

PRESS RELEASE

PREPARATION OF A NEW NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY AND STRATEGY NOW IN PROGRESS

BELIZE CITY, BELIZE, 15 April 2026

On April 14, 2026, an inaugural meeting of the Youth Policy Round Table was held in Belize City as part of an initiative to prepare a new National Youth Development Policy and Strategy for Belize. The meeting brought together seventeen stakeholders representing key government ministries, civil society organizations, youth groups and international partners.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Tourism, Youth, Sports & Diaspora Relations, Nicole Usher-Solano, serves as Chairperson of the Youth Policy Round Table, with the Department of Youth Services providing core technical support.

In January 2026, the Belize Policy Research Institute (BELPRI) of the University of Belize was commissioned by the Ministry, with the support of UNICEF, to coordinate the preparation of the National Youth Development Policy and Strategy. This effort is designed to reflect the evolving needs, aspirations, and challenges facing young people across Belize. Through this policy and strategy, the Ministry seeks to strengthen the policy framework for youth development and empowerment.

The policy development process is being implemented by a three-member team headed by Dr. Dylan Vernon, Executive Director of BELPRI. The process incorporates a thorough review of past policy experiences, comparative research, surveys, stakeholder interviews, and countrywide consultations to inform the policy and strategy proposals. This multi-layered approach ensures that the voices and perspectives of Belizean youth are meaningfully integrated into the policy and strategy.

The Youth Policy Round Table plays a critical role in guiding the process by facilitating dialogue, providing strategic oversight, and ensuring inclusivity. During its inaugural meeting, the Youth Policy Round Table endorsed the project's goal: to deliver an innovative, practical and long-term policy framework, supported by effective implementing mechanisms, that will enhance the empowerment of the young people of Belize and create sustainable opportunities for them to learn, work, engage and lead.

Announcements regarding stakeholder consultations activities will be made in the coming weeks.

-End-

BELPRI is an independent policy institute housed at the University of Belize. For more information on the policy project, contact BELPRI at 223-0256 (ext. 2070) or belpri@ub.edu.bz.