDGs as a national development target review framework, it will also utilize a range of international conventions and standards, including the CRC and the CEDAW, to explore achievements and gaps.

### A. Poverty

Goal 1 of the MDGs is to Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger. At a global level, the targets are:

1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people

whose income is less than \$1 a day;

2. Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; and
3. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

The eradication of poverty is seen as an overarching goal in the achievement of rights, as poverty alleviation is generally linked to positive changes in health, education, participation and in the protective assets that guard against violence, victimization, and exploitation. Poverty exerts differentiated impacts on equity and rights for children and women, impacts which further differ depending on geographical area and ethnicity. Globally, evidence indicates that poverty invariably impedes educational access, performance and retention, and serves as a barrier to good health.

In Belize, the MDG target has been to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people living below the Belize indigence line; and to halve the proportion of the people with less than minimum consumption (extreme poverty).

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*The eradication of poverty is seen as an overarching goal in the achievement of rights, as poverty alleviation is generally linked to positive changes in health, education, participation and in the protective assets that guard against violence, victimization, and exploitation.*

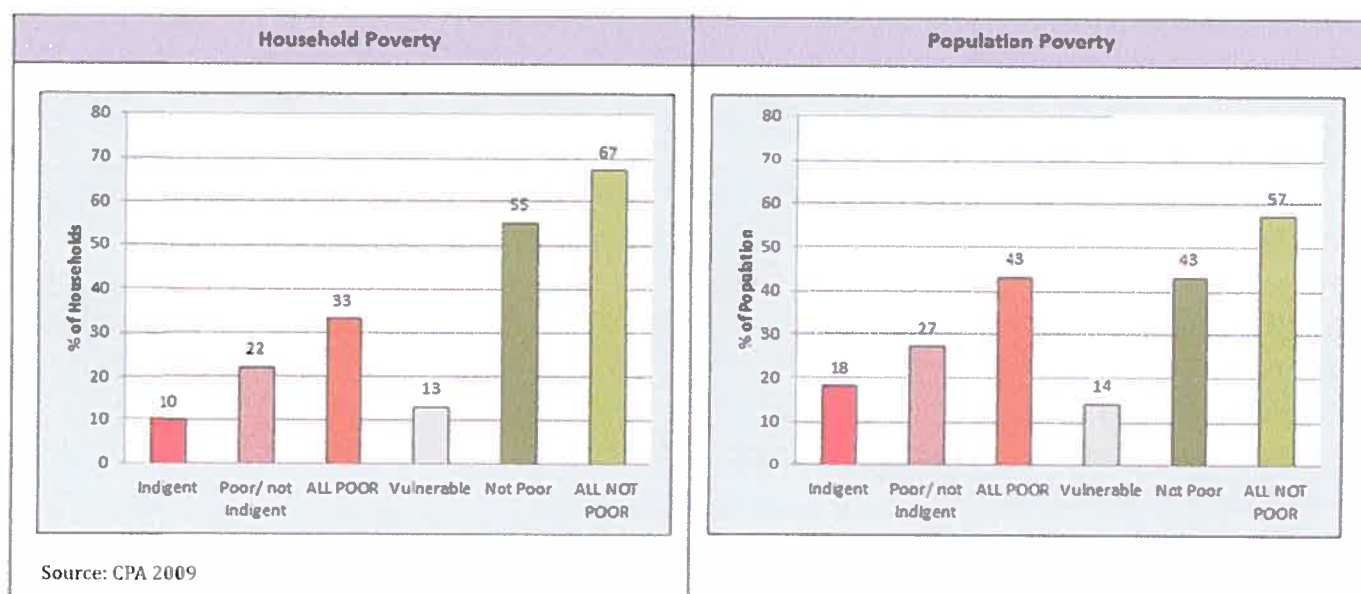
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### (i) Structure, Characteristics and Causes of Poverty in Belize

The UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI), a measurement going beyond traditional poverty definitions based exclusively on income and economic growth rates, provides a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and income. The 2010 Human Development Report (HDR) ranks Belize's HDI at 0.694, which places the country at 78 out of 169 countries with comparable data and within the high human development ranking (UNDP 2010b, pg. 149). However, the HDI of Latin America and the Caribbean as a region has increased from 0.573 in 1980 to 0.704, establishing Belize below the regional average (UNDP 2010b, pg 151).

In 2009, the Government of Belize with support from the Caribbean Development Bank carried out a Country Poverty Assessment (CPA), based on the findings of a Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS), among other data. The methodology required

the calculations of two poverty lines: 1) the Household Indigence Line (HIL) which represents the minimum cost of a food basket needed to provide a healthy diet for an adult male and 2) the General Poverty Line, which is made up of the HIL together with an allowance for non-food expenditure (CPA 2009, pg. 44). According to the findings of the 2009 CPA survey, 43% of the Belizean population was poor, 16% of the population was indigent, 14% were classified as vulnerable to poverty and an estimated 43% of the population were not identified as poor (pg. 48). These poverty statistics represented significant increases in impoverishment from the last poverty assessment conducted in 2002 in that the total number of poor households increased from a quarter to a third of all households in Belize during the timeframe between 2002-2009. As a result of this increasing level of poverty, the Belize Scorecard and Outlook Report for MDGs 2010 report notes that *"this increase puts Belize well off track to achieve the MDG by 2015 and is*



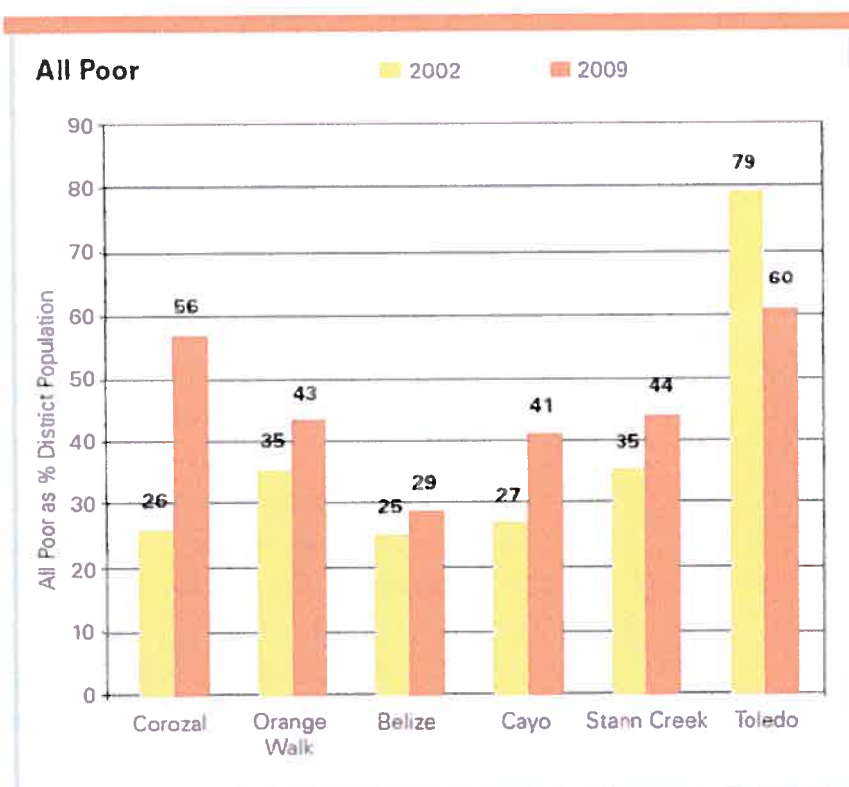
also inconsistent with the expectation of a general reduction in poverty by the National Poverty Elimination Action Plan (2007-2011)"(UNDP 2009a, pg. 33).

The CPA 2009 noted that while indigence and poverty have increased in all districts, the nature and extent of the changes differs. In comparison to 2002, the sharpest rise in poverty has been in Corozal where poverty had doubled and indigence had tripled. During the period when the CPA was conducted, Corozal was one of the districts repeatedly impacted upon by hurricane and flooding, underscoring the population's vulnerability to natural disasters as well as the speed with which disasters can reverse development gains in Belize. The poverty rate had also increased significantly in Orange Walk and Cayo from 2002-2009. While indigence and poverty levels in Toledo still remain the highest in the country, the rate of poverty had dropped from 79% to 60% (CPA 2009, pg. 55). However, the rural indigence rate- the most extreme form of poverty- is 60% in Toledo which is double the rate in any other district (ibid.).

Generally, poverty rates are highest in rural areas while the highest urban poverty rates, including the indigent, are primarily in the southern side of Belize City and secondarily in the major towns in the Cayo District and Stann Creek District.

Analysis based on data sourced from the 2009 CPA specifically concluded that the groups particularly vulnerable to poverty were large

Figure 3: Changes In Poverty Level by District



Source: (CPA 2009)

Table 3: Urban and Rural Poverty in Belize

Category		Variable	Year	Indigent	Poor*	All Poor	Not Poor	Total
Households	Rural	%	2002	12.7	21	33.7	66.3	100%
		%	2009	18.1	26.3	44.4	55.6	100%
		% Change		43%	25%	32%	-16%	
	Urban	%	2002	3.3	13.9	17.2	82.8	100%
		%	2009	4.1	19.0	23.2	76.8	100%
		% Change		25%	37%	35%	-7%	
	Rural/ Urban	Rural as % of all poor house hold	2002	75%		61%		
			2009	78%		61%		
Population	Rural	%	2002	17.4	26.8	44.2	56.8	100%
		%	2009	25.8	30.8	56.6	43.4	100%
		% Change		48%	20%	28%	-24%	
	Urban	%	2002	4.8	18.9	23.7	76.3	100%
		%	2009	6.2	24.1	30.3	69	100%
		% Change		29%	28%	28%	-9%	
	Rural/ Urban	Rural as % of all poor house hold	2002	72%		54%		
			2009	80%		64%		

\*Poor but not indigent

(Source: Adapted from CPA, 2009, pg. 54)

**Box 3: Poverty and Its Impacts on Children and Women in Belize**

For all children, poverty impedes educational access, performance and retention. Access is even more difficult in rural districts such as Toledo. When home resources and education levels are low, there is less support available to complete schoolwork. When there is pressure on children to contribute to household income, school attendance and performance suffer. When school fees are a hindrance, some children will not be able to attend. For children living in urban high-poverty areas such as Southside Belize City, the opportunities for income and social status on the streets (linked to drug-selling, gangs, sex for money) may outweigh the perceived importance of school.

For all children and women, poverty is a barrier to good health. Access to quality health care and prevention is in part related to income-related lifestyle. Exposure to health risk is higher for those that are poor – in an urban setting, this may be due to poor housing and the risk of drug abuse and violence; in rural areas, and this may be due to agricultural pesticides, poor road conditions and flooding /other weather hazards.

For women poverty strains individual and household resources, especially when for cultural reasons women are the primary care providers. The dual task of providing or contributing to household income and caring for the family imposes a burden that may impede efforts to attend school, gain job training, or participate in the community.

For all children and women, poverty impedes participation through reduced access to information, from the internet and other communications channels, from books in school or libraries, and through participation in other education/learning opportunities.

*Source: Adapted from UNICEF (2011). The Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Belize: An Ecological Review.*

families, children, rural households and the ethnic Maya that inhabit the Toledo District. A recent UNICEF report pointed to the fact that children are particularly burdened by poverty with a poverty rate of 50% and an indigence rate of 21% (UNICEF 2011, pg. 33). Furthermore, the publication stated that the weight of poverty increases fell unequally on women "because of their over-representation in low-paying jobs – a historical pattern stemming from a traditional gender-based-division of labor and inequities in education that result when the school completion rate is affected by the movement of girls/young women into household roles (UNICEF 2011, pg. 33).

Box 3 provides an analytical excerpt on the impact of poverty on women and children in Belize especially in terms of equity and rights

There is differentiation in poverty rates according to ethnicity, industry of employment, and by education levels (CPA, 2009). Poverty remained highest among the Mayan population at 69% even though it has decreased from 77% in 2002 (CPA, 2009, pg. 64). Every other ethnic group experienced an increase in poverty, with the Garifuna showing the greatest increases rising from 24% in 2002 to 40% in 2009 and the Creole population having the least increase in poverty (9.3%), and remaining the least poor of all ethnic groups (CPA, 2009, pg. 64). Table 4 presents the cross-referenced poverty and ethnicity data for the years 2002 and 2009.

The state's obligations to lower the impacts of poverty on vulnerable populations are clear. The particular burden of poverty on children and indigenous groups was underscored in Recommendation 73 of the CRC 2005 concluding observations report in which "*the Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to improve the equal enjoyment of all rights of children belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples, in particular, by prioritizing effective measures to reduce poverty among them. The Committee also recommends that the State party take measures to promote respect for the views of children, especially girls, belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples and facilitate their participation in all matters affecting them*" (pg. 18).

As previously noted in the section on the economy, a notable feature in the poverty profile of Belize is the growing number of the working poor. This is linked to the character of the Belize labor market, which is constituted by a significant sector of subsistence workers involved in own-account and unpaid assistance in family enterprises. The increased percentage of such workers as a proportion of total employment has been attributed to the fact that the "*economy has not accumulated domestic and international capital at a rate sufficient to embrace the labor market fully in the capitalist market economy*" (UNDP, 2010a, pg. 37). A significant feature of this increasing rate of subsistence employment is the rising female population of subsistence



workers. Despite increased participation in education, the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector has raised very slowly during the last two decades-in fact only 3% from 1995 to 2007 (ibid.).

While it has been reported that 10% of poor households in Belize lack regular sufficient food supply, it has also been stated that the vast majority of households were able to obtain an adequate food supply and that widespread hunger is not a major facet of poverty (CPA, 2009, pg.56). Therefore, the nature of poverty in Belize could be considered as somewhat different from largely populated countries with endemic impoverishment where although economic growth has driven economic development, a significant underclass can be identified that suffer from poverty of which a major feature is widespread hunger and malnourishment. The immediate causes of poverty in Belize are linked to low incomes, insecure livelihoods, unemployment, and deficiencies in the capabilities and assets of the poor to respond to changing economic opportunities. The structural, institutional and governance-related causes of poverty are varied, and include both macroeconomic and disaster risk-related externalities, as well as those policy-related issues regarding the strategies most conducive to poverty reduction. The CPA has identified many of the economic factors as exogenous, including *“global economic conditions, reduced tourism, changing markets for its produce, the absence of large scale tradable resources (oil*

**Table 4: Poverty and Ethnicity (2002-2009)**

Ethnic Group	2002		2009		Changes 2002 - 2009
	% indigent	% All Poor	% indigent	% All Poor	
Creole	5.1	26.5	9.1	35.8	+9.3
Garifuna	2.2	24.3	11.5	40.8	+16.5
Maya	54.8	77.0	48.4	68.9	-8.1
Mestizo	6.2	30.1	13.3	43.1	+13.0
Other	8.4	27.8	16.6	39.2	+11.4
ALL Groups	10.8	33.5	15.8	43.2	+9.7

Source: CPA 2009, pg. 65

*production already appears to have peaked) and natural disasters, all of which have increased un- and under-employment in Belize leading to reduced incomes and hence increased poverty, of both workers and their dependents” (CPA 2009, pg. 82).* Some of the specific drivers of poverty for vulnerable groups are differentiated. For example, for women, it is a question of the confluence of the burden of reproductive/social care and their limited labour market opportunities that exacerbates the experience of poverty; for the Mayan population, geographic isolation, under-development of the rural economy and distance from services all contribute to their poverty.

While Belize has the highest levels of poverty in the Caribbean, it comparatively has one of the lower measurements of income inequality in the Caribbean along with other countries such as Dominica and Anguilla (CPA 2009, pg. 49). Compared to other Central American neighbours, it has lower levels of poverty and indigence than Guatemala and Honduras. It should be noted however that the most urbanized district in Belize, the Belize District, has historically registered a very

**Box 4: Investment, Poverty Reduction and MDGs**

"Overall evidence clearly indicates underinvestment in the most important forms of domestic capital, a signal that the fundamental conditions of development through national ownership were not there. Indeed, this is compelling evidence of GDP growth without development and with rising poverty. One reason for this is the tendency to view MDG related investment in education, information, health and housing as social sector investments aimed especially at the poor and vulnerable. However, far from being mere social sector investments, these are perhaps the most important forms of (domestic), economic capital required to provide the social and economic fabric within which markets can foster transformative growth.

Specifically, in the face of frequent, sharp, negative, random price and technology shocks to which the economy is often subject, they embody the main capacities needed by Belize to undertake rapid switches of technique, joint production of commodities and effective utilization of knowledge spillovers from the rest of the world and to raise routinely the efficiency of the utilization of relatively scarce foreign exchange."

*Source: (UNDP 2010a, pg. 27)*

high Gini coefficient measurement reflecting disproportionately high levels of income inequality while the Toledo District which has the highest poverty rate also traditionally has had the lowest level of income inequality measurements. Poverty and inequality can be linked to lack of accessibility to resources, as while public resources may be available, the rural poor may have difficulty accessing those resources easily due to distance from urban areas.

Many of Belize's challenges are shared by most Caribbean countries, whose economies and financial systems are highly dependent on the US economy and global financial market conditions. The global economic slowdown and specifically lower demand from North America and Europe invariably affect export revenues, as reduced economic growth and consumption in North America and Europe affect demand for the Caribbean nations' agricultural products and tourism. Foreign direct investment in tourism-related projects has also diminished, reflecting restrictions in borrowing options. Capacity of Caribbean governments to pursue counter-cyclical fiscal measures in response to global conditions is limited with little room for maneuver as they confront a changing trade environment. While the concrete realities of size and geography are beyond the control of governments, the underlying causes of poverty are also linked to equity issues which can be positively impacted by good policy-making decisions. This is evidenced by historical patterns of

discrimination, inequality, and exclusion or reduced access to resource opportunities not being addressed via the consistent and effective implementation of pro-poor, pro-employment policies and programs.

It has been suggested that increased poverty in Belize is linked to underinvestment in domestic capacity-building to expand access to entrepreneurial, income and consumption opportunities which needs to be addressed, among other policies, by direct targeting of vulnerable populations through expanded social assistance (UNDP, 2010a, pg. 23). Box 4 specifically reviews the analytical linkages among increased domestic capital investment, poverty reduction and overall achievement of the MDGs.

Although the economic outlook improved marginally during 2010 and moderate growth is expected in the medium-term, it is highly unlikely that Belize will be able to meet its 2015 target for halving extreme poverty despite demonstrated political will for concerted and targeted action. It has been suggested that to reduce the national poverty rate in Belize on an accelerated basis to a targeted 16.8% by 2015, real annual government spending on domestic capital investments would have to grow from US\$ 48.9 million in 2010 to US\$ 67.3 million in 2015 based on annual allocated spending increments of 6.6% per year (UNDP, 2010a, pg.83). Revenue projections suggest that government spending capacity would not be sufficient to meet these required domestic capital spending needs as there

is a projected deficit of US\$ 170.5 million for capital spending in the period. 2010-2015 (ibid.). Furthermore, there is an additional projected deficit of US\$ 85.2 million (1990 prices) in required capital spending in attempting to achieve existing MDG-based development targets (ibid., pg. 83). It is envisioned that financial and technical support from international development cooperation partners will be critically needed to address this resource deficit and supplement national resources that will be allocated towards achieving the MDGs.

## B. Education

Goal 2 of the MDGs is: Universal primary education. At a global level, it is to ensure that all children complete a full course of primary education. Success is measured based on the number of children enrolled in primary education; the proportion who reach the last grade of primary school and literacy rates for those aged 15-24.

It is the responsibility of the state to guarantee the right to education, which implies providing the conditions of access – from the perspective of universality and educational quality – such that public policies and programmes genuinely benefit children, adolescents, youth and the population in general. The right to education also includes the right to secure schools, adequately equipped with appropriate resources and trained teachers. Belize has ratified the CRC, assuming the commitment to adopt all the administrative, legislative and other

necessary measures to make effective those rights recognized in the CRC.

In addition to the MDGs and the commitments included in the CRC, the “Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments” obliged governments to achieve quality basic education for all by 2015, with particular emphasis on girls’ schooling and a pledge from donor countries and institutions that “no country seriously committed to basic education will be thwarted in the achievement of this goal by lack of resources” (UNESCO, 2000, pg. 9). The six Education for All (EFA) goals are as follows: i) expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children; ii) ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality; iii) ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes; iv) achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults; v) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality and vi) improving



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Several factors have been identified for declining attendance at the institutional and policy levels including "inadequacies in the processes to sustain quality education (particularly at the primary level), the high proportion of untrained teachers, especially in the early grades, and the absence of role-models who can motivate young boys to stay in school"

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all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (UNESCO, 2000, pg. 8).

The revised Education and Training Act of Belize (2010) states in Article 49 (1) that "the Ministry shall ensure equitable access for both sexes to education at all levels, and that provision of education is sensitive to the particular needs of both males and females, and caters to the special needs of challenged pupils" and in Article 49 (2) "Managing Authorities shall ensure that schools under their management are free of gender, racial and other biases, and shall be managed in such a way that all students shall, as far as may be applicable, co-exist as peacefully and harmoniously as possible". The vision of the Ministry of Education is "equitable access to and efficiently delivered quality and relevant education, at all levels, for all Belizeans, founded on the following integrated principles: Education for Self (to create confidence, self-sufficiency, and excellence in an ever changing environment); Education for Strength (in preparation to enter, participate, and contribute ethically to an economically strong, socially rich, culturally proud, and politically just society) and Education for Life (*Never too old to learn or too old to start. Belizeans of all ages will enjoy educational opportunities as we create a country founded on the intelligence and education of its greatest assets, the people*). The mission statement is "the

*Ministry of Education is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all Belizeans are given an opportunity to acquire those knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for their own personal development and for full and active participation in the development of the nation. In carrying out its mission, the Ministry of Education shall work in collaboration with all education stakeholders*". In terms of resource delivery for the educational system, in 2007-08, the education budget was BZ\$ 146 million, 24.5% of the national budget and 5.7% of GDP.

This section explores the status of education in Belize including educational coverage at all levels, expenditure, the quality of education, and repetition and school-leaving rates, and gender equity.

### (i) Enrolment

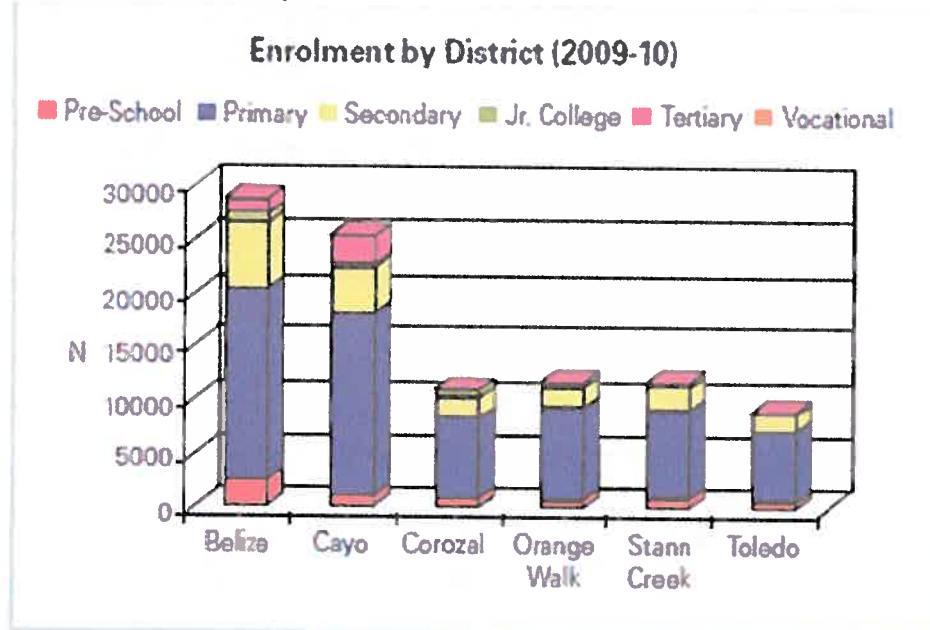
A key indicator for the education MDG (MDG 2) is net enrolment ratio in primary education, the percentage of children in the age group 5 to 12 years who are enrolled and attending primary school. Primary education, for all children 5-14, is compulsory in Belize. The Government's NPESAP of 2007 stated government's commitment to achieve a rate of 92% net enrolment by 2009 and upward to 100% net enrolment by 2015 (UNDP, 2010a, pg. 39). The Government's NPESAP (2009-2013) does not have a net enrolment target for primary education but seeks to achieve a 100% primary school completion target by 2015. It has been suggested that declining primary school enrolment, attendance



and completion rates could eventually lead to a lowered national literacy rate (UNDP, 2010a, pg. 84). While overall enrolment and the primary school population rose, the net enrolment for 5-12 year olds fell, reflecting a contradictory trend and suggesting that *"investment to increase access to education has not been able to keep pace with the growing population"* (UNDP 2010a, pg. 39). Several factors have been identified for declining attendance at the institutional and policy levels including *"inadequacies in the processes to sustain quality education (particularly at the primary level), the high proportion of untrained teachers, especially in the early grades, and the absence of role-models who can motivate young boys to stay in school"* (ibid., pg. 40). Readiness may also be a factor for children entering primary school since only 43% of children have access to Early Childhood Development (ECD), the gross enrolment rate for preschoolers is 27.8% (2004/2005 data) and net enrolment rate for preschoolers is 27.2% (2004/2005 data) (MoE, 2005). This is a situation that must also be corrected if children are to progress effectively through the education system. Impoverishment and weak parental capacity are also strong contributing factors at the household level which add to declining school attendance rates (UNDP, 2010a, pg 40). Figure 4 shows overall school enrolment by district for the time frame 2009-2010.

A second key MDG 2 indicator is the completion rate for pupils fin-

Figure 4: Enrolment by District



Source: (MoE, 2010)

ishing primary school. The national primary school completion rate in Belize has risen from 87.2% in 2002 to 91.9% in 2009 and while it does not meet the 93.6% target set by the Ministry of Education for 2009, the overall rate is up and the completion rate for girls is almost fully on track for this indicator (UNDP 2010a, pg. 41). The primary school completion rates for girls have far surpassed that for boys and the gap between the two show steady increases from 2002 to 2009 reflecting a significant and troublesome educational achievement gap at this basic schooling level<sup>2</sup> (ibid.). Although, the average primary school repetition rate shows a downward trend, it has been suggested in the Horizon 2030 long term plan for Belize that this may indicate that rather than repeating a school year, children drop

<sup>2</sup>The average repetition rate in primary school has been estimated at 7.2% (2007/2008 data), with a higher rate for males (8.4%) than for females (6.0%) (Ministry of Education 2007/2008).

out of school completely (Barnett et al, pg. 28).

The third indicator linked to the MDG 2 is tied to the literacy rate of 15 to 24 year-olds. Based on official educational statistics and an official definition of literacy<sup>3</sup>, the overall literacy rate has shown a consistently upward trend from 76.5% in 2000 to 94.7% in 2009 which means that Belize had already met its intermediate term literacy target of 90.6% for 2009 (UNDP 2010a, pg. 41). Interestingly, by 2006, all men within the target cohort had already achieved this target, and women had reached 89.4%, just short of the target set for 2009 (ibid.). It has been noted that literacy levels in the lower cohort (15-19) were higher than the upper cohort (20-24) of females which is possibly a reflection of the higher trending rates of educational participation by females and the traditional movement of young women into domestic household roles (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 68). Concern has also been expressed regarding the possible negative future impact that declining primary school enrolment would have on national literacy rates. It is additionally asserted that besides remaining pockets of illiteracy, a core poverty-literacy problem is the issue of the level of academic preparedness of primary school graduates and having the wherewithal to compete for employment opportunities that require higher level cognitive skills particularly in knowledge economies (ibid.). Based on these shortcomings, there is scope for questioning the

utility of the existing official literacy definition. Unlike a functional literacy rate that definitively verifies if a student is literate, grade completion only presupposes that a student is in fact literate and numerate. It is further noted that *"the literacy rate may be a very low baseline indicator, and the country will need to reconsider the related targets to better align them with the skills needed for poverty reduction"* (UNDP, 2010a, pg. 41).

A serious source of concern is the low and declining rate of enrolment in secondary education, which has a direct impact on critical national human resource constraints. The 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Study (MICS), developed and executed by the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB), reported that only 58.7% of children who are of secondary school age attend secondary school (SIB, 2006, pg. 17). Of the remaining 41.3% not attending secondary school, 14% are still in primary school and the other 26.4% are out of school altogether (SIB, 2006, pg. 17). There is a significant and worrisome gender gap in this phenomenon, as the net enrolment of males (37.4%) is lower than that of females (44.1%) in terms of secondary school participation (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 70). Levels of parental educational achievement and poverty levels have a major impact on secondary school enrolment as well as *"children of secondary school age, whose mothers have at least a secondary education or are in the richer two quintiles, are more likely to be attending secondary*



<sup>3</sup>Literacy in Belize is defined/measured by the completion of at least 7 years of formal primary education.

school than those whose mothers have not gone beyond primary or belong to the poorer three quintiles" (SIB 2006, pg. 17). Table 5 shows overall school enrolment and transition rates from primary to secondary schooling levels from 2008 to 2009.

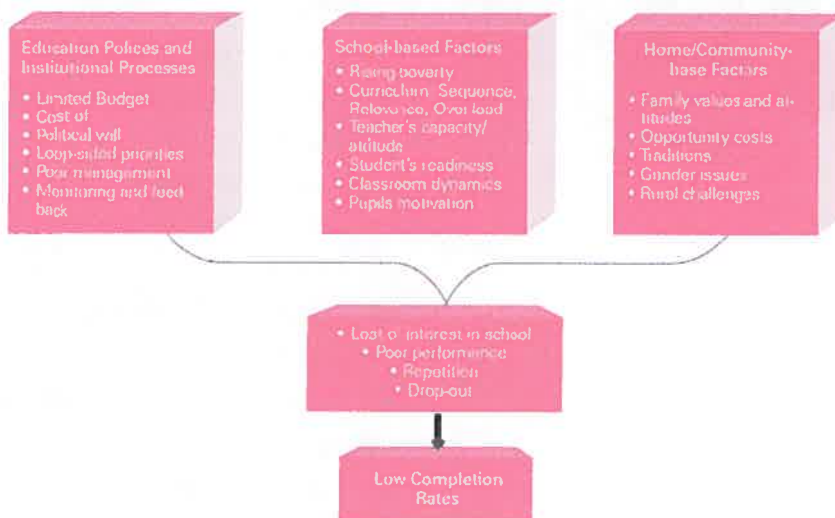
It has been observed that low transition rates from primary school to secondary school and drop-out are particular challenges for youth from low socioeconomic levels, dysfunctional families, those not living in traditional nuclear families but instead are in single or no-parent households and for youths from migrant families that have cultural orientation and language capability challenges (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 70). A variety of factors have been suggested as likely causes or contributors to these challenges namely poor academic performance leading to grade repetition, high participation costs, weak bonding or attachment to school due mainly to low or nonexistent levels of home support, inflexible classroom environments that are not conducive to social learning and meaningful behavior modification, burdensome transportation schedules (especially in rural areas), immediate and available income earning opportunities in the informal and criminal sectors and generally low levels of motivation (ibid.). Figure 5 identifies key factors that are barriers to improved coverage and quality in education and which fall into three broad categories: 1) educational policies and institutional processes; 2) school-based factors; and 3) home-based factors.

Table 5: School enrolment and transition by district and gender (Source: MoE 2009)

District and Sex	Standard 6						New Entrants Form 1 & Prep		Transition Rate	
	Enrolment 2006-07	Enrolment 2007-08	Repetitors 2006-07	Repetitors 2007-08	Dropouts 2006-07	Dropouts 2007-08	2006-07	2007-08	2007-08	2008-09
<b>Belize</b>	<b>1,842</b>	<b>1,843</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1,814</b>	<b>1,812</b>	<b>1,671</b>	<b>1,724</b>
Male	874	927	2	3	14	12	858	917	799	841
Female	968	916	6	2	6	14	956	900	872	883
<b>Cayo</b>	<b>1,413</b>	<b>1,638</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1,376</b>	<b>1,562</b>	<b>1,239</b>	<b>1,325</b>
Male	736	798	4	7	15	16	717	775	652	645
Female	677	840	8	3	10	20	659	787	587	680
<b>Corozal</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>582</b>
Male	411	451	14	7	14	18	383	370	306	293
Female	406	422	10	7	5	10	391	405	297	289
<b>Orange Walk</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>576</b>
Male	408	425	10	7	12	16	396	407	297	294
Female	393	426	11	6	17	12	355	408	295	282
<b>Stann Creek</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>628</b>
Male	384	413	11	11	7	5	366	387	333	298
Female	406	412	16	14	4	9	386	389	337	330
<b>Toledo</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>491</b>
Male	256	307	10	9	8	14	277	284	224	258
Female	340	264	17	7	6	16	317	241	238	233
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,298</b>	<b>6,521</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>6,061</b>	<b>6,276</b>	<b>5,227</b>	<b>5,316</b>
Male	3,108	3,271	51	44	70	81	2,987	3,146	2,611	2,628
Female	3,190	3,250	68	39	48	81	3,074	3,130	2,616	2,688

Source: MOE Abstracts, 2009

Figure 5: Factors Affecting Educational Completion



Source: UNICEF, 2011, pg. 71

An additional enrolment challenge is that of early childhood education (ECE), which the Ministry of Education has long considered a critical foundation for future learning and part of a national education strategy and policy. At present, less than a third of Belizean children between 35-59 months attend organized early childhood education programmes

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*"The cost of education, especially secondary education, makes education inaccessible to many families."*

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with structured learning activities such as kindergarten or community childcare (SIB 2006, pg. 16). However, there are notable regional and urban-rural differences in ECE participation as 43.7% of children in urban areas attend pre-school while only 20.7% of rural children attend formal ECE programmes (ibid.). While far fewer boys and girls from poor households attended pre-school programmes, official education data indicate that the distribution of pre-schools has improved over the last eight years, and that the poorer districts such as Toledo now have comparatively increased access (UNICEF 2011, pg 69). From a policy perspective, health and education interventions in Belize need to be seen through the broadest development lens, as the sine qua non for human capital formation especially in the earliest years. The evidence points to integrated social interventions as the most likely to have significant impact.

## **(ii) Access and Quality**

The quality of education is always a major cause for concern, as sharp deficits in quality undermine demand for education over time as students are not engaged in the learning process, become less motivated and distracted and often opt to become involved in livelihood activities rather than dedicating time to studies if there are growing perceptions that the time spent in school is not worthwhile and not connected to improved incomes in the long term. National testing results have shown that there

is an educational quality dilemma in Belize. Over a third of students taking the Primary School Exam (PSE) in 2007 achieved a grade under 50%, with students from rural areas accounting for 41% of those grades and students from urban areas representing 29% (CPA, 2009, pg. 139). During the same year at the secondary level, under half of pupils in the final year of high school achieved a satisfactory outcome in the regional matriculation exams in math while only 59% got satisfactory passes in English (ibid., pg 140). Again, grades in rural areas were much lower across core subject testing results (ibid.). At the national level, Belize ranked last of 8 countries compared and 132 out of 138 countries globally in math and science thereby reflecting that comparative and absolute performance levels of the national educational system are weak (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 80).

Among the impediments to educational access in Belize, cost has been identified consistently as a major barrier. It has been noted in the Horizon 2030 planning document that:

"The cost of education, especially secondary education, makes education inaccessible to many families. The number of high school places is grossly inadequate so that, if many more parents could afford to pay the fees, the number of spaces would quickly run out. Furthermore, there are gross inequities in distribution of subsidies provided by government to schools with schools at the high end of the spectrum getting almost twice per student what schools at the lower



are provided per student" (Barnett et al., pg. 25).

In addition, the geographic distribution of schools and teachers is not aligned to the population distribution in the country and furthermore, poorer districts such as Toledo fare worse in terms of number of schools and trained teachers proportionate to the schooling population served. Another key issue linked to education quality is teacher training. Presently, the proportion of fully trained or adequately training teachers within the primary and secondary educational levels is less than a half of the national teaching population (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 81). Based on 2008/2009 data, 42.5% of primary school teachers were fully trained while 38.5% of primary school teachers were partially trained (ibid., pg. 83). For the same data period, official educational data show that only 25.3% of secondary school teachers had a university degree and professional teacher training while 43% of secondary level teachers only possessed a high school or sixth form education (ibid.). Interestingly, there is a noticeable geographic differentiation with regard to trained teachers in the educational system as the two northern districts (Orange Walk and Corozal) have far higher percentages of trained teachers in the primary school level than do the two southern districts (Stann Creek and Toledo). It has been observed and concluded that there is a direct correlation between the higher levels of teacher training in primary schools in Corozal and Orange Walk and the higher pass-level

rates of primary students in those districts (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 81).

In recent years, Belize has invested heavily in the establishment of technical and vocational training (ITVET) within each district but enrolment has been relatively low (760 in 2007-08 and 797 in 2008/2009) (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 77). To date, males have dominated enrolment and the majority of the enrolment has been in the Belize district (ibid.). The current proposal is that technical and vocational training and options might be delivered through partnerships with high schools and institutes where feasible, making it unnecessary for students to wait until they exit the system to access such training (ibid.).

An additional concern is the inadequate inclusion of people with disabilities (especially children) within the regular education system and its negative impact on poverty reduction. The 2000 population census estimated that approximately 6% of the population (13,774 persons) in Belize had some form of disability, and at present there is no specific legislation governing their treatment (UNICEF 2011, pg. 75). However, the Ministry of Education has tasked schools to integrate children with disabilities into regular classrooms wherever possible via its National Resource Center for Inclusive Education (NaRCIE) (formerly the Special Education Unit) which consolidates governmental and non-governmental resources within one body and now offers services across a wide range of disabilities (ibid., pg. 76). Prospective students

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*The 2000 population census estimated that approximately 6% of the population (13,774 persons) in Belize had some form of disability, and at present there is no specific legislation governing their treatment*

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can be also referred from diverse categories of professionals and service agencies thereby providing more service coverage (ibid.).

### (iii) Institutional Response

The weaknesses of the educational system have been extensively analyzed in recent years and the Ministry of Education is acutely aware of the pressing need to enhance efficiency, access and quality. The Belize Medium Term Development Strategy (2010-2013), sought to comprehensively address these challenges with a robust policy menu of strategic objectives: 1) implement programs to promote pre-school attendance, preventative health care and introduce or expand school feeding programme at the primary level to ensure students “start strong”; 2) make secondary education compulsory and expand coverage for the first few years of secondary schooling; 3) improve student achievement levels and quality assurance through rigorous performance standards and increased resources for under-performing schools and 4) investment in teacher education and development (GOB, 2010, pg. 46). Further proposals include focusing schools on nurturing growth and development; developing a database to track children in school; ending the dichotomy between academic and vocational education; addressing inequities in access, curriculum and quality and make targeting of educational funds more efficient and effective and the re-establishment of a schools inspectorate to ensure exter-

nal oversight (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 83). Finally, there is a need to respond to the current challenges of data collection, analysis and reporting in the education sector, as building policies on solid research data is critical for the strengthening of the design of policies to promote greater social inclusion and integration.

## C. Gender Equality

Goal 3 of the MDGs is: to promote gender equality and empower women. Globally, the goals are to eliminate gender disparity in all levels of education by 2015; based on the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education; increase the number of women in paid employment outside the agricultural sector and increase the number of female parliamentarians.

In 2011, Belize was ranked 97 of 187 countries in the overall Gender Inequality Index (GII) (UNDP 2011, pg. 140) and ranked 100 of out 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index ranking (WEF 2011b, pg. iii). Despite this mediocre comparative performance at the global level, the GOB has committed itself to a range of efforts to ensure gender equity by ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Belize ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol to the Convention in 2002) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). As was noted earlier in this CCA document, gender equality is a cross cutting issue and one of the normative principles guiding the analysis. Thus

far, this CCA has sought to analytically review the similar and differentiated ways in which women and men experience and are impacted by major development challenges. This section further explores how gender affects and is affected by development issues in Belize within the context of the specific indicators for MDG3. Additionally, the discussion in the section highlights the gaps as well as the successes in meeting the goals and rights enshrined in the CEDAW and the CRC. It will seek to shed light on the financial, social, cultural and capacity barriers that affect the achievement of rights in different ways.

#### (i) Ratios of Boys to Girls in Educational System

Belize has notably achieved its targets in gender parity in primary and secondary education. Cumulative educational data in Belize do not show gender differences among the country's overall student population however there are notable differences based on disaggregated data covering schooling levels and geographic location of schools (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 66). Generally, there are more girls enrolled than boys in preschool (except in Cayo and Toledo), there are more boys than girls enrolled in primary school across districts and in that secondary and post-secondary education there are more girls enrolled than boys (except in Toledo) reflecting higher transition rates for females into secondary and tertiary education (ibid.). It is further suggested that causes of the mixed gender dis-

parities throughout the educational schooling levels are primarily cultural and social and perhaps secondarily biological and legal (ibid., pg. 67). For instance, it is surmised that higher rates of female participation at the preschool level are tied to female children being culturally viewed as more school-ready while many male children at a pre-school age have biological and behavioural characteristics that project more interest in physical play (ibid.). Then, at the primary school level, male student enrolment matches and surpasses female enrolment as primary school enrolment is mandatory and then drops off again at the secondary and tertiary levels due to a host of reasons including costs, lack of home support, attraction of non-school environments, early entrance into the workforce and type of course offerings (ibid.).

While the increase in the participation of females in the Belizean educational system is an important development trend, the more important issue with regard to gender equality in education is what policies can be developed to increase gender parity wherever applicable across the educational system. As noted “gender parity in education is linked to poverty reduction and should be given great attention. The fact that girls are doing well is a cause for celebration. At the same time, however, it cannot be emphasized enough that it is gender parity that is important, not the success of one sex or the other” (UNDP, 2010a pg. 47).




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**Box 5: Access to full employment and decent work for women**

Labor is the most widely available factor of production at the disposal of poor people around the world and the primary means through which they earn a living. Although women's share of employment has increased, a gender division of labor persists. The contraction of formal employment and decent work and proliferation of "atypical" or non-standard work, which is generally precarious, poorly paid and uncovered by labor legislation or social protection, has particularly affected women. Lack of access to decent work is a major cause of poverty among women (UNDESA 2009, pg. vii).

Addressing the constraints women face in the labor market requires a range of policy interventions, including development of women's capabilities to adapt to changing labor market conditions, support to reduce unpaid care work, gender-sensitive labor market regulations and enhanced capacity for collective action. Increased responsibility of all stakeholders—states, the private sector and civil society—for care-giving is particularly important (ibid.).

Source: UNDESA 2009

**(ii) Women and Employment**

A second indicator for MDG 3 is the share of women in wage employment outside the agricultural sector. At a global level, although women have continued to move out of the agricultural sector in all regions of the world, there is evidence that women are still overrepresented in that sector (UNDESA, 2009). It has been estimated that globally the share of women employed in agriculture stands at 35.4%, as compared with 32.2% for men (ILO 2009 quoted in UNDESA 2009, pg. 29). Globally, Belize is ranked 81 out of 135 countries in the area of women's economic participation and opportunity in society (WEF 2011b, pg. v). Belize has not made significant advances in this respect, as between 1995 to 2007, the share of women employed outside the agricultural sector has progressed a scant 3 points from 38.7% to 41.7% (UNDP, 2010a, pg. 47). While it is expected that over time the situation of women's employment will change with increasing participation and achievements in education, it has been suggested that the slow progress in this area is due to the need for increased investments in targeted capacity-building initiatives for women in order to transition them out of agricultural and subsistence employment (ibid.). It has been noted that "gender-based discrimination is most apparent in employment" and that "although more women are obtaining secondary<sup>4</sup> or higher education, this is not translating into lower

unemployment or higher positions for women in the labor force (UNICEF, 2011, pg.88). Box 5 provides a brief analytical profile of employment access for women in Belize.

**(iii) Women in Governance**

Another key indicator for MDG 3 is the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament. As was noted in the section on governance, the currently low number of women in politics in Belize, particularly at the national level, should be a source of concern. As noted previously, there is only one female parliamentarian in Belize although there are now two female ministers appointed to Cabinet. Nevertheless, Belize's poor performance in this area over the last few years puts the country in a very low position (132 out of 135 countries) on the Global Gender Gap Index in the area of political empowerment of women, along with Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Brunei (WEF 2011a, pg. v). Based on these data, Belize is not on course to achieve this MDG. Article 17 of the CEDAW Monitoring Committee's 2007 concluding comments report states that "*the Committee remains concerned about the low rate of representation of women in public life and in elected bodies. The Committee notes with concern that the Political Reform Commission recommended against the adoption of a quota system for the appointment of women to public bodies in 2000 and that the State party does not support the use*

<sup>4</sup>Labour force statistics (2000 data) show that one quarter of unemployed females had at least a secondary school education, whereas this was true for only 16% of unemployed males indicating that employers may be applying stricter qualification requirements on female job-seekers (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 88).



*of quotas or targets to accelerate the achievement of de facto equality between women and men in all areas of the Convention" (pg. 4).* As of February 2012, it should also be noted however that in the Senate, the other governmental chamber of the bicameral legislature, where membership is by political appointment, there are five female Senators out a total of twelve senatorial positions (41.7%) which while not being equally proportional is a far better representative proportion than parliament.

There are indications that women have significant interest in political participation and in executive decision-making roles. In addition, there is robust public support, especially among youth, for greater female participation in political leadership. A variety of barriers to female participation in the Belizean political system have been identified including women's reproductive role within the family and society; lack of financial and institutional support from political parties; gender socialization patterns and the patterns of patronage that characterize the political system (NWC, 2010). While the issue of employing special temporary measures to increase women's political participation was initially included as a recommendation from the 1999 Political Reform Commission, it was later jettisoned for lack of Commission consensus on the associated issues. However, in 2007, the CEDAW Monitoring Committee put forward recommendations with respect to the application of special temporary measures for pro-

moting the political participation of women (see Box 6).

The absence of women in parliament contrasts with the active, vocal and visible leadership roles of women in civil society organizations, in technical and mid-management levels in the public sector (both central government and municipal government levels) and leadership and mid-management levels of the private sector. Undoubtedly, women have a lot to offer in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities at the national political level and their roles as officials and leaders within political parties must be fostered and encouraged so that they can confidently offer themselves as candidates for political office.

#### **(iv) Institutional Response**

In 1982, the National Women's Commission of Belize was established to advise the Government on the empowerment of women. Its establishment was part of an overall effort of the Government to meet a series of international commitments made to improve the situation of the nation's women and girls. Its stated goals are to advocate for issues related to the advancement of women; monitor the implementation of CEDAW and appropriately advise the Minister on relevant issues; create public awareness on policy concerns for women; spearhead data collection and analysis to determine the emerging needs of women; promote the networking and co-ordination of women's groups; serve to ensure women's involvement in national processes. It has five cen-

#### **Box 6: 2007 CEDAW Monitoring Committee Recommendations for Promotion of the Political Participation of Women**

The Committee urges the State party to effectively use temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25, in order to accelerate the realization of women's de facto equality with men in all areas.

The Committee draws the State party's attention to the fact that a purely formal or programmatic approach is not sufficient to achieve women's de facto equality with men, and that the application of temporary special measures is part of a necessary strategy towards the accelerated achievement of substantive equality for women in all areas covered by the Convention. The Committee encourages the State party to establish a legislative basis for the use of temporary special measures, either in the Constitution or in other appropriate legislation. It urges the State party to establish concrete goals, such as quotas and timetables, to accelerate achievement of substantive equality between women and men for each area of the Convention.

*Source: (CEDAW 2007, pg. 4)*

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*The National Women's Commission has launched a development initiative, the Women in Politics programme, to contribute to enhancing women's political participation in Belize by providing training and encouraging women to engage in the political arena at various governance levels*

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tral priorities including: 1) poverty – attention to equal pay for equal work and special banking loans for women; 2) domestic violence – attention to the rehabilitation of victims and promotion of non-violent societies; 3) legal reform and decision making – attention to law review and new proposals; 4) health – special attention to sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and strengthening families; and 5) education in communities and women's empowerment.

The National Women's Commission has launched a development initiative, the Women in Politics programme, to contribute to enhancing women's political participation in Belize by providing training and encouraging women to engage in the political arena at various governance levels. It will include an analysis of the political and policy context of Belize with special emphasis on gender and will update previous research on the situation of women in Belize. It will look to expand the analysis of socio-economic, cultural and political obstacles to political participation and foster a national dialogue on the issue. While there are limited numbers of women in the political arena, they are vibrant leaders in public sector administration, civil society and private sector.

While acknowledging advances, the CEDAW Monitoring Committee noted its concern about a number of gender related issues in 2007 including the lack of a comprehensive system of data collection for all areas covered by the Convention so as to assess the actual situation of women

in Belize and to track trends over time (CEDAW, 2007, pg. 2). UNICEF is supporting the NWC in the development of a gender equality indicator database which will address this shortcoming and will allow Belize to monitor progress against indicators relevant to the Belize Platform for Action as well as facilitate regional and global comparisons.

CEDAW Monitoring Committee's 2007 concluding comments report also expressed concern about the weak institutional capacity of the national machinery for the advancement of women, i.e., the Women's Department in the Ministry of Human Development, which was considered under-resourced and understaffed (CEDAW, 2007, pg. 3). The Committee noted the strong challenges it faced to work effectively for the full implementation of the Convention and to coordinate the use of a gender mainstreaming strategy across all sectors of Government. The scarcity of personnel at the district level to promote gender equality was also pointed to as a barrier to greater effectiveness. The absence of mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the impact of laws, policies and programmes on the achievement of women's equality was also underscored (ibid.).

#### **D. Health**

This section seeks to analyze the current situation with respect to health in Belize, with emphasis on the MDGs, but also taking into consideration other health sector issues as identified by stakeholders.

The previous sections make clear the critical necessity of an integrated and rights-based approach to health, and through an ecological lens that situates it in a dynamic relationship to both the physical and social environment. The CCA's analysis broadly follows a life cycle approach as it reviews the vulnerabilities and opportunities for persons as they progress in phases through the aging process thereby underscoring that health for human development is not a necessarily uniform and linear course.

### (i) Health Profile

The Constitution of Belize, through Article (b) in the preamble of the Constitution, establishes the state's obligation to ensure the health of the nation's citizens as a right (Constitution of Belize 1981, pg. 4). This is aligned with Article 12 of the Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (ratification in 1966 and entry into force in 1976) regarding citizens' enjoyment of the highest possible level of physical and mental health (U.N. 1976, pg. 4). In general, health indicators in Belize reflect improved life expectancy and survival levels but improvements in quality of life and decreases in some preventable causes of death and illness remain major health challenges. In terms of health satisfaction among the population, a comparative study among Latin American countries showed that Belize has a relatively high proportion of respondents that said they were generally satisfied with their individual level of health although these satisfaction lev-

els were not consistent across income level groupings (IDB 2008 quoted in UNICEF 2011, pg. 48). Overall, Belize is undergoing an epidemiological transition from a national health profile characterized by high levels of communicable diseases (CDs) to one that is primarily characterized by non-communicable diseases (NCDs). It has been suggested that the absence of communicable diseases and infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria as leading causes of mortality reflect the usual development transition to more of a lifestyle illness pattern (ibid., pg. 49).

Life expectancy at birth (2011) is estimated at 76.1 years (males-74.7 years) and females -77.6 years), which is higher than the estimated average for Central America (73.5 years) and the Non-Latin Caribbean (72.8 years) (PAHO 2011, pg. 1). While the increases in life expectancy may reflect changes in fertility trends and overall improvements in water and sanitation, among other factors, it is likely that possible gains in life expectancy are lost due to the impact of NCDs and possibly HIV and AIDS. Morbidity rates, based on hospitalization records data, show that females accounted for more than half of total hospitalizations from 2005-2009 with the main causes of female hospitalization in descending order of importance- being complications from pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium, injury, poisoning and other external causes, acute respiratory infections, diseases of the digestive system and diabetes (UNICEF 2011, pg.



*Noncommunicable diseases are now the major cause of mortality in Belize with an increase in the overall mortality rate recorded from 2005-2009*

48). The main causes of hospitalization for males – in descending order of importance—are injuries, respiratory infections and appendicitis (ibid.). The rising male: female ratio of injuries and external causes (2.2:1 in 2005 and 3:1 in 2009) indicates rising injury related hospitalization rates for males (ibid.). This particular sub-indicator of morbidity reflects particular livelihood and lifestyle effects on men's health. The corrected crude death rate is decreasing over time and is currently listed at 4.5 per 1000 persons in the population for the 2007-2009 time period (PAHO 2011, pg. 3). The average annual crude death rate for males was significantly higher (5.2-corrected) than that for females (3.8-corrected) from 2007-2009 indicating higher overall levels of mortality for males (ibid.). The mortality rate for communicable diseases in Belize from 2007-2009 was 64.5/100,000 population, higher than the Latin America and Caribbean region (58.4/100,000) but lower than Central America (80.1/100,000) and the

Non Latin Caribbean (52.2/100,000) (ibid.).

Noncommunicable diseases are now the major cause of mortality in Belize with an increase in the overall mortality rate recorded from 2005-2009 (UNICEF 2011, pg. 48). Diabetes, heart disease, injuries, HIV/AIDS and cerebrovascular disease were the overall leading causes of death. Among females, the leading causes of death were acute respiratory infections, cerebrovascular disease, diabetes, heart disease and ischemic heart disease (ibid.). Non-communicable diseases (except for diabetes) disproportionately affected males and in particular males are significantly more impacted by death from injuries (ibid.). Table 6 shows the main health indicators for Belize from 2002-2007.

Three of the MDGs are grouped under the health category. They are:

#### **Goal 4: Reduce child mortality**

*Target 4.A. Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate*

**Table 6: Main Health Indicators for Belize, 2002-2007**

Indicator	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Life Expectancy at birth	70.1**	N/A	N/A	71.8***	69.3#	72.5
Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) (per 1,000 live births)	19.2	14.8	14.7	18.4	19.6	17.2
Under 5 Mortality Rate	23.2	17.8	19	23.5	24.8	20.6
Maternal Mortality Rate (Per 100,000 live births)	92.7	40.4	63.9	134.1	41.8	85.3
% Low Birth Weight	4.20%	3.30%	4.40%	6.90%	14.2%#	6.9
% Stunting	N/A	N/A	N/A	17.6%	17.6	N/A
% Using contraception	N/A	N/A	N/A	34.3%	N/A	N/A
Teenage Pregnancy Rate (women 15 - 19yrs)	N/A	8.6%	9.2%	9.6%	7.6%	7.2%

Source: \* Census, 2001; \*\* MICS, 2006; \*\*\*PAHO; otherwise MoH, 2007



## **GOAL 5: Improve maternal health**

*Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio*

*Target 5.B: Achieve universal access to reproductive health*

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## **GOAL 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**

*Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS*

*Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it*

*Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases*

*To detect at least 75 % of new TB cases and cure at least 85 % of them*

### **a. Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality**

*Indicator 4.1: Under-five Mortality Rate (U5MR)*

The five principal causes of hospitalization for children ages 1 through 4 between 2005 and 2009 showed an increase of 60% in injuries as a result of external causes, but decreases in acute respiratory infections (down 30 %), intestinal infectious diseases (down 62%), chronic and unspecified respiratory conditions (down by 51%), and diseases of other parts of the digestive system (down by 8.2%) (UNICEF, 2011,pg.51). In term of under-five mortality, it has been cited that *"the causes of death for children 1 to 4 years from 2003-2007 were related mostly to child safety issues and communicable diseases. Among the leading causes were accidental drowning and submersion, transport ac-*

*cidents, acute respiratory infections, HIV/AIDS, intestinal disease and diseases of the nervous system other than meningitis"* (Barnett et al 2010, pg. 45). Overall, the under-five mortality rate decreased from 23.5 in 2005 to 16.9 in 2010 (UNICEF, 2011, pg.51).

The highest rates for U5MR occur in the areas of Belize which have the most elevated rates of indigence and poverty such as southern Belize. Urban areas tended to have slightly lower infant and under-5 mortality rates than rural areas (SIB, 2006, pg. 8). More significantly however, the Horizon 2030 report, citing the MICS data findings, noted that the "two most important factors related to under-five mortality were the sex of the child and the level of the education of the mother. Boys had a significantly higher rate than girls (35/1000 live births for boys compared to 19/1000 live births for girls) and children with mothers with only a primary school education had higher mortality rates (30/1000) than those with a secondary school education (19/1000)" (Barnett et al 2010, pg. 44). It has been concluded that malnutrition and diet are definitively important issues for children under five years of age and equity plays an important role as a factor (UNICEF, 2011, pg.51). Notably, (SIB, 2006) revealed that *"6.1 per cent of children under-five are moderately underweight and 0.7 per cent are classified as severely underweight"* and that an estimated *"18 percent of children between 1-4 years of age are stunted or too short for their age and more than two per cent are wasted*



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*the under-five mortality rate decreased from 23.5 in 2005 to 16.9 in 2010*

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or too thin for their height" (pg. 9). In summary, there are significant differences in the health status of children from 1-4 years of age based on whether they reside in rural and urban areas, whether their mother has a certain level of educational achievement and their ethnicity (as Mayan children had a notable level of growth retardation) (ibid.).

Overall, it has been noted that Belize has made slow but steady progress with child mortality indicators including the infant mortality rate, the under-five mortality rate, neonatal mortality rate, low birth weight and the still birth rate (UNICEF 2011, pg. 50). Overall, based on current data trends, Belize will fall short of the MDG 4 infant mortality goal of 8 deaths/1000 live births but according to current trends, is poised to achieve the MDG 4 under-five mortality rate of an overall two-thirds reduction by 2015.

#### *Indicator 4.2: Infant Mortality Rate*

Morbidity data (based on causes of hospitalization) for children under one year of age when compared between 2005 and 2009 indicated increases in conditions originating in the perinatal period (up 40.5%), acute respiratory infections (up 1.1%), hypoxia at birth (up 10.3%), and reductions in slow fetal growth or prematurity (down 3.2%) and intestinal infectious diseases (down by 34.9%) (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 50). Perinatal causes accounted for 60% of the five leading causes of hospitalizations and 33% of total hospitaliza-

tions among children under one year of age (ibid.) This indicates that there are still relatively high hospitalization levels for many expectant mothers and newborns.

The infant mortality rate during the period 2003 to 2010 ranged from 12 to 13.3 / 1000 live births over the period 2003 to 2010 (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 50). The percentage of deaths occurring in the neonatal period dropped from 59% in 2005 to 41% in 2010 (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 50). This most likely reflects overall improvements in maternal health and newborn care across the health system. The five leading causes of infant mortality in 2009 occurred in the perinatal period (4.9/100 live births), respiratory conditions (3.77/1000 live births), congenital anomalies (3.23/1000 live births), intestinal infectious diseases (1.08/1000 live births) and septicemia (0.81/1000 live births) (ibid., pg 51). In 2006, there were 141 deaths in this age group; in 2007, 121 deaths; in 2008, 85 deaths; in 2009, 133 deaths and in 2010, there were 96 deaths in this age group (MoH, 2011, pg 175). These discrete infant mortality statistics show relatively significant annual fluctuations over the past five years indicating that neonatal health care quality may not be consistent over time.

Malnutrition and diet are critically important factors in the infant mortality rate. (SIB, 2006) states that 78.1% of infants are breast-fed within the first day of birth, 10.2% of infants are exclusively breast fed from 0-5 months, 44% of infants who are 6-9

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*it has been noted that Belize has made slow but steady progress with child mortality indicators including the infant mortality rate, the under-five mortality rate, neonatal mortality rate, low birth weight and the still birth rate*

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months old are receiving breast milk, 41.6% of infants are still being breast-fed at 12-15 months of age and 26.8% of infants that are 20-23 months old are still breast-fed (pg. 10). This indicates that breast-feeding patterns include an early spike right after birth which then drops sharply in terms of exclusive breast-feeding but then partial breast-feeding is practiced with just over a quarter of births almost up to a child's second birthday. Ethnicity and income levels impacted breast-feeding rates with certain ethnic grouping such as the Maya practiced breast-feeding more than Creoles while lower income earners tended to also breast-feed more than higher income earners (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 51). It has been asserted that the principal cause of malnutrition (acute and chronic) in children is attributable to inadequate complementary feeding practices for children 6 to 23 months (ibid.). Low birth weight is an important indicator of the newborn's survival likelihood, longer term growth prospects, mothers' health and is a condition linked to the consequences of poverty. One health data source has identified that eight percent of Belize's newborn children were born at a low birth weight (less than 2,500 grams) (SIB, 2006, pg. 10) while another indicates that the percentage of live births at low birth weight was 6.9% in 2005 and 2007 and 14.4% in 2006 and 2008 respectively and then decreased in 2010 to 9.3% (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 51). Overall, this shows that the percentages of low birth weight births increased and decreased with-

out a noted pattern and may suggest the need for more complex causality analysis that delves deeply into the causes and effects of increased percentages of low-birth weight births (ibid.).

Improvements to prenatal and newborn care, including the delivery process, will have to be implemented to reduce overall infant mortality rates. Also, it is important to point out that unless access to health care is strengthened including both added health facilities and the placement of medical staff in remote rural locations, MDG 4 will not be achieved. In particular, the shortage of local/resident nursing and medical staff, the over-reliance on externally sourced health personnel through international cooperation agreements and increasing poverty rates at household levels that contributed to at-risk pregnancies are a few of the more intractable challenges that need to be tackled if serious progress toward achieving MDG 4 is to be realized.

*Indicator 4.3: Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles*

Belize has a highly expanded immunization program, covered by recurrent government revenues, which has a national vaccination schedule that covers antigens against eleven vaccine preventable diseases (UNDP 2010, pg. 52). The immunization programme, carried out by health facilities and mobile clinics and supported by surveillance and monitoring programme, has also included

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*Belize has a highly expanded immunization program, covered by recurrent government revenues, which has a national vaccination schedule that covers antigens against eleven vaccine preventable diseases*

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*Official health data reports that the maternal mortality rate has steadily declined over the last two decades from 154.8 deaths/100,000 live births to 55.3 deaths/100,000 live births in 2010*

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vaccines for different targets such as the elderly, pregnant women and adults. Current immunization rates (95% immuno-preventable disease coverage in 2007) have meant that the incidence of immuno-preventable diseases has been negligible for many years (GOB, 2010, pg. 128).

It has been identified that 81.9% of Belizean children receive their measles vaccine sometime after 12-18 months of birth and 56.3% of children aged 18-29 months had received all eight recommended vaccinations before their first birthday (MICS, 2006, pg. 11). Of particular importance is the statistical evidence that immunization rates drop as the required number of vaccinations in the immunization schedule progresses and the children get older which signals the need for interventions to ensure that the full schedule of vaccinations are completed and that parents are aware and understand the health implications for their children when all required vaccinations are not done. Despite the achievements noted, there are remaining areas that need to be strengthened. For instance, there are geographical areas with lower coverage when compared to others; failures in the information system and quality of the data as well as its timely availability. In the same way, it is important to include advocacy actions for the introduction of new vaccines, especially for emerging diseases such as Streptococcus Pneumonia and Rotavirus.

A number of measures would improve prospects of fully achieving this

health target and indicator for MDG 4. Among them are: 1) addressing some of the behavioral factors (attendance at early antenatal care, timely complementary feeding, improving exclusive breastfeeding rates, etc.); 2) improving tertiary care services for neonates; 3) increasing ratio of nurses, particularly at the primary care level; 4) more precise targeting of the most vulnerable populations; 5) conditional cash transfers targeting children 0-35 months; 6) maintenance of compliance with national vaccination schedule; and 7) improvement of public health surveillance system for under-fives to identify risk areas.

#### **b. GOAL 5: Improve maternal health**

*Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio*

*Target 5.B: Achieve universal access to reproductive health*

*Indicator 5.1 Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio*

Official health data reports that the maternal mortality rate has steadily declined over the last two decades from 154.8 deaths/100,000 live births to 55.3 deaths/100,000 live births in 2010 (UNICEF 2011, pg. 50). These improvements have been achieved with a current cohort of approximately 7,500 births per year (ibid.). It is important to note that the absolute number of maternal deaths during childbirth is very low there were 4 deaths in 2010 and so small



annual variations can result in significant percentage shifts for this core health indicator (PAHO, 2011, pg. 2). Notably, the main causes of maternal deaths in recent years have been transitioning from being solely caused by direct obstetric complications, such as postpartum haemorrhage and eclampsia, to indirect obstetric causes, such as heart disease, and HIV/AIDS (UNDP 2010a, pg. 55).

The fact that corresponding maternal health process indicators have also shown improvements over the years in Belize has also been acknowledged (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 50). For instance, the proportion of births attended by skilled medical personnel increased from 79% in 1995 to 94.2% in 2010 and the percentage of all births within hospitals increased from 76.8 in 2005 to 90.6% in 2009 (ibid.). However, a critical but intractable challenge is to significantly improve the prenatal health of pregnant women since the health of expectant mothers directly impacts the health of newborns which in turn dictates morbidity and mortality outcomes for infants, especially in the neonatal period.

Adolescents accounted for 20% of live births between 2004-2008 with the teen birth rate being 99 births per 1000 female adolescents in 2004 and decreasing to 78 births per 1000 female adolescents in 2008 (UNDP, 2010a, pg. 57). It is medically proven that there is an increased risk of pregnancy complications and maternal mortality for pregnant adolescents (ibid.). This is in fact a major and trou-

blesome health concern for Belize since the leading cause of hospitalization (2009 data) for children age 15-19 was complications of pregnancy, childbirth, and puerperium and it was also unsettlingly the third leading cause of hospitalization (2009 data) for children age 10-14 (UNICEF, 2011, pg. 50). A significant constraint in reversing the teen pregnancy trend in Belize is the legal ban on sexual and reproductive health counseling for youth less than 18 years unless there is parental consent. In its 2005 report, the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its concluding remarks expressed particular concern regarding this issue by noting in item 23 that "the Committee is concerned that persons under 18 years are not allowed to have any medical counseling, including counseling on reproductive health, without parental consent" (UN-CRC, 2005, pg 5). The National Action Plan for Children and Adolescents (2004-2015) has two key targets in this area, firstly, *"to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy to 15 per 1,000"* and secondly *"to increase the accessibility and affordability of comprehensive healthcare services targeting adolescents"* (GoB 2004, pg. 14). This would be done by improving adolescents' access to sexual and reproductive health services within the national health care system and improving the delivery of related educational information on such services to teenagers (ibid.).

Based on current data trends, Belize remains approximately five percentage points from the MDG 5 tar-



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*The 2010 UNAIDS Global Report estimates the adult (ages 15-49) HIV prevalence rate in Belize at 2.3%, the highest in Central America and the third highest in the Caribbean*

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get in the area of maternal mortality which is achievable if neonatal health care improvements hold. However, the 2015 teen birth target of 1.5% will certainly not be achieved. Overall, Belize is not on target to achieve MDG 5 and associated targets.

**c. GOAL 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**

*Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS*

*Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it*

*Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases*

The 2010 UNAIDS Global Report estimates the adult (ages 15-49) HIV prevalence rate in Belize at 2.3%, the highest in Central America and the third highest in the Caribbean (pg. 202). It should be noted that the Ministry of Health in Belize locally calculated HIV prevalence for the first time in 2009 (based on a cohort of 3,375 15-24 year old antenatal clinic attendees that were tested for HIV) yielding a 1.01% prevalence rate (NAC 2010, pg. 13). With regard to absolute numbers of HIV/AIDS cases, at the end of 2009, there were an estimated 5,175 persons either HIV infected or with AIDS (NAC 2010, pg. 15).

In terms of infection trends, newly reported HIV infections have been decreasing annually as in 2009, a 14% decrease was documented when compared to 2008 data and 2010 data shows a further reduction in new in-

fections by 33.8% when compared to 2009 data (MoH 2010, pg. 2). It was further noted that Belize has diminished new infections to below 250 for a single year; something that had not been documented since 2000, prior to the wide scale testing and the introduction of VCT services countrywide (ibid.). Despite these achievements, (MoH 2010) contextualized the progress by noting that "while this is certainly mirroring a positive impact within the national response, the key age groups still affected remain those between 20-49 years of age with the highest number seen in those 25-29 yrs. highlighting the fact that much work remains to be done amongst this productive sector of society" (ibid.). Overall, several HIV/AIDS related technical reports (e.g NAC 2010, MoH 2010, MoH 2009) have asserted that increased testing levels and better reporting protocols over the last decade have led to increased HIV prevalence rates being reported but has also meant a more accurate statistical understanding of HIV/AIDS in Belize. There have also been some geographic shifts in the areas that have the highest level of new infections. In contrast to previous years, the Belize and Cayo districts now have the greater number of new infections with the Stann Creek District now contributing the third highest number of new infections (MoH 2010, pg. 3). It has been suggested that the current migration patterns in Belize could be driving the HIV infection spread to districts like Cayo (ibid.). Table 7 shows new HIV cases categorized by sex and location of residence.

From the reporting of the first case of HIV in Belize in 1986 to December 2009, the reported total number of HIV infections was 5,045, the reported total number of AIDS cases was 1,093 and the reported total number of AIDS deaths was 963 (Moll 2009, pg. 1). Overall, from 2006-2007 and 2009-2010, HIV/AIDS was the third and fourth leading cause of death in Belize for the first and second years of those time periods respectively (Moll 2011, pg. 172). Early diagnosis of HIV, early access to preventive medication, and timely detection and treatment of infection are identified as key variables that would reduce HIV mortality rates (Castillo and Chien 2009, pg. 12) while the decentralization of HIV care to health centers closer to communities is additionally recommended (ibid., pg. 13).

Regarding anti-retroviral treatment (ART), there were 11 treatment sites in Belize at the end of 2009 including two in each of the Southern, Northern and Western Health regions and five sites in the Central Health region (NAC 2010, pg. 17). In 2008, a total of 630 persons were on ART at the end of that year with 64 (10.2%) being less than 15 years of age while 566 were 15 years and/or older (ibid.). Of the 64 who were below 15 years, 22 were male and 42 were female. Of the 566 who were 15 and older, 285 (45.2%) were males and 281 (44.6%) were females. When utilizing Spectrum estimates for the number of people with advanced HIV infection needing ART, the ART coverage is approximately 49.0% of the es-

**Table7: New HIV Cases by Sex and District of Residence 2010**

District	Male	Female	TOTAL
Corozal	5	5	10
Orange Walk	2	5	7
Belize	83	82	165
Cayo	20	16	36
Stann Creek	11	9	20
Toledo	2	1	3

Source: National TB, HIV & other STIs Programme Annual Report. 2010. National Aids Programme, Ministry of Health.

timated population that should have been in treatment (ibid., pg. 18). In 2009, the Ministry of Health began calculating survival rates of AIDS patients 12 months after beginning the treatment regardless of disease advancement level and although there are no longitudinal data to compare this to, the estimated survival rate is a relatively high 75.6% (NAC 2010, pg. 18). Additionally, aside from the ART treatment provided at the national site network, the Government of Belize also provides free medication aimed at opportunistic infections for HIV/AIDS patients undergoing ART therapy (ibid., pg. 19).

Comprehensive disease awareness, ongoing public education, early sexual initiation and multiple sex partnerships, growing but relatively low condom usage and linkages between HIV/AIDS affliction and domestic violence continue to be challenging HIV/AIDS related issues. Only approximately 38% of primary schools

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*At present, the Government of Belize covers the full operational cost of the National AIDS Commission Secretariat, the National Health Surveillance and Epidemiological Unit of the Ministry of Health, which includes the program for HIV/AIDS, TB and other STIs. This funding guarantees free HIV counseling and testing and antiretroviral treatment for all person who require treatment*

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offered life skills oriented HIV education in 2009, there is currently no established life skills-based HIV education in secondary schools and only roughly half (50.2%) of young adults (ages 15-24) surveyed had comprehensive and accurate knowledge about HIV sexual transmission (NAC 2010, pgs. 11-12). The occurrence of reported sexual initiation before the age of 15 in Belize is 7.8% with males having a higher reporting rate than females (NAC 2010, pg. 24). An estimated 9.4% of sexually active adults surveyed reported having more than one sexual partner in the previous 12 months (*ibid.*, pg. 25) 63.1% of surveyed sexually active adults reported using a condom the last time they had sex and interestingly females between the ages of 25-49 were least likely to report condom usage while males 15-19 were the most likely to report condom usage (*ibid.*, pg. 25). In terms of linkages between domestic violence and HIV, it has been revealed that susceptibility among women in Belize is evidenced by the high number of gender-based violence survivors who received a positive diagnosis after willingly testing for HIV (42%) and among those who experienced an act of sexual violence since the age of 15, 28% were HIV positive, and nearly a quarter (24%) of women who were sexually victimized by their husbands were also diagnosed with HIV (MoH/PAHO 2010, pg. 20).

Belize has made several important strides in 2008-2009 toward realizing its commitments made in the UNGASS Declaration on HIV and AIDS

in 2001. The convention's compliance 2010 report noted improvement in coordination of the national response, surveillance, prevention and involvement of civil society have allowed the country to increase the number of indicators reported as well as record improved performance in key UNGASS indicators (NAC 2010). At present, the Government of Belize covers the full operational cost of the National AIDS Commission Secretariat, the National Health Surveillance and Epidemiological Unit of the Ministry of Health, which includes the program for HIV/AIDS, TB and other STIs. This funding guarantees free HIV counseling and testing and antiretroviral treatment for all person who require treatment. However, other key areas have also been identified that need more attention "such as improved evidence-based planning and coordination of the national response, achieving universal access, progress sexuality and HIV education training for young people, monitoring national AIDS spending, reducing stigma and discrimination, and mainstreaming meaningful involvement of PLHIV (persons living with HIV)" (NAC 2010, pg. 8). Although HIV prevalence is high, Belize has undertaken a range of efforts to halt and reverse the spread of HIV and efforts are underway to better identify "most-at-risk populations" (MARPS), so that the evolving HIV/AIDS disease profile can be better understood and more effectively targeted interventions designed and implemented.



### (i) Other Disease Burdens

Belize has been highly successful in improving malaria incidence, registering decreases from 49.3 per 1000 persons in 1994 to 1.7 per 1000 persons in 2008 (UNICEF 2011, pg. 57) and overall reduction in number of positive malaria cases by 63.2% between 2000 and 2008 (UNDP 2010a, pg. 61). These significant improvements have been attributed to the vigorous implementation of a robust prevention and control programme comprised of indoor spraying in high-risk areas, early detection, quick laboratory confirmation of cases and semi-supervised treatment (UNICEF 2011, pg. 57). There have been no deaths from malaria since 2006 and Belize has surpassed the 2010 target of reducing the malaria positive cases by 50% (UNDP 2010a, pg. 61). In fact, Belize would be certified for malaria elimination within the next two years if the epidemiological profile is still the same.

Tuberculosis (TB) incidence and prevalence rates have also dropped significantly however TB still represents an important threat to the general population, especially for specific vulnerable population groups. The TB infection rate fell from 49 per 100,000 in 1990 to 24.6 cases in 2009 and the prevalence rate dropped from 78 per 100,000 in 1990 to 26.7 in 2009 (UNICEF 2011, pg. 57). It has been stated that the successes associated with reducing the incidence and prevalence of this disease in the country are attributable to the allocation of human resources to coordinate the manage-

ment of the tuberculosis programme and the implementation of a decentralized framework for the delivery of related services in the administrative health regions (UNDP 2010a, pg. 62). It has been reported that malaria prevalence and endemic dengue are highest in the Stann Creek area, due to the predominance of agriculture and migrant workers (UNICEF 2011, pg. 57).

### d. Institutional Response for the Health Sector

PAHO/WHO identified a number of strengths in the Belizean national health system to be built upon, such as the trend of increasing investment in health, ongoing health sector reform, the decentralized health system, the Belize Health Information System and existing frameworks for action in health (PAHO/WHO 2008). It has also been noted that major health sector reform, decentralization and universal coverage issues still require completion and assigned importance in terms of resources and strategies (ibid.). With respect to the financing of the health sector, there has been a modest growth in the per capita health allocation mostly due to the free distribution of antiretroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS patients, the expansion in primary care networks and the increase in staff and services at the secondary care level. However, the majority of the Ministry's budget was allocated to personal emoluments and the national referral hospital (ibid.). Private expenditure on health as a percentage of the total

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*Belize has been highly successful in improving malaria incidence, registering decreases from 49.3 per 1000 persons in 1994 to 1.7 per 1000 persons in 2008*

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*Nationwide, there has been an expansion of primary health care networks as well as an increase in staff and services at the secondary level of health services provision*

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health expenditure decreased from 33% in 2006 to 29% in 2010; however, out of pocket expenditures rose from 32% to 42% in the same period (PAHO/WHO 2008, pg. 36).

Belize is among the 28 countries in the Region of the Americas committed to concerted action to confront the five Human Resources in Health (HRH) challenges for the next ten years as established by the 'Toronto Call to Action (2006-2015). National health data showed that in 2009, Belize had 2,283 health workers—56% (1279) were health care providers and 44% (1044) health management and support personnel (MoH 2011, pg.1). In terms of medical personnel service coverage, there were 181 general practitioners and 64 specialists (coverage density of 7.6 per 10,000 population) and for registered nurses the coverage density was 10.2 per 10,000 population (ibid.). Cuban volunteers constituted 3.5% of the health care provider workforce and are the largest cadre of Spanish-speaking workers (ibid.). The data also showed that 86.7% of community health workers were in rural areas but only 6.2% of doctors, 3.0% of nurses, and 2.4% of midwives also serviced rural locations (ibid.). The geographical inequalities in health service coverage that disadvantaged rural district areas were driven by the uneven distribution of health care providers.

Training programs for nurses, midwives, practical nurses, rural health nurses, pharmacists, medical

laboratory technicians, public health officers, and social workers are offered at the University of Belize however there is only one fully certified offshore medical school in Belize with most students coming from the US, India and the UK. Therefore, the majority of medical educational access was from Cuba, University of the West Indies, Mexico and in Central American countries such as Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. There was no institutional approach to support continuing education of health personnel. As of 2009, there was no Code of Practice regarding the recruitment of international health personnel and no policy on self-sufficiency regarding the development of HRH in Belize.

Basic analyses of health budgetary allocations for Belize show that the absolute amounts have not kept pace with the demands of human resources, technology, equipment and universal coverage. Nationwide, there has been an expansion of primary health care networks as well as an increase in staff and services at the secondary level of health services provision. Additional issues that need to be addressed in Belize include the need for the increased quality of health services (including the provision of high-quality medication procured at cost-effective levels), the lack of state of the art medical technology and the absence of a legal framework that enhances the stewardship role of the MoH over the private sector.

## E. Environment

### (i) Integration of principles of sustainable development into country programmes

Belize's future depends on the efficient use and conservation of its natural resource base and requires national development policies and strategies to integrate a sustainable development approach within future economic development planning and management efforts. Belize has been striving to ensure that its national environmental policies are based on an integrated environmental management approach that incorporates sustainable development principles. With the support of active NGO partnerships and financial assistance from the UN System and regional partners, Belize has been able to make significant strides toward its environmental management goals and targets. Nevertheless, additional effort is required to ensure a more functional integration of sustainable development principles across all sectors of the Belizean economy. The symbiosis of the economy and the environment is clearly linked in the Horizon 2030 long term plan which states that "productivity and competitiveness are critical and, in the context of Belize's natural resource based economy, environmental sustainability is key to sustainability of economic development" (Barnett et al. 2010, pg. 74). Horizon 2030 also notes that Belizeans would like fundamental change in the planning process, an increased recognition of the economic value of the natural resources and environmental

goods and services and greater incentives for the adoption of "green" technologies (ibid.). This however, presents a major challenge when considering Belize's currently high poverty level, slow economic growth rate and fairly rapid population growth. Presently, Belize also faces increased environmental degradation primarily associated with the expansion of agriculture, housing, tourism and the new blossoming petroleum sector thereby posing even greater challenges in maintaining a healthy environmental and natural resource base.

With the support of the UN System and other development partners, Belize continues to make progress towards the accomplishment of its international commitments under the various Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and MDG 7 which aims to ensure environmental sustainability. More specifically, MDG 7 related targets aim to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of resources, reduce biodiversity loss, and to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015. The MDG 7 has three targets, namely:

*Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources*

*Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss*



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*Belize is a signatory to various MEAs including the Kyoto Protocol, and is undertaking a number of actions to coordinate multi-sectoral environmental policies to achieve the three Rio conventions: Convention on Biological Diversity; Convention to Combat Desertification; and the Framework Convention on Climate Change*

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*Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation*

Belize is a signatory to various MEAs including the Kyoto Protocol, and is undertaking a number of actions to coordinate multi-sectoral environmental policies to achieve the three Rio conventions: Convention on Biological Diversity; Convention to Combat Desertification; and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Regarding the first target of the MDG 7, Belize has embarked on a number of initiatives to streamline and harmonize its policies, legislation and programs with its regional and international commitments aimed at meeting this first target.

#### **a. Coordination of MEAs/Environmental Policies**

The Government of Belize is embarking on an initiative to 'Strengthening Institutional Capacities for Coordination of Multi-sectoral Environmental Policies and Programmes'. The overall objective is to ensure better coordination of Belize's natural resource and environmental policies in such a way that they create synergies for the national implementation of the United Nations Convention for Biodiversity (UNCBD); United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNCCD); United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Belize CBD 4th National Report 2010).

#### **b. Sustainable Land Management Policy**

In support of UNCCD objectives, the Government of Belize has embarked on activities aimed at the enhancement of its sustainable land management capacities and the strengthening of current land use policies and legislative frameworks. GOB is presently executing the Mainstreaming and Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) project to establish an enabling environment for sustainable land management enhanced through mainstreaming, capacity building and improvement in policy, legislative and institutional framework (GOB-MNR SLM 2010).

#### **c. Chemicals Management**

Belize has embarked on the implementation of its national programme aimed at "Mainstreaming into Development Plans: Sound Management of Chemical (SMC) Priorities for Key Development Sectors in Belize and Associated SMC Governance".

Under this initiative a comprehensive diagnostic of the chemical sector was conducted with the following being elaborated: a) Policy Options Analysis Report-October 2010, b) Mainstreaming the Sound Management of Chemicals Priorities -An Action Plan-November 2010, c) a National Profile for the Management of Chemicals and Waste -December 2010,d) The National Pollutant Release and Transfer Register Assessment Report July 2011 and e) a Capacity building exercise in



Chemical Accidents: Expand National Emergency Plans to Include Industrial Accidents, Including in Ports and Shipping Channels, to Defend Coastal Integrity/ Biodiversity and Safeguard Human Health.

#### **d. Protected Areas Policy**

In 2005, the Government of Belize prepared a National Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan (NPAPSP), which was founded on the need to ensure that biodiversity conservation becomes an important and integral part of national social and economic development. A key underlying principle was to balance biodiversity protection with maximizing the potential contribution of the protected areas system to national development and poverty alleviation needs. The Plan has the greater rationalization of its protected area system and management framework as one of its main goals.

#### **e. Integrated Water Resource Policy**

Belize's core water policy recognizes that Belizeans have a fundamental right to water and it is hereby declared that the policy of the Government is to bring about the planned development, coordinated management, sustainable use and protection of Belize's water resources consistent with the social, economic and environmental needs of present and future generations, and to ensure that all Belizeans have access to affordable, safe, adequate and reliable water. At the same time, this policy allows Belize to be in alignment with

its international partners and neighbours. As a follow up, the ministry is proceeding with consultations for the passage of legislation known as the National Integrated Water Resources Act and is currently designing strategies and action plans for the National Integrated Water Resources Management Policy.

#### **f. Legislative Reform**

In keeping with efforts to harmonize national legislation with international commitments, Belize has promulgated a number of national legislative instruments that support the conservation of biodiversity and natural resources, including the National Lands Act, the Lands Utilization Act, the Environmental Protection Act, the Forest Act, the Wild Life Protection Act, the National Parks Systems Act, the Fisheries Act, Belize Agriculture and Health Authority Act, and Pesticide Control Board Act.

#### **g. Forest Sector Reform**

It is estimated that the annual deforestation rate for Belize is approximately 0.6% which is considered to be very low in comparison with global rates and it is further projected that by 2015, Belize will lose 1.8% of existing forest cover if the current rate is stabilized (Cherrington et al. 2010, pg. 35). While the GoB is clearly aware of the necessity to develop a more integrated policy framework to help combat the decline in forest cover, at present, many of the existing instruments need to be aligned, coordinated and made more robust to ensure more objective and impartial enforcement.

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*In 2008, Belize had 102 protected areas, representing 22.6% of its national land, including territorial and marine waters and which included 19 Forest Reserves, 17 National Parks, 3 Nature Reserves, 7 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 5 Natural Monuments, 9 Archaeological Reserves, 8 Private Reserves, 8 Marine Reserves, 13 Spawning Sites, 6 Public Reserves and 7 Bird Sanctuaries*

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#### **h. Green House Gas Emissions**

With respect to the indicators on greenhouse gas emissions, Belize is classified as a Non-Annex 1 country and is not obligated by convention to set or meet quotas. While the country's net emissions are negligible when compared with international levels, and with some sectors reporting decreasing emissions (electricity generation), it would still be a prudent policy strategy to consider CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in development planning within existing reporting processes for the achievement of the MDGs.

#### **i. Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS)**

With respect to the phasing out of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS), Belize has shown meaningful progress and is presently on track to complete this process by 2015. Belize acceded to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer on June 6th, 1997. It subsequently acceded to the London and Copenhagen Amendments on January 9th, 1998. Belize also ratified the Montreal and Beijing amendments on 4th of January, 2008. The country is classified as an Article 5 country under the Protocol and is hence eligible to receive technical and financial assistance from the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol. The country does not produce any ODSs, and all its consumption is met through imports. All chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) used in Belize are limited to the servicing of refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment (UNEP/ROLAC/UNDP/GoB 2008). The Terminal Phase-out Management Plan for Belize was ap-

proved at the 53rd Meeting of the Montreal Protocol Executive Committee in held November 2007. In 2008, the expected Annex A CFC consumption level for Belize was 3.7 metric tons, as agreed with the Executive Committee, also for 2009. In 2008, Belize's consumption level (.078) was far below the agreed ceiling of 2.9 tons.

#### **(ii) Reduction of Biodiversity Loss**

Belize faces diverse challenges in the area of protected areas and biodiversity. It has shown its commitment to this issue through the ratification of a number of legally binding multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on World Heritage Sites, the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention), as well as the previously noted ones on desertification and climate change. Although the methodologies for the monitoring of biodiversity are still undergoing development and refinement, Belize has a Biodiversity and Environmental Resource Data System (BERDS), which has collected data on more than 100,000 specimens.

In 2008, Belize had 102 protected areas, representing 22.6% of its national land, including territorial and marine waters and which included 19 Forest Reserves, 17 National Parks, 3 Nature Reserves, 7 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 5 Natural Monuments, 9 Archaeological Reserves, 8 Private Reserves, 8 Marine Reserves, 13 Spawning Sites, 6 Public Reserves and 7 Bird Sanctuaries (Figure 6).

(Land Information Center)





The terrestrial protected areas include 34.9% of the total land surface area, while the marine reserves include 10.6% of the country's marine area. The legal administration of protected areas is shared among three different ministries responsible for the fisheries, forestry and archaeology portfolios.

The Belize Fisheries Department has the legal mandate to declare and manage Marine Reserves, which is one category of the National Protected Areas System (NPAS) in Belize. The major goal of Marine Reserves is to conserve marine biodiversity by protecting important ecosystem, habitats, and species. Among its objectives are: 1) providing a refuge from harvesting activities; 2) protecting habitats, especially those critical to lifecycle stages such as spawning, juvenile rearing and feeding; 2) protecting spawning stock biomass, thus enhancing reproductive capacity; 3) ensuring protection of areas of species, habitats, and ecosystems restoration and recovery; and 4) assisting in conservation-based fisheries management regimes (FAO 2007). Indicators established regarding biodiversity protection capacity of the NPAS suggest that Belize is at present adequately fulfilling protection standards for most species except the commercial species subject to high levels of extraction. This has been particularly challenging with respect to pressure on fish stocks and marine species, in part due to the recent growth in the number of licensed fishermen. Most of the fishing effort in Belize is focused on the Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*) and the Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*), which repre-

sent the largest fisheries within the industry. At present, lobster stocks and conch are managed sustainably after dramatic declining trends in the 70s, indicating effective implementation of protection measures. However, the overall trend is toward decreasing biodiversity in general, as well as those of commercial species, with rising numbers of species on endangered lists.

### **(iii) Access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation**

Target 7C of MDG 7 seeks to halve the population that does not have access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Belize has set its own target of universal water access for all its citizens thereby becoming an 'MDG plus' country in this area. The proportion of the population with an improved water source ascended from 43.6% in 1995 to 76.4% in 2006 (UNICEF 2011, pg. 58) while it has been reported that 96.5% of the population is using an improved source of drinking water including 99.2 % in urban areas and 94.0 per cent in rural areas (SIB 2006, pg. 13). With regard to the former, improved water sources have been identified as household connections, public standpipes, boreholes, protected dug wells, protected springs, rainwater collection and bottled water (UNICEF 2011, pg. 58) while bottled water and piped water into dwellings stood out as the most significant sources of drinking water consumed by 32% and 23.1% of the population respectively (SIB 2006, pg. 13).



This progress in water access puts Belize well on track to achieve its 2015 target of 100% universal potable water coverage for all citizens. Despite the fact that Belize has made admirable advances in attaining this target, it may fall short in keeping up its current rate of progress unless specific measures relating to improvements in institutional capacity, good governance practices, policy development, sound planning and community empowerment are implemented. Other elements such as geographical targeting have been recommended, especially for rural communities in the Belize and Toledo districts, as the rural-urban divide persists, with poor rural farming families reflecting the least access to potable water sources.

Some notable progress has also been made in sanitation coverage, especially in the rural areas, but the current pace still leaves the country off track in its MDG plus goal of 100% access to improved sanitation services by 2015. It has been reported that Belize's improved sanitation coverage now stands at 93.7% (SIB, 2006, pg. 13) while other sources have stated that the proportion of the population with improved sanitation access increased from 41% in 1995 to about 70% in 2008 (UNICEF 2011, pg. 58). While overall sanitation access percentages may vary, the trend points squarely upward. What has also been noted is the clear "urban-rural divide" with regard to sanitation as while 80.9% of urban households have access to a toilet either linked to a sewer system or to a septic tank, only 33.1

per cent of the rural households use this type of sanitation facility and of those approximately 63 per cent of the rural population continue to use pit latrines or less sanitary facilities (SIB 2006, pg. 13). Furthermore, there continues to be sharp geographical variations in sanitation coverage as the population of Toledo, the district perennial scoring high poverty rates, also is less likely (16.7% of district's population have no sanitary facilities at all), to use improved sanitation facilities (ibid.).

Belize is currently not on track to achieve this MDG 7 sub-target and so an MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) has been developed to support countries like Belize in intensifying and focusing their efforts in achieving these goals. It seeks to provide a systematic approach for national stakeholders to identify and analyze bottlenecks that are impeding MDG achievement in their country, followed by identification of coordinated, focused actions to help accelerate progress. Belize is participating as a pilot country for the implementation of the MAF to develop a Country Action Plan (CAP) for the achievement of MDG 7, the increase of sustainable access to improved water sources and basic sanitation by 2015. In June 2011, the GOB and the UNDP published the results of MAF framework study for water and sanitation, which provided a wide range of recommendations at technical, institutional, and policy levels to make progress toward the established goals. Belize has a number of legislative frameworks





and plans which when implemented will make important contributions to water resource management and protection and improved solid waste management. A national solid waste management project funded by the IDB is currently being implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources. The project is financing investments to improve solid waste disposal in the Western Corridor (Belize City, San Ignacio and Santa Elena), on the islands of Ambergris and Caye Caulker and aims to strengthen the Solid Waste Management Authority (SWMA) as the entity responsible of improving solid waste management across the country.

#### **(iv) Institutional response**

Consistently emerging conclusions from macro analyses of the environmental management sector in Belize points to the need to develop a more systematic approach to the issue of unsustainable practices and to rationalize and make more coherent the large number of frameworks, policies, and legislative instruments to ensure better coordination, management and enforcement. Capacity constraints, at the institutional, organizational and individual (human

capital) levels remain the core intractable development challenge for this sector. Implementation and enforcement of environment and natural resources management responsibilities have been consistently hampered by institutional capacity gaps as key institutions that are directly responsible for the management of Belize's environment and natural resources are under-resourced, under-staffed and operate primarily in an implementation oriented mode that does not necessarily incorporate strong results-oriented and impact evaluation approaches. Numerous technical analyses have also identified the need for shared responsibility among key stakeholder groupings, the need for strong local-level stakeholder involvement in resource management decisions and that community buy-in and robust participation is indispensable for institutionalizing viable long-term environmental management strategies at the national level. This presupposes investment in capacity-building with local-level partners and being informed by a strategic approach which evidently values and makes operational the symbiotic relationship between sustainable practices and economic benefits.

## PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES, BINDING CONSTRAINTS and AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

### A. Prioritized Development Challenges

Belize's development priorities and challenges have been identified in this CCA development exercise through an extensive range of national analyses and planning processes, some of which have included broad stakeholder consultations. While the various processes and output documents have slightly different emphases and time-frames, their initiatives and actions are closely linked and aligned and have strategically informed this CCA and the resultant UNDAF providing a seamless collage of policy formulation and attendant interventions which are meshed together to leverage resources, efforts and ultimately development impact.

The CCA analysis and discussion with stakeholders have pointed to a range of constraints and impediments to achieving well-being in the broadest sense, and to establish development objectives more specifically in Belize. Examining these constraints provides a route to establishing the broad clusters or priority areas for development cooperation. The overarching challenge facing Belize is to develop strategies and create capacities to reduce the elevated levels of poverty, which is Goal 1 of the MDGs and a target that is currently off track.

The poverty level for Belizeans in 2009 was 41.3%, a burden that falls unequally on children, who experience a poverty rate of 50%. One factor underlying this phenomenon is the burgeoning unemployment rate of 23.1%, with significant gender inequity in the workforce. Another worrying trend is that of the increasing poverty of the employed poor. The issue of increasing socioeconomic inequity must be at the center of the discussion, analysis and strategies to reduce poverty in Belize.

Challenges in governance also serve as an impediment to achieving development goals. These areas include weaknesses in rule of law institutions; barriers to transparency and accountability; obstacles to greater participation, particularly for women in national politics; and deficiencies in establishing a human rights culture. Crime, violence and citizen insecurity, phenomena which have multiple drivers, also block and undermine the attainment of a range of rights. Citizen insecurity and violence are linked, among other contributing factors, to youth exclusion, lack of economic opportunity, deficiencies in access to quality education and health, and patterns of gender socialization. Barriers to improved governance were also detected in the area of public finan-




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*The overarching challenge facing Belize is to develop strategies and create capacities to reduce the elevated levels of poverty, which is Goal 1 of the MDGs*

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*The four development cooperation areas that will comprise the UNDAF (2013-2016) are:*

- 1) Advancing Human Rights with Equity, Equality and non-discrimination;*
  - 2) Promoting Economic and Social Well-being, Citizen Security and Justice;*
  - 3) Promoting Environmental and Natural Resource Management; Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Mainstreamed; and*
  - 4) Enhancing Democratic Governance*
- 

cial management and more broadly public administration, where lack of sufficient capacity development was noted in the areas of evidence-based policymaking; strategy and planning; monitoring and evaluation; human capital development and ICT for development. The need for better aid coordination and inter-sectoral collaboration was also deemed important and identified for improvement in the next UNDAF implementation period.

Another key development area identified for core interventions is the broad area of environmental, cultural and natural resources management; disaster risk reduction and vulnerabilities to climate change. There are strong causal relationships among the state of the environment, human well-being and vulnerability. The vulnerability of a population is dependent on the extent of their exposure, their sensitivity to impacts, and the ability or inability to cope or adapt. Almost 76% of Belize's economy depends on the environment, requiring that sustainability, vulnerability to natural disaster, and the importance of adaptation to climate change, be placed at the centre of the Belize's national developmental agenda.

#### **B. Indicative Development Cooperation Areas**

Based on the preceding analyses across major development sector in Belize, it can be concluded that the implementation of the UNDAF (2013-

2016) will be greatly assisted by having a broad human-rights based approach and sustainable development orientation guiding its delivery across the many working partnerships among UN agencies and respective national partners in Belize. The ongoing challenge will be to ensure that all development domains have a common goal of human development and social well-being and have the non-negotiable tenets of human rights recognition and attainment as well as equity solidly woven into each programmatic area and individual intervention. Thus, the four broad areas identified for development cooperation between the U.N. system and Belize reflect the interdependent character of these guiding principles and overall development goals and objectives.

The four development cooperation areas that will comprise the UNDAF (2013-2016) are:

- 1) Advancing Human Rights with Equity, Equality and non-discrimination;
- 2) Promoting Economic and Social Well-being, Citizen Security and Justice;
- 3) Promoting Environmental and Natural Resource Management; Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Mainstreamed; and
- 4) Enhancing Democratic Governance.



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## Annex 1-The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Summary Version)

<b>Article 1</b>  All human beings are born free and equal.	<b>Article 16</b>  All adults have the right to marry and found a family. Women and men have equal rights to marry, within marriage, and at its dissolution.
<b>Article 2</b>  Everyone is entitled to the same rights without discrimination of any kind.	<b>Article 17</b>  Everyone has the right to own property.
<b>Article 3</b>  Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security.	<b>Article 18</b>  Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
<b>Article 4</b>  No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.	<b>Article 19</b>  Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
<b>Article 5</b>  No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel or degrading treatment or punishment.	<b>Article 20</b>  Everyone has the right to peaceful assembly and association.
<b>Article 6</b>  Everyone has the right to be recognized everywhere as a person before the law.	<b>Article 21</b>  Everyone has the right to take part in government of one's country
<b>Article 7</b>  Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection of the law.	<b>Article 22</b>  Everyone has the right to social security and to the realization of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for dignity.
<b>Article 8</b>  Everyone has the right to justice.	<b>Article 23</b>  Everyone has the right to work, to just conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work, to sufficient pay to ensure a dignified existence for one's self and one's family, and the right to join a trade union.



<b>Article 9</b>  No one shall be arrested, detained, or exiled arbitrarily.	<b>Article 24</b>  Everyone has the right to rest and leisure.
<b>Article 10</b>  Everyone has the right to a fair trial.	<b>Article 25</b>  Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services.
<b>Article 11</b>  Everyone has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.	<b>Article 26</b>  Everyone has the right to education.
<b>Article 12</b>  Everyone has the right to privacy.	<b>Article 27</b>  Everyone has the right to participate freely in the cultural life of the community.
<b>Article 13</b>  Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and to leave and return to one's country.	<b>Article 28</b>  Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which these rights can be realized fully.
<b>Article 14</b>  Everyone has the right to seek asylum from persecution.	<b>Article 29</b>  Everyone has duties to the community.
<b>Article 15</b>  Everyone has the right to a nationality.	<b>Article 30</b>  No person, group or government has the right to destroy any of these rights.

## Annex 2-The CCA's Underlying Corporate Principles and Approach

### 1. The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)

In 1999, the UN Secretary General's *Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform* underscored the centrality of human rights in all UN activities and set in motion efforts to mainstream human rights into the designing, implementing and evaluating national programmes. The Statement of Common Understanding which emerged from the 2003 Inter-agency Workshop on the Human Rights-based Approach to Development Cooperation underscored three broad principles:

- All programmes of development cooperation, policies and technical assistance should further the realization of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human rights and other human rights instruments
- Human rights standards contained in, and principles derived, from the Universal Declaration of Human rights and other human rights instruments guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process
- Development cooperation contributes to the development of the capacities of “duty bearers” to meet their obligations and and/or of “rights holders” to claim their rights

The essence of the human rights-based approach is that human development requires the realization of the full range of human rights (social, civil, cultural, economic and political) and as such the aim of all development activities should be to contribute to the realization of human rights. The human development approach and a human rights perspective are mutually reinforcing. The principles of a human rights based approach are indivisible, universal, interdependent and inter-related, non-discriminatory, participatory and accountable. The application of this approach is that it is oriented towards the most marginalized and excluded. It seeks to build the capacity of those communities to advocate and influence policy and programme directions. While the human rights based approach focuses on the protection of and compliance with specific rights, the human development analysis provides the systematic evaluation of the institutional and economic limitations for the realization of these rights, as well as seeking to propose the policies and resources to overcome these obstacles. The Human Development Report 2000 has argued that the human rights perspective has enriched the human development approach by clarifying duties and responsibilities of different social actors, while the human development perspective provides the rights approach with key instruments to measure and analyse progress and conditions for the realization of rights.

National efforts to promote human development cannot be seen as an “option”, but rather as a commitment to respond to the established human rights of individuals. Individuals are not seen as beneficiaries of services or of protective measures, but as “rights holders”, subjects of rights to which they are entitled and must claim. “Duty-bearers,” primarily the state, are required to meet their obligations under international law to respect, protect and fulfill people’s rights. The HRBA introduced an important new element of accountability, as well as placing more explicit emphasis on the issue of inequality as a key barrier to claiming rights and fulfilling rights, as well as that of capacity.

### 2. Gender Equality

Another normative principle governing the CCA analysis is that of gender equality and equity. There is extensive evidence regarding the relationship between the success of development policies and the promotion of gender equality, and a human rights-based approach integrates and robustly reinforces women’s rights, both as framed broadly in international human rights instruments, and specifically as formulated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

### Gender Mainstreaming

In its agreed conclusions 1997/2, the Economic and Social Council defined gender mainstreaming as “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.”-Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/52/3/Rev.1), chap. IV, para. 4.

### Human Rights and Environmental Sustainability

The sustainability of ecosystem services is a pre-requisite for the enjoyment of human rights. The human rights obligations of States should include the duty to ensure the environmental protection needed to enable the fulfillment of human rights, particularly the rights to food, safe water, sanitation, housing, and health. Human rights, like the access to information, participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters, are essential to good environmental decision-making. The intersection of these concerns means that development processes must pay attention to the legal, policy, and institutional processes that determine the access to, and control of ecosystem resources, especially for vulnerable, excluded groups.

Guidance Note: Application of the Programming Principles to the UNDAF (United Nations Development Group, 2010)

(CRC). All UN Country Team agencies have identified gender mainstreaming as a strategy and gender equality as an overarching or cross-cutting goal.

Through a gender mainstreaming approach, this CCA will examine the structural inequalities and barriers which impede both equitable development as well as the full participation of women in all spheres of society. The CCA seeks to reflect the differentiated ways that men and women experience the major development challenges and issues, and will highlight the gaps as well as the successes in meeting the goals and rights enshrined in the CEDAW and the CRC<sup>5</sup>. Through a gender analysis, this CCA will examine the structural inequalities and barriers which impede both equitable development and constrain the full participation of women in all spheres of society. It will also address how stereotypical gender norms affect the involvement of boys and men in realizing a culture of gender equality. It will explore the different data gaps and their significance, as well as seeking to analyze disaggregated data through a gender lens. The analysis seeks to take into account the potential differences in impact of different vulnerabilities/risks (environment/citizen security) on men and women in different groups (e.g. by age, ethnicity, income, etc.) when possible. It will seek to identify the specific capacity gaps that women and girls face at all levels.

Subject to the quantity and quality of available data, the CCA seeks to analyze also ethno-cultural discrimination of women, girls and indigenous adolescents; imbalance in access to basic health and nutritional services among pregnant and lactating women; access to basic social services for girls, adolescent girls and women; and gender disparities in education.

### 3. Sustainable Development/Disaster Risk Reduction

One of the five normative programming principles of the UNDAF is sustainable development, defined by the Millennium Project as the task of meeting “current human needs without undermining the capacity of the environment to provide for those needs over the long term. As with other areas of rights, environmental sustainability has its own normative framework of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in three broad clusters related to climate, biodiversity, and chemicals. As noted in the box to the left, there is a highly interdependent relationship between the fulfillment of other human rights and the need for environmental sustainability. Evidence suggests that stronger environmental management and policy will certainly contribute to the achievement of both the other MDGs and other national development goals.

In the CCA’s mainstreaming of the principles of sustainable development, key natural resources assets of the country will be examined as it relates to their importance to the country’s long term economic growth and their contributions

<sup>5</sup>CEDAW’s recommendations of 2007 (CEDAW/C/BLZ/CO/4) and CRC’s recommendations of 2005 (CEDAW/C/BLZ/CO/4).

to human/social development. It is the intent of the CCA to consider key barriers to the sustainable application of the country's resource base in addressing the country's economic development, overarching environmental health and poverty reduction. The process identifies the capacities of duty bearers and rights holders as it relates to their abilities to make the required environment-development linkages allowing for more comprehensive national and sectoral development planning.

As climate change becomes more widely accepted as one of the key issues influencing the development of countries such as Belize, the CCA has prioritized climate change and climate proofing in its analysis. The report also seeks to highlight the existing associations between land and natural resource management, climate variability and national vulnerabilities.

#### **4. Results-Based Management**

Results-Based Management (RBM) is one of the two enabling principles that, along with capacity development, allows the normative principles discussed above to be made operational in the UNDAF. It is a specific management strategy to contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes, and results), establishing clear accountability for performance and progress. It was developed to "create and report on a specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound results framework to measure capacity-building initiatives".

It requires the engagement of partners to establish priorities, results, mechanisms and processes for monitoring and evaluation, and establishes indicators, baselines and performance targets to underpin M & E. It establishes and encourages a learning process, regular feedback during development programs permitting improvement and adjustment, and strengthens the management capacity of stakeholders and practitioners. Formulated with partners; it provides a precise method to concretely measure progress from the broad lens of the HRBA perspective, the environmental sustainability approach and that of gender equality.

#### **5. Capacity Development**

One of the central focal points of the UN system's development assistance is to support national counterparts to develop their capacities to lead, manage, achieve, and account for their national development priorities. This has particular relevance for those objectives related to the MDGs and internationally agreed development goals, as well as human rights obligations as reflected in ratified UN conventions and treaties. The CCA and later the UNDAF will employ a capacity assessment/capacity development conceptual approach to explore some of the constraints and barriers to achieving development goals, examining capacity gaps between desired capabilities and current ones. The analysis takes a systems approach to the capacities under assessment, ranging from the broader enabling environment, to the organizational and institutional level, and to the individual level.

Hence the analysis will examine a wide range of national capabilities including national capacity for public sector accountability, for multi-stakeholder inclusion, and participation for equity and empowerment in development processes; capacity for policy development formulation and implementation; capacity for financial resource allocation, management and oversight; national capacity to manage environmental resources; and capacity to manage external/international relations. The purpose of the analysis will be to, at the UNDAF stage, develop capacity indicators and benchmarks to monitor and review the role, responsibilities and responsiveness of public institutions for policy design and formulation, and service delivery.



