

Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat Support to Belize 2007-12

July 2013



The Commonwealth

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACP	Africa, Caribbean & Pacific
ACS	Association of Caribbean States
ARTEMIS	Activity Results Tracking and Expenditure Management Information System
BBS	Belize Bureau of Standards
BCCI	Belize Chamber of Commerce & Industry
BELTRAIDE	Belize Trade and Investment Development Service
BTOR	Secretariat's Back-to-Office Report
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CARIFORUM	Caricom states and the Dominican Republic
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CM	Certification Mark
COHSOD	Council for Human and Social Development
CS-DRMS	Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Reporting and Managing System
DAC	The OECD Development Assistance Committee
DMFAS	UNCTAD's Debt Management and Financial Analysis System
DSA	Debt Sustainability Analysis
EC	European Commission
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EPB	Economic Performance Benchmarking
GIDD	Governance & Institutional Development Division
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDCG	Inter-Divisional Coordination Group
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LCAD	Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement





OAS	Organisation of American States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCR	Project Completion Report
PSA	Production-Sharing Agreement
PUP	People's United Party
RTPA	Regional Trade Policy Adviser
SASD	Special Advisory Services Division
SICA	Central American Integration
SID	System Small Island Developing State
TCF	Technical Cooperation Framework
TCSRG	Technical Cooperation and Strategic Response Group
TORs	Terms of Reference
TPA	Trade Policy Analyst
UDP	United Democratic Party
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WTO	World Trade Organization
YFF	Youth For the Future

Executive Summary

This evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's programme of assistance in Belize, covering the period 2007/08 – 2011/12, is one in a series of country evaluations being undertaken by the Secretariat. The study's primary aim was to assess whether projects met their objectives and, more importantly, whether they created any impact or made a difference.

The evaluation adopted a 'rapid and light' approach, in which evidence relating to project background and performance was collected from three main sources: (a) reviews of file correspondence, Project Completion Reports (PCRs), Back to Office Reports (BTORs) and project documents from PIMS (Project Management Information System) and ARTEMIS; (b) interviews with Secretariat staff; and (c) consultations with officials in the government of Belize and CFTC consultants based in Belize.

Approximately £0.8 million of Commonwealth Secretariat assistance (excluding training and in-house advisory services expenditure as well as other expenditure charged through regional and pan-Commonwealth projects) was provided to Belize over the period 2007/08 – 2011/12. Assistance to Belize represents about 15 per cent of total Secretariat individual country assistance to the Caribbean region.

The programme of assistance included activities in the following strategic programme/thematic areas: Economic Development (trade, debt management and natural resources management), Rule of Law (legislative drafting), Democracy & Consensus-Building (an election observation mission), Public Sector Development and Environmentally Sustainable Development (climate change adaptation options). Other programme areas that have featured, but to a lesser degree, included Human Development (education, youth and gender) and Human Rights.

The evaluation found that most, if not all, of the projects constituting the assistance appeared relevant when matched against the Secretariat's Strategic Plan, though this could be explained by the inclusiveness and broad nature of the Plan and its programmes. With regard to Belize, project request documents and interviews with officials in Belize during the evaluation field mission would suggest that the requested assistance at the time was relevant to the country's needs. There is also the suggestion that because the Secretariat does not generally operate within country strategy frameworks and priorities, integration or relevance of Secretariat assistance is not always evident. However, as will be seen later in this report, relevance though important, is only one of the many considerations that need to be taken into account when appraising a project request.

The evaluation also established that most projects delivered on outputs and generally met their objectives. However, it is also true that some projects also appeared not to have gone beyond these initial outputs and did not realise real outcomes or impact per se. Nevertheless, Secretariat programmes made valuable contributions in areas connected with the petroleum sector, debt management, trade policy (under the Hub and Spokes project), export promotion (opening up of the Mexican market for Belize beef livestock), rule of Law (the judiciary and legislative drafting), promotion of democracy (election observer mission), Multi-grade Education Reform and some areas of governance. Notwithstanding, Secretariat projects tended to operate in isolation from other donor programmes and strategic priorities, which it could be argued, diluted their overall development impact.

There was evidence of effective collaboration among some Secretariat Divisions, and the hope is that the recent establishment of the Inter-Divisional Coordination Group (IDCG) will lead to more regular Secretariat-wide sharing of information and the development of a more coherent and integrated country assistance programme in Belize. However, strong partnerships or collaborations with other organisations (apart from the Hub and Spokes project) were not evident. Where there is an active development partnership between international donor organisations and the government, the Secretariat should become more strategic in its involvement. Though limitations on resources suggest some constraints on the extent of such involvement, there should be more effective coordination with donors and the government in the design and implementation of development programmes.

Going forward, it is recommended that the Secretariat considers the following:

- Abstain from undertaking activities unless it is clear that the requesting government/agency is showing the necessary level of committed support, and generally that the appropriate enabling environment is in place.
- Undertake, where possible, preliminary scoping missions to minimize risks by establishing a better understanding of the proposed project and its implications; establishing any key outstanding issues that remained to be addressed; and clarifying with the government requirements for potential follow-up work.
- For some projects, the Secretariat should approach better resourced agencies operating in the Caribbean region with a view to forging partnerships in order to take projects/initiatives forward to another level – agencies and regional organisations such as OAS, CIDA, EC, IDB, UNDP, CDB and CARICOM. Initial requests could also be referred to better placed agencies, and in this regard the Secretariat should have mechanisms in place for directing requests to the appropriate agency or sister organisation

(example, directing support for private sector assistance to the Commonwealth Business Council).

- Consideration should be given for a consolidated programme of country assistance under a Technical Cooperation Framework (TCF) in line with Belize's Development Plan and the Secretariat's Strategic Plan. This would ensure genuine priority areas for assistance are identified and are in alignment with its development priorities and other donors' programming.¹
- As already been established by the Training Evaluation Study,² many workshops/seminars undertaken by the Secretariat in member countries have tended to be short and one-off activities and have not made a noticeable difference or created any identifiable benefits. The recommendations arising from that study are also applicable here.
- Some ministries were still not sure what the Secretariat had to offer. Lack of awareness and limited visibility of the Secretariat's programmes among some member countries seems to be a recurring issue. Greater promotion and communication of its work is still needed, particularly its achievements and successes within the Commonwealth.

1 Evaluation of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation, April 2008.

2 Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat Training Programmes, September 2010.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This is the report of an evaluation study of Commonwealth Secretariat (hereafter called the Secretariat) assistance to Belize. The study is one in a series of country evaluations being undertaken by the Secretariat across all four Commonwealth regions, and covers the financial years 2007/08 to 2011/12,³ therefore spanning two Secretariat strategic plans: 2004/05 – 2006/07 and 2008/09 – 2011/12. The choice of Belize for this evaluation study was guided by several factors, chiefly among them were the resources disbursed by the Secretariat in Belize through various country, regional and pan-Commonwealth projects and the diversity of the portfolio of projects implemented in Belize over the evaluation period.



Source: The CIA World Factbook

1.2 Objectives of the Evaluation

This evaluation had two broad objectives, which were to provide an account of the performance of the programme of assistance in Belize over the period 2007/08 to 2011/12; and to derive lessons for the Secretariat in Belize and elsewhere in Commonwealth member countries.

Specifically, and using standard OECD DAC evaluation criteria, the main objectives of the study were to review the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the projects implemented in Belize, as well as to identify evidence of impact and sustainability of the assistance provided. The study will therefore touch on various elements of the results chain, from inputs and outputs to outcomes and final impacts. The main focus, however, will be on the latter, that is, determining where the Secretariat's assistance has made a difference. The study also sought to ascertain lessons to be learnt in the design and delivery of future assistance and recommend any strategic or operational changes that may be required by the Secretariat to make the delivery more focused, relevant and sustainable.

1.3 Methodology

The measurement or assessment of impact and attribution is of course not straightforward, and doing so appropriately should involve the development of counterfactuals – that is, determining what would have happened in the absence of Secretariat support. This technique, however, requires a substantial amount of information, time and resources and was therefore not adopted for this study. This evaluation exercise followed a 'rapid and light' approach, in which evidence was collected from three main sources: (a) reviews of file correspondence, Project Completion

³ The Commonwealth Secretariat Financial Year runs from 1 July to 30 June.

Reports (PCRs), Back to Office Reports (BTORs) and project documents from PIMS (Project Management Information System) and ARTEMIS; (b) interviews with Secretariat staff; and (c) consultations with officials in the government of Belize and CFTC consultants based in Belize (Annex 3). Examination of all sources of information was structured by use of an evaluation framework/matrix (Annex 1). This matrix was critical in establishing the basis for responding to the crucial questions that defined how the evaluation was carried out. The five headings and some of the associated questions in the matrix are:

Relevance: To what extent was Secretariat assistance suited to the priorities and policies of Belize's needs and did this assistance fit in with the Secretariat's Strategic Plan?

Effectiveness: To what extent has the programme of assistance to Belize achieved its objectives?

Efficiency: To what extent has the assistance achieved its objectives on time and were actual expenditure levels in line with planned expenditure?

Impact/Outcomes: Has Secretariat assistance made a difference and has there been any identifiable change, or what contribution has its assistance made towards long-term outcomes?

Sustainability: To what extent did the benefits accruing from Secretariat projects continued after Secretariat support ceased?

1.4 Structure of Report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows: Section 2 sets out the country context (politically, socially and economically) within which the programme of assistance was developed. Sections 3 and 4 address respectively the nature of the assistance provided and its effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The final Section provides the conclusions and suggested recommendations for the way forward, as well as some lessons to be drawn from the evaluation.

2. Country Context (Political, Social and Economic)

During the period under evaluation, governance of Belize more or less alternated between the two major political parties – the People's United Party (PUP) which occupied government from 1998 - 2008, and the United Democratic Party (UDP) which came to power in 2008 and was re-elected at the last General Election in March 2012.

The Commonwealth has consistently supported Belize in its border dispute with Guatemala, primarily through the Commonwealth Ministerial Committee on Belize, created by Heads of Government in 1977 and comprising eight Foreign Ministers. With the co-operation of Belize, Ministers agreed in 2011 to "rationalise" the work of the Committee by reporting on developments to Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meetings, rather than convening separately.

Belize is a member of the United Nations, WTO (World Trade Organisation), CARICOM (Caribbean Community and Common Market), SICA (Central American Integration System), OAS (Organisation of American States), Commonwealth, ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific), NAM (Non-Aligned Movement), San Jose Group, Association of Caribbean States (ACS), CDB (Caribbean Development Bank), the World Bank Group, IMF (International Monetary Fund) and IDB (Inter-American Development Bank). In order to strengthen its potential for economic and political development, Belize has sought to build closer ties with the Spanish-speaking countries of Central America to complement its historical ties to the English-speaking Caribbean states.

Belize has a population of approximately 334,297 (July 2013 est.) people, and ethnically is made up roughly of: Mestizo 48.7%, Creole 24.9%, Maya 10.6%,

Garifuna 6.1%, other 9.7%. The country's population growth rate was estimated at about 2.0% in 2011.

Economically, tourism is the number one foreign exchange earner followed by exports of marine products, citrus, cane sugar, bananas, and garments. The government's expansionary monetary and fiscal policies, initiated in September 1998, led to GDP growth averaging nearly 4% from 1999 to 2007. Oil discoveries in 2006 bolstered this growth. Exploration efforts have continued and production has increased a small amount.

In February 2007, the government restructured nearly all of its public external commercial debt, which helped reduce interest payments and relieved some of the country's liquidity concerns. Growth slipped to - 0.0% in 2009 from 3.5% in the previous year, but recovered to 2.9% in 2010 and fell again to 1.9% in 2011 as a result of the global slowdown, natural disasters, and a temporary drop in the price of oil. Owing to the refinancing of Belize's public debt through commercial financial institutions, the country was exposed to the drastic fluctuations in interest rates resulting in Belize becoming one of the world's most indebted nations owing approximately US\$550 million. As of March 2011, Belize's total national debt (both external and domestic) was in the region of US\$1.0 billion, an amount equivalent to approximately 75.3% of GDP.

A key government objective, as noted in the National Development Framework for Belize, 2010 – 2030⁴ (Horizon 2030), remains the reduction of poverty and inequality with the help of international donors. Belize earlier this year signed a United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (2013-2016),

4 Belize Horizon 2010-2030 National Development Plan.

which constitutes the framework of reference for the collaborative actions of the entire UN system in Belize and is anchored to the National Development vision and priorities of the Government of Belize as outlined in Horizon 2030, as well as in other national sector plans, policies and strategies. Although Belize has the second highest per capita income in Central America, the average income figure masks a huge income disparity between rich and poor. The government's 2010 Poverty Assessment shows that more than 4 out of 10 people live in poverty.

The Government of Belize has designated tourism as one of its major development priorities and it is the country's main foreign exchange earner, followed by exports of crude oil and marine products. On the other hand, agriculture currently employs approximately 29% of the total labour force and the need to diversify the agricultural product remains a high priority. Although tourism attracts the most foreign direct investment, telecommunications and the agricultural sectors continue to prove attractive areas for investment.

Infrastructurally, a major constraint on the economic development of Belize continues to be the scarcity of infrastructure investments. As part of its financial austerity measures started in late 2004, the government froze expenditures on several capital projects. Although electricity, telephone, and water utilities are all relatively good, Belize has the most expensive electricity in the region. Hydroelectric facilities at Vaca Dam and a bagasse cogeneration plant at a sugar cane processing facility were brought fully online in 2010 in an effort to increase domestic capacity for electricity generation.

Large tracts of land, which would be suitable for development, are inaccessible due to lack of roads. Some roads, including sections of major highways, are subject to damage or closure during the rainy season hinting at the level of the State's environmental vulnerability.

Economic Profile

GDP (*at constant prices*): US\$1,376mn (2012)

GDP per capita (*at constant prices*):
US\$4,248 (2012)

GDP real growth: 2.3% (2011), 5.3% (2012 est.)

GDP by Sector: (2011)

- Agriculture: 9.7% (bananas, cacao, citrus, sugar; fish, cultured shrimp; lumber)
- Industry: 19.8% (garment production, food processing, tourism, construction, oil)
- Services: 70.5%

Main exports: Sugar, bananas, citrus, clothing, fish products, molasses, wood and crude oil

Export Partners: USA (30.3%), UK (20.8%), Costa Rica (12.7%), Cote d'Ivoire (4.6%) and Nigeria (4.6%).

Imports: Machinery and transport equipment, manufactured goods; fuels, chemicals, pharmaceuticals; food, beverages and tobacco

Import Partners: USA (34%), Mexico (14.3%), Cuba (9.5%), Guatemala (7.6%), China (4.7%) and Trinidad and Tobago (4.3%).

Natural Resources: Arable land potential, timber, fish and hydropower.

3. Overview of Secretariat Assistance to Belize

Secretariat assistance to member countries is guided by the Strategic Plan. The Plan sets out the overall strategic focus, objectives and expected results of the organisation, as well as the modes of delivery. The Plan has two on-going and interlinked Goals for the Secretariat reflecting the two broad pillars of its work – Democracy and Development – under which the Secretariat's Programmes are structured (**Table 1**). The assistance, which this evaluation reviews, spans two strategic plan periods: 2004/05-2007/08 (which consisted of 13 programmes) and 2008/09-2011/12 (which saw a reduction in the number of programmes to eight). The programmes under which project assistance to Belize fell will be examined shortly.

Between 2007/08 – 2011/12, Secretariat direct development assistance to Belize was valued at approximately £0.8 million⁵, excluding training,

in-house advisory services expenditure and other Net official development assistance (disbursement flows net of repayment of principal) and official aid to Belize during this period totalled about £82 million (sourced from OECD/DAC). expenditure charged through regional and pan-Commonwealth projects (all Caribbean member states benefit from the Secretariat's regional programme of assistance, valued at over £1 million per annum and the pan-Commonwealth programme worth about £15 million per annum). Thus, for example, the cost of work in the area of trade capacity building (through the Hub and Spokes project) and human development (education and health) is not included in the direct country expenditure, as such activities tended to be more regionally or pan-Commonwealth focused.

Table 1: Secretariat Programmes per Strategic Plan Period

2004/05-2007/08	2008/09-2011/12
1. Good Offices for Peace	1. Good Offices for Peace
2. Democracy & Consensus Building	2. Democracy & Consensus Building
3. Rule of Law	3. Rule of Law
4. Human Rights	4. Human Rights
5. International Trade	5. Public Sector Development
6. Investment	6. Economic Development
7. Finance & Debt	7. Environmentally Sustainable Development
8. Public Sector Development	8. Human Development
9. Environmentally Sustainable Development	
10. Small States	
11. Education	
12. Health	
13. Young People	

⁵ Net official development assistance (disbursement flows net of repayment of principal) & official aid to Belize during this period totalled about £82 million (sourced from OECD/DAC).

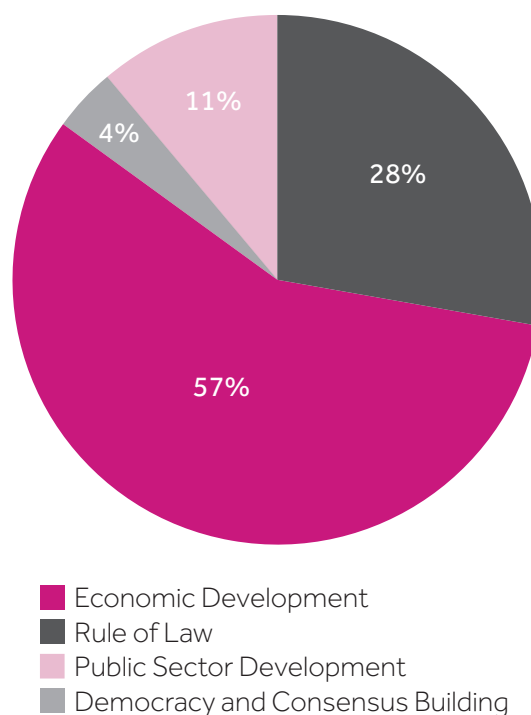
Assistance to Belize over the period represented about 15 per cent of total Secretariat individual country assistance to the Caribbean region.

Table 2 below shows the level of this assistance over the five-year period, while **Figure 1** provides a distribution of assistance to each member country in the region over the same period. The programme of assistance in Belize included activities in the following strategic programme/thematic areas: Economic Development (trade, debt management and natural resources management), Rule of Law (legislative drafting), Democracy and Consensus-Building (observer mission), Public Sector Development and Environmentally Sustainable Development (climate change adaptation options). Other programme areas that have featured, but to a lesser degree, included Human Development (education, youth and gender) and Human Rights. **Figure 2** illustrates where the magnitude of assistance was most significant.

Table 2: Value of Secretariat Direct Assistance to Belize, 2007/08- 2011/12

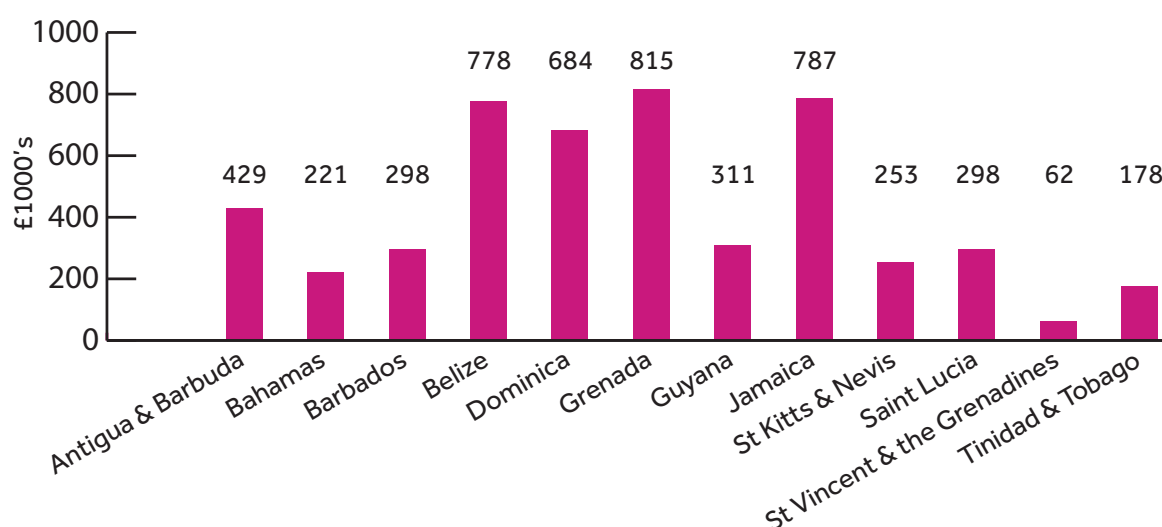
Year	£000
2007/08	186.9
2008/09	147.3
2009/10	131.2
2010/11	168.4
2011/12	144.4
Total	778.2

Figure 2: Thematic Composition of Secretariat Direct Expenditure in Belize 2007/08- 2011/12



As mentioned at the beginning of this Section, Secretariat assistance is meant to be linked to its Strategic Plan programmes and the following now provides a brief description of those programmes and the projects that were implemented in Belize under them.

Figure 1: Distribution of Secretariat Direct Country Assistance to the Caribbean, 2007/08 - 2011/12 (excludes regional and pan-Commonwealth assistance)



Economic Development Programme

This Strategic Plan Programme seeks to *strengthen policies and systems that build resilience and support inclusive and sustainable economic growth in member states*. The Programme has two broad areas of work: finance and financial sector development, and economic development. Over fifty per cent (£0.5 million) of Secretariat funds expended in Belize were on projects falling within this Programme. Projects, as seen in the box below, ranged from natural resources management to debt management, investment, export generating activities and trade capacity building.

Box1: Projects Falling Under Economic Development Programme

Assistance to Establish a Petroleum Fiscal Regime, PXBEL025 (started in 2006)

Expenditure: £116,960

Development of Certification Marks for Belizean Products: A Feasibility Study, PXBEL024 (2010)

Expenditure: £48,683

Debt Management Assistance (ongoing)

Expenditure: Falls under the regional and Pan-Commonwealth programmes of assistance on strengthening debt management capacity

Enhancing the Competitiveness of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Belize, PXBEL021 (2008)

Expenditure: £68,400

Improving the Export Competitiveness of Professional Services from Belize, PXBEL023 (2010)

Expenditure: £128,681

Belize Investment/WTO Compatibility, PXBEL018 (2008)

Expenditure: £92,666

Continued...

Belize Market Access for Agribusiness and Light Manufacturing, PGBEL041 (2010)

Expenditure: £76,120

Trade Policy Formulation, Negotiations and Implementation (Hub and Spokes Project) (This is a pan-Commonwealth project under which Belize has benefited significantly. The project has been in operation since 2004).

Assistance to Establish a Petroleum Fiscal Regime, PXBEL025

Essentially, the programme of assistance under this project sought to ensure that a petroleum fiscal regime was established in Belize that generated a fair and equitable fiscal take for the government, while at the same time remaining internationally competitive. Assistance so far has consisted of a review of tax instruments covering elements such as royalty rates, income tax, production-sharing and government participation. Once the fiscal regime was agreed upon, the concept of introducing a Petroleum Revenue Management Fund was fundamentally guided by the need for transparency, improved management and the distribution of oil income while keeping future generations in mind. As such, it is hoped that the Belize Petroleum Fund will become one of the standards in the industry in terms of accountability, transparency and good governance.

In parallel to the establishment of the Petroleum Fund, a review of the model Production-Sharing Agreement (PSA) was undertaken. A set of recommendations and amendments were proposed to bring the Model Agreement into line with industry best practices. Special attention was dedicated to issues of decommissioning and to the creation of an Environmental Common Trust providing the government with an emergency response capability in undertaking mitigation measures in response to any potential environmental accident. In summary, benefits accrued so far from this project include:

- More balanced contractual arrangements with companies;

- Optimisation of government benefits while making sure the country remains attractive for investors. (overall taxes have been increased by over 50% and a dozen new companies have signed contracts);
- Sound management of Petroleum revenues and Intergenerational equity;
- Environmental protection mechanisms.

Development of Certification Marks for Belizean Products: A Feasibility Study, (PXBEL024, 2010)

The purpose of this project was to determine, through a feasibility study, the best practical options for establishing certification marks for Belizean agri-food products. BELTRAIDE, the Belizean government agency responsible for trade and investment promotion, requested technical assistance in developing certification marks (CMs) for commodities produced by SMEs. A scoping mission by the Secretariat to Belize in June 2009 found that while there was some enthusiasm and demand for CMs by government agencies and SMEs, some of the preconditions necessary for the establishment of such CMs were not yet in place. As a result and with the concurrence of BELTRAIDE and other stakeholders, it was decided that the technical assistance at that stage should focus on conducting a feasibility study to determine how best the country could be assisted to establish CMs.

The assistance to Belize under this project has consisted of a feasibility report, scoping the options for establishing certification marks for Belizean agri-food products taking into consideration its existing infrastructure and resources available and presenting a roadmap or step-by-step approach on how certification marks could be introduced in the short, medium and long terms.

However, though the feasibility report appeared to have been well-received by BELTRAIDE and the Belize Bureau of Standards (BBS), with plans to move to the piloting stage, no actual follow up action or implementation seemed to have resulted. BBS, the ultimate beneficiary, did

indicate in their response that they needed to 'agree to the scheme, the sectors concerned and more importantly the basket of goods' and that existing legislation needed to be looked at in terms of the suitable government institution to take the lead as the certifying authority.

Implementing Debt Techniques using CS-DRMS, Central Bank and Ministry of Finance

The Secretariat has been providing advisory and training support to the Ministry of Finance and Central Bank, both of which are using CS-DRMS, to help with the recording and management of the country's external debt portfolio on a sustainable basis. Assistance has focused on developing national capacity to carry out debt sustainability analysis (DSA) using the IMF Debt Sustainability Framework Template. The training has been designed to assist local officials in better analysing the sustainability of the current debt levels and to identify the surplus required on the external current account (excluding interest) and the primary fiscal account to stabilise debt ratios. The analysis was carried out using the latest information available against a background of adverse overall economic conditions and rising financing needs.

Enhancing the Competitiveness of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Belize, (PXBEL021)

This project involved the Secretariat assisting BELTRAIDE (Belize Trade and Investment Development Services) with development and implementation of a National MSME Policy, and developing an Economic Performance Benchmarking (EPB) software-based tool for MSMEs. This software based tool was to assist in gauging the performance of MSMEs and identify how they could enhance their levels of productivity and thereby competitiveness. The project followed earlier work carried out in Belize under the pan-Caribbean SME ICT Competitiveness Development SMEs and ICT. Belize was one of the five countries covered under this phase of the programme, whose key focus areas included providing

effective SME strategies and augmenting institutional capacities in order to enhance the competitiveness of these businesses in the countries covered. A MSME policy for Belize has been produced and submitted to BELTRAIDE, though it is not clear if it was subsequently adopted.

Improving the Export Competitiveness of Professional Services from Belize, (PXBEL023)

The Government of Belize, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade, requested technical assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat for promoting and increasing the export of professional services. These services were to include accounting, ICT, creative services, engineering, architecture, contractors, consulting, health and many others. The purpose of this project therefore was to improve the export competitiveness of professional services in Belize, with a roadmap for the export of professional services from Belize as the main output. A toolkit to facilitate further capacity building has also been prepared. The project was implemented in two phases: Prioritization and Consensus-building and Situation Analysis and Preparation of a Roadmap. Key outputs under these phases comprised:

- Identification of potential markets for the services;
- An assessment of the business and regulatory environment to identify any policy and administrative barriers;
- A review of the institutional framework governing the sectors, including the current roles and co-ordination arrangements within Government and with the private sector and proposing a mechanism to institutionalise policy dialogue;
- Consensus building workshop on emerging markets;
- Developed a detailed roadmap with key actions, time frame, resource requirements and agencies responsible to enhance the competitiveness of professional services exports from Belize.

Government officials in Belize indicated this project was timely, adding that it built on earlier efforts aimed at organizing the services sector and further developing awareness of the importance of services to the Belizean economy. It was said that this project worked with the services providers to take them to the next level (export) and made them aware that they were already exporting in some instances. It also highlighted the links between the tourism sector and other services and reinforced the point that services are not limited to tourism. It also built capacity to the point where service providers recognized that there is great potential and more than that, it provided the building blocks by incorporating tools to allow them to move forward. These "tools" or the roadmaps were given to the service providers, the government and the statutory body responsible for services.

Unfortunately, however, implementation of the roadmaps for each of the service stakeholders did not proceed as planned. This, it was pointed out, was for reason beyond the scope of the project itself. It is understood that the Secretariat made many attempts to support implementation of this project, but to no avail.

Belize Investment/WTO Compatibility (PXBEL018)

This project consisted of a series of activities assisting Belize in reviewing its domestic regulations, particularly those pertaining to domestic border taxes, fiscal incentives, export processing zones and the Belize's investment regime in the context of the implementation of WTO commitments. The project's overall purpose was the establishment of a WTO-compatible trade and investment regime, conducive to investment. This project was identified following Belize's WTO Trade Policy Review, which highlighted certain problematic areas in the Belize's regulatory frameworks. It eventually led to concrete proposals for the streamlining of domestic legislation directly relevant to bananas, citrus, sugar and livestock and to the reorganisation of these sectors. The project also addressed tariffs and other duties

and charges and provided useful information in this area facilitating Belize's negotiations at the WTO. The project's outcome led to a fundamental policy change for some key agricultural products which were previously benefiting from a WTO-incompatible licensing regime. Legislative changes on the import licensing regime generated tangible outcomes in the citrus industry of Belize. This industry now provides an interesting business alternative to some of the other less competitive sectors such as bananas.

Belize Market Access for Agribusiness and Light Manufacturing (PGBEL041)

This project, which commenced in May 2010, aimed to support Belize Trade and Investment Development Services (BELTRAIDE) in its efforts to diversify Belize's export base and create better access to international trade markets. The project sought to assist Belize in maximising value creation by building the sustainability and competitiveness of SMEs in the agri-business and light manufacturing sectors (mainly furniture), through improved access to profitable and sustainable local and international markets. This project has had some impact as it has led to the opening up of the Mexican market for Belize beef livestock. Less successful, however, has been the light manufacturing sector where it is felt limited aspirations for the export market existed. Overall, outputs achieved so far include:

- Development of a "Paths to Market Manual" for use by BELTRAIDE staff and SMEs;
- Strengthening of established formal linkages with relevant agencies including Belize Agriculture Health Authority;
- Successful participation in business negotiations e.g. access to the Mexican market for Belize beef livestock;
- Mentoring and training of staff including (including a local person who has assumed the post of Industry Specialist, Agribusiness and Light Manufacturing).

It is also understood that this project has been beset by unfortunate circumstances, such as significant staff turnover within BELTRAIDE, a hurricane and an arson attack that destroyed the BELTRAIDE building. This, it is believed, disrupted and limited the CFTC expert's work in relation to training and mentoring of staff.

Trade Policy Formulation, Negotiations and Implementation (Hub and Spokes Project)

This pan-Commonwealth project seeks essentially to enhance the capacity of ACP countries to formulate, negotiate and implement international trade policies. A Trade Policy Analyst (TPA) was based in Belize in 2005/06, though it is understood this did not create the effectiveness or impact that was anticipated. Belize's assistance from the Hub and Spokes project has come through the technical input of the CARICOM Regional Trade Policy Adviser (RTPA) on issues relating to Belize's obligations to WTO, EU-CARIFORUM Economic Partnerships (EPAs) and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.

Specifically, the RTPA conducted WTO mandated consultations with the beneficiaries of Belize's three export subsidy programmes (Commercial Free Zones, Export Processing Zones and Fiscal Incentives); prepared a Draft Action Plan leading to full compliance by 2015; prepared a WTO notification of progress made towards becoming fully compliant; prepared a draft of the official beneficiary notification letter regarding the elimination of export subsidies and formed a Technical Working Group on Export Subsidies that would ensure the implementation of the Action Plan.

The emergence of the services sector is seen as the major growth pole within the Caribbean region, and the Hub and Spokes Project was therefore also instrumental in the establishment of and strengthening of Coalitions of Service Industries in Belize.

The RTPA also conducted initial stakeholder consultations and was involved in the formulation of a Strategic Plan for the Corozal Free Zone in Belize.

Rule of Law Programme

This Programme's objective is to *support member countries to promote and strengthen the rule of law that underpins strong democratic and accountable governance; and to assist members to harmonise their national laws with international frameworks*. The Secretariat has pursued this objective in Belize through four projects, totalling approximately £0.3 million.

Box 2: Projects Falling Under Rule of Law Programme

Assistance to the Judiciary, Justice of the Supreme Court of Belize (PGBEL040A, 2007-2011) Short-Term Court Administrator (PGBEL040B)

Expenditure (both projects): £249,887

Strengthening the Institutional Drafting Capacity, Attorney General's Ministry (PGBEL0442, Jan 2012)

Expenditure: £53,467

Seminar for Magistracy of Belize (24 – 25 June 2011)

Expenditure: £26,025

Assistance to the Judiciary, Justice of the Supreme Court of Belize (PGBEL040A, 2007-2011)

The principal objective of this project, which ran from January 2007 – January 2011, entailed assisting in the improvement, development, capacity building and strengthening of the judiciary and the administration of justice in Belize. It is understood that the consultant, who undertook the assignment, made a big contribution to the administration of justice during his four years in Belize, chiefly by reducing the large backlog of cases (more than 1,200, mainly civil cases), allowing local judges to focus on new cases entering the court system, conducting case management conferences and providing advice to the Registrar, as well as general advice to members of the staff of the Registry on management of case files and other administrative matters.

A chief recommendation emanating from this consultancy was that a Court Administrator for the Supreme Court Registry was urgently needed as there was a persistent problem with case file management, case flow management and records management within the Supreme Court of Belize. This recommendation has been adopted with the appointment of a *Short-Term Court Administrator PGBEL040B*. The Court Administrator has completed phase 2 of the assignment and is planning on returning to Belize for the last phase of the consultancy, though the feeling was expressed that more time may be needed for completion. Work so far has centred on the installation of a computerised case filing system, though progress appeared to have been slow at times due to delays concerning the input of data. However, the recording of data has commenced and some reports have been developed for use by the Chief Justice and Registrar. Electronic recording of data files has been created for Supreme Court Civil Cases, Supreme Court Criminal Cases and Court of Appeal. A Manual has been produced and training has been conducted with Registrars and System Administrators for checking data integrity and producing reports.

Legislative Drafter (PGBEL0442, Jan 2012)

The purpose of this project is to enhance the legal drafting capacity in the Attorney General's Ministry of Belize, thus improving the operational effectiveness of the drafting unit, and ultimately assisting the Government of Belize in dealing effectively with legal drafting requirements.

This project, which commenced in January 2012, grew out of a legislative drafting assignment at CARICOM. In August 2010, the Secretariat seconded to Belize one of its CFTC (CARICOM- based) legislative drafters. This consultant provided three months' assistance in the clearing of the backlog of drafting assignments and mentoring and capacity building activities in Belize. However, it was realised that a more long term arrangement was needed and that problems still remained (backlog of outstanding legislation; lack of drafting

capacity within the AG's Ministry and requesting ministries' inability to articulate their legislative requirements) - hence the appointment of the current legislative drafter. The current consultant is effectively clearing the backlog of drafting assignments, which was urgently required to satisfy Belize's international and domestic obligations. The consultant has also provided some training to counterparts by using drafting assignments as training exercises to foster the use of proper technique to analyse instructions, develop legislative schemes, attention to use of language and formatting among other drafting principles.

Overall, this project is new, but the assistance is proving effective, though long-term its sustainability remains in doubt as those who receive training tend to move on, mainly because of more lucrative financial opportunities elsewhere. The feeling was expressed that the Secretariat may need a rethink on how to address the serious skills-gap and capacity building in legislative drafting. Two years' counterpart training by a consultant was considered inadequate and a longer period of time (four years) was felt necessary to nurture trainees effectively. It is envisaged therefore that requests for assistance in the area of legislative drafting will continue for some time, not only from Belize, but from most Commonwealth developing countries.

In addition to the above project, reference too should be made to the supplementary programme of assistance that has been provided to Belize through the regional legislative drafting programme at CARICOM. It is understood that under this assistance the entire statute book of Belize has been revised, updated and re-issued.

Seminar for Magistracy of Belize (24 – 25 June 2011)

This seminar's primary aim was to contribute to the strengthening of the administration of justice in Belize. Organized by the Secretariat in conjunction with the Judiciary of Belize and the Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association, the seminar sought to provide magistrates in Belize with the opportunity to

discuss major issues confronting them in the dispensation of justice. Seminar participants formulated ten recommendations for future practice and reform.

Feedback from officials suggested that this seminar was timely and useful, and had a positive effect in so far as it provided judicial education for magistrates. A request was expressed for further training for magistrates in areas of specialisation so that they could be put on court cases in those areas where they were specialists.

Public Sector Development

The Public Sector Development Programme has aimed to advance good governance in Belize *by assisting governments build public service capacity, strengthen public institutions and improve service delivery*. Projects in this area of work have been part of the Secretariat's Caribbean Management and Development Programme for the Public Services, encompassing professional skills development and strengthening of management systems, processes/ procedures and training institutions/units.

Box 3: Projects Falling Under Public Sector Development Programme

Feasibility study on The Establishment of a Public Service Training Institution in Belize

Expenditure: £11,842

Customer Service Training, Belize Public Service (March 2011)

Expenditure: £18,211

Standardization of Jobs Descriptions for Ministry of Finance Departments

Expenditure: £19,678

Change Management Workshop, March 15th – 17th 2010.

Expenditure: £18,575

Caribbean Cabinet Secretaries and Heads of the Public Service Consultative Meeting, 10 - 12 June 2010

Expenditure: n/a

Public Policy and Management Programme, 20-13 June, 2011

Expenditure: £12,720

Continued...

Documenting Position Descriptions, Job Functions and Competencies for Senior Public Officers, 20-24 April 2009

Expenditure: n/a

Pre-retirement Training for Ministry of the Public Service, 28 Feb – 1 March 2011

Expenditure: £16,423

Feasibility study on The Establishment of a Public Service Training Institution in Belize

This study sought to determine the feasibility of the establishment of a public service training institution in Belize. The Ministry of the Public Service (MoPS) indicated that they were in the process of utilising the report emanating from this study sometime next year (2013). They were working in tandem with the University of Belize and said an Action Plan had already been developed. Much work needed to be done still. A training and development plan was being developed and a circular has been released to ministries seeking their training needs. Further assistance would be needed from the Secretariat in prioritizing the human resources needs identified by the various sectors. Training of public servants was cited as a big priority for Belize.

Customer Service Training, Belize Public Service (15 – 18 March 2011)

This four-day training workshop was designed to assist in ensuring public servants were equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills for providing excellence in public service. The idea was that at the end of the programme participants would have a better grasp of the key assumptions about behaviour and would have skills that varied from effectively answering the telephone to competencies in diffusing conflict with difficult customers. Seventy participants drawn from several government ministries were trained. It was indicated that a major recommendation - that a structured survey

should be conducted within three months of the training to assess the views of customers and therefore the effects of the training - had not yet been followed up. So, in effect it was not clear if any notable change had taken place as a result of the training.

Standardization of Jobs Descriptions for Ministry of Finance Departments

This project has led to the adoption of new job formats/descriptions for over 380 people by four departments in the Ministry of Finance (Treasury/Accountant General, Customs and Excise, General Sales Tax and Income Tax). It is understood these new job descriptions have helped in informing the development of competency frameworks within the public service as well as the filling of longstanding vacancies. It is understood other ministries are also now using these new job formats.

Change Management Workshop, 15 – 17 March

This workshop's aim was to enhance and expose senior and middle managers in the public sector to prevailing human resource development interventions, which will assist them in developing skills to implement measures to strengthen organizational leadership and promote innovation through the adoption of modern management practices. The workshop was attended by 25 senior public officers. One of the change management interventions that was highlighted at the workshop was the relocation of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the resistance to this move. Since the workshop, the Ministry of Natural Resources has been relocated and HR Managers are 'effectively' managing the resistance to this change.

Caribbean Cabinet Secretaries and Heads of the Public Service Consultative Meeting, 10 - 12 June 2010

This meeting, which was convened in Belize, concluded with the endorsement and adoption of an eighteen-point Work Plan. Issues raised during

the course of this meeting formed the basis for further action with regard to implementation at the national level. The main issues discussed included efficiency in the context of change management, monitoring and evaluation of policy and programmes and capacity building. The Ministry of the Public Service indicated that Belize has been making slow strides in managing change and that monitoring and evaluation was still a bit weak. It was added that there was no M&E Unit in the Ministry and that there was a strong case to be made for one to be established.

Public Policy and Management Programme, 20-13 June, 2011

This Public Policy and Management programme was a regional programme and was attended by 15 Belizeans with responsibility for policy development in their respective ministries. It is understood the programme equipped those officers with the necessary skills to be able to effectively develop policies.

Documenting Position Descriptions, Job Functions and Competencies for Senior Public Officers, 20-24 April 2009

This programme provided training on how to draft job descriptions and job functions and how to develop core HR competencies. The objective of this training programme was to address the mismatch between position description and current job functions. This programme was attended by 25 HR managers/Administrative Officers. A follow up visit was made by the consultant, who spearheaded the development of job descriptions in five technical departments. The revised job descriptions are being used and are required by the Public Service Commission in their deliberations.

Pre-retirement Training for Ministry of the Public Service, 28 Feb – 1 March 2011

This workshop was attended by 50 public officers who were nearing retirement. The training looked at areas such as the fears of retirement,

retirement investments, business planning, health concerns of retirement and volunteering options after retirement. Prior to the workshop, it was felt that there was little or no preparation for officers who were retiring from the public service and that they were leaving without being mentally and physically prepared. It was said that the officers found the training very informative and beneficial.

It is understood that further requests for assistance are expected to come for support for training of public servants and support for improved governance in public bodies.

Democracy and Consensus-Building Programme

This Programme's objective is to *support democratic processes and institutions across the Commonwealth*. Only one country project has featured under this programme in Belize: *Commonwealth Expert Team to Belize, 2008, PBEL001*, at a total cost of £41,355. The Commonwealth Expert Team, which consisted of three experts and three Secretariat staff, observed the preparations for the election, the polling, counting and results process; and the overall electoral environment. Overall, the elections were considered to be credible by the Team, though the Team's report contained a series of recommendations for the further strengthening of the electoral and democratic process in Belize.

Among areas for improvement were reform of election management arrangements to strengthen their independence from government; strengthening of women's participation and addressing campaigning financing. It is understood, however, that recommendations relating to these issues and to others have not yet been implemented. The 2012 Election, which the Secretariat unavoidably could not participate in, was observed by the Organization of American States (OAS) and some of the recommendations emanating from the OAS Observer Mission were similar to the ones arising from the Commonwealth Expert Team,

2008. Whilst the Secretariat's observation of elections is welcomed by member countries, (its comparative advantage in this area of work based on shared values, parliamentary traditions and electoral systems), means of monitoring and assisting with the implementation of critical recommendations emerging from Expert Teams' reports need to be considered.

Environmentally Sustainable Development Programme

The Environmentally Sustainable Development Programme aims to *assist members, especially small and least developed countries, to manage risk and identify opportunities for environmentally sustainable economic development and pro-poor growth*. As a Small Island Developing State (SID), Belize is vulnerable to, among other things, climate change, and under this Strategic Plan Programme, Belize has been benefiting from work being undertaken by the *Regional Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (5Cs)*. This project, which is supported by EAD and GIDD and based in Belize, seeks to develop methodologies for undertaking cost benefit analysis of climate change adaptation options in the water, agriculture and tourism sectors. The 5Cs coordinates the Caribbean region's response to climate change, and Secretariat support has led to the development of an implementation plan on climate change that has now been approved by CARICOM Heads of Government.

A long-term expert has been in place since October 2008 to support the enhancement of capacities within 5Cs in order to provide technical assistance to the Small States in the region, and regional partners to develop methodologies for carrying out cost benefit analysis of climate change adaptation options in the water, agriculture and tourism sectors. The Secretariat also undertook a special event on small states concerns at the Rio+20 meeting in June 2012.

Belize recently signed a financing agreement (Euro 2.9 million) on climate change with the European Union, which aims to lead to a project that will develop a resilient water sector and

enhance climate change governance through the establishment of a Climate Change Office. This project will be implemented by UNDP. So it can be seen that other players are involved in this area of work in Belize and the region. However, it is recognized that support and cooperation on all fronts is vital in addressing climate change. Therefore the Secretariat would appear to have a role to play here.

Human Development Programme

Under this programme, which *supports Commonwealth countries to develop strategies and tools, and to use their public sector professionals more effectively, for human development*, Belize participated in a Regional Training Workshop in 2008, in response to a request that had been presented by Caribbean countries at the 16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (16CCEM). The Secretariat in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, St Lucia organised a regional workshop to introduce the Commonwealth modules on multi-grade teaching. Three delegates from Belize participated in the workshop. Following this regional workshop in St Lucia, the Ministry of Education in Belize requested the Secretariat to organise a specific national workshop in Belize, and this brought together around 50 principals, teachers and education officials from across the country to help improve teaching methods. It is understood that multi-grade teaching in Belize is now in 43.5 per cent of schools and that 12.3 per cent of the teaching staff is deployed in these schools. Results associated with Secretariat assistance in this area in Belize include notably:

- The introduction of a standardised course entitled 'Managing the Regular (mono-grade) and Multi-grade Classrooms';
- Multi-grade Teaching is now part of the Continuing Professional Development Programme provided by Teacher Education and Development Services of the Ministry of Education in collaboration with District Education Centres;

- Teachers are prepared to address any of the two conventional classroom environments – mono-grade and multi-grade classrooms.

Other areas of work implemented in Belize in the education sector focused on improving professional standards for teachers and school leaders and the establishment of national teaching councils. It is understood that Belize has adopted and will implement these frameworks, and that a final decision and implementation strategies will be approved at the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) meeting in May 2013.

Also under the Human Development Programme, the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) hosted/facilitated a three day *Belize National Youth Consultation from 30th September to 2nd October 2011*, bringing together youth from across Belize. Some of the 80 participants were previously engaged in consultations to develop the Belize National Youth Policy (by Youth for the Future (YFF)). Other participants were youth organization leaders, members, students, unattached young people and YFF youth development officers. While many of the young people present came from different backgrounds and locations in Belize, they were unified in agreement that the National Youth Governance structure of Belize needed to be looked at to identify what would work best for the youth of their country.

A planning team in Belize is currently working on the development of a National Youth Council. It is understood that a National Youth Policy has been drafted and should be making its way to Cabinet shortly. The Belize National Youth Consultation was designed as the first phase of an incremental approach that would lead to the development of a working Constitution and the launch of the National Youth Council for Belize.

Belize attended the Senior Leaders Forum for Women Leaders for Development which was convened from 11-14 November at the Secretariat. There were discussions with the Belize Permanent Secretary to conduct research in relation to the drastic fall in the representation

of women in Parliament from 30% in 2005 to nil in 2012. Belize also participated in the Caribbean regional colloquium for women leaders in Trinidad and Tobago in June 2011.

Human Rights Programme

The Human Rights Programme's objective is to *engage with member states and partners to strengthen the respect, protection and promotion of human rights in the Commonwealth.*

The Secretariat has not provided much direct assistance to Belize in this area of work. However, Belize, which does not have a national human rights commission (it has an office of the Ombudsman), is a member of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI). The Ombudsman has participated in the meetings of the CFNHRI, notably in May 2011 in the UK, and in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2009. No Ombudsman has been appointed since the last general Election in March 2012. Belize has also participated in regional capacity development interventions for UPR preparation and implementation of accepted UPR recommendations in 2008 and 2010. Belize underwent its UPR in 2009 and the next one is due in 2013.

The response of Belize to the UPR recommendation to establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles was as follows: Belize accepts the recommendation to consider the possibility of establishing a national human rights institution in conformity with the Paris Principles. In this regard, Belize has already expressed its interest, to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in accessing technical assistance to facilitate thorough consideration of the establishment of the national human rights institution. In the interim, the National Women's Commission, the National Council on Aging, the National Committee for Families and Children and the National AIDS Commission are all institutions tasked with ensuring implementation of particular human rights obligations.

Belize has ratified 7 of the 9 core international human rights treaties. The exceptions are the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

4. Findings and Results

In this Section the results of the evaluation study are reviewed, based on findings of document review and interviews in country and within the Secretariat. In the preceding Section results of the study have been described. These are now discussed according to the objectives of the study and the headings included in the evaluation matrix.

4.1 Relevance against Secretariat Strategic Objectives and Belize's Needs

When positioned against the Secretariat's Strategic Plan, there is no doubt that the portfolio of projects implemented in Belize appeared to be relevant. Almost 90 per cent of projects related to the second Secretariat strategic goal: *supporting pro-poor policies for economic growth and sustainable development in member countries*. However, most of the alignment of projects with the current Strategic Plan's programmes could be attributed to the broad nature of the Plan, its programmes which number eight in total, and their related objectives and results. In the current Plan, the Economic Programme, for example, seems quite inclusive - comprising eleven areas of work and twenty result areas. Similarly, the Public Sector Development Programme covers thirteen areas of work. The preceding Strategic Plan (2004/05 – 2007/08) was also wide-ranging and consisted of as many as sixteen programmes, which made it not too difficult aligning a project request with the Strategic Plan.

Regarding relevance to the needs of Belize, because the Secretariat does not generally operate within country strategy frameworks and priorities, integration or relevance of Secretariat assistance is not always evident. However, the message coming across from Belize government

officials was that the projects, when requested from the Secretariat, were relevant to their Government's needs. Project proposals also suggested there were certain problems faced by Belize, indicating therefore that the assistance being sought was relevant to solving these problems. It has also been argued that the demand-led nature of many Secretariat activities, initiated through formal requests by countries, ensures some degree of relevance.

There is, nevertheless, evidence of projects with clear relevance to Belize's needs. These include work in the petroleum sector, where the Secretariat's initial involvement in 2006 occurred at a time when no experience in the petroleum industry existed in Belize, on the discovery of oil in 2005. The technical and legal assistance provided was critical. Likewise, the CS-DRMS debt management software and associated training, plus advisory support, was and still is vital to the operations of the Central Bank and Ministry of Finance in recording and managing Belize's debt service payments on a sustainable basis.

Effective debt recording is crucial to all other aspects of debt management and the support the Secretariat provides for this function, primarily through the CS-DRMS software and training, has therefore been highly relevant. Government debt in Belize escalated further through the nationalization of the telecommunications and electricity industries (debt ratio now is almost 100%). The CS-DRMS is the only feasible tool at the government's disposal as changing to an alternative tool like UNCTAD's DMFAS will not be viable. The relevance of the debt management programme therefore seems beyond doubt.

Other areas of assistance such as trade capacity building work through the Hub and Spokes project; the multi-grade education reform

programme and teacher professional standards and school leadership; the Investment/WTO Compatibility project, which facilitated the implementation of the WTO agreement and met Belize's identified trade interests; plus legislative drafting support (especially given the acute shortage of drafters in the country), all appeared relevant to Belize's needs.

4.2 Effectiveness

Most, if not all, of the projects reviewed did meet their output objectives, as set out in project documentation and could therefore be classified as reasonably successful if looked at from this limited perspective. However, this rate of success becomes much lower when considering the longer-term outcomes, as many projects did not go beyond output objectives. Also, Secretariat projects are generally small and there is difficulty in assessing the flow-on developmental impact from such limited interventions. Nonetheless, projects like the aforementioned *Assistance to Establish a Petroleum Fiscal Regime*, *Implementing Debt Techniques using CS-DRMS*, *Belize Investment/WTO Compatibility*, *Multi-grade Education Reform* and, to a lesser extent, *Market Access for Agribusiness and Light Manufacturing*, have clearly managed to go beyond their initial output objectives and progressed to the higher level objective of impact, as will be seen shortly.

4.3 Efficiency

Assessing the efficiency of an organisation can be challenging due to the lack of a clear comparator. However, based on anecdotal evidence, it would appear that the Secretariat operates with a reasonable degree of efficiency. As one of its modes of delivery, the Secretariat uses a wide range of consultants to support its projects and activities, and the daily fee rates paid by the Secretariat for consultants are normally lower than those paid by other bigger institutions, suggesting that there is no problem with inefficiency in terms of cost effectiveness. Furthermore, it should also be pointed out that the Secretariat uses its own in-house staff to

implement some activities, such as the technical and legal assistance provided to the petroleum sector project. It is understood such work would be far more costly if it was sourced from outside the Secretariat. The e-learning debt management course is also proving to be a cost effective means of delivering support.

Cooperation to good effect has been noted between Secretariat Divisions, particularly between the Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD) and the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division (LCAD) regarding projects under the of the Rule of Law Programme (Assistance to the Judiciary, Justice of the Supreme Court of Belize; Short-Term Court Administrator; and Strengthening the Institutional Drafting Capacity, Attorney General's Ministry). GIDD, through the Technical Cooperation and Strategic Response Group (TCSR), provided the necessary project management functions in the form of project preparation and design, coordination and review, whereas LCAD's Justice Section accounted for the technical inputs. Again, the TCSR has cooperated effectively with the Enterprise and Agriculture Section in implementing the *Belize Market Access for Agribusiness and Light Manufacturing* project. Apart from the Hub and Spokes project, evidence of cooperation or partnerships with external organisations could not be detected for any projects.

4.4 Impact

As alluded to earlier in Section 1, determining impact or change attributable to a particular intervention is not straightforward. However, some of the assistance provided by the Secretariat has undoubtedly made a difference. Evidence of this is most notable in the assistance provided to Belize since 2006 in the petroleum sector, which has led not only to more equitable contractual arrangements between Belize and the oil companies operating there (through effective review by SASD of tax instruments (royalty rates, income tax, production - sharing and government participation), but to increases in oil revenues that have contributed to debt

repayment and much needed economic growth. Oil still remains Belize's biggest export earner, bringing in about US\$128 million this year.

The CS-DRMS debt management software and associated training provided by SASD has become an invaluable tool to the operations of the Central Bank and Ministry of Finance (MOF) in recording and reporting Belize's debt. It has significantly increased the efficiency of their work and the accuracy of their debt data service payments on a sustainable basis. The Secretariat is still regarded as the first port-of-call for debt management assistance. The MOF indicated they have used the CS-DRMS mainly for analysis and budgeting purposes and also for reporting to the IMF - they saw it as an indispensable working tool. It was, however, added that some technical areas could be improved on – problems were being experienced in generating reports for the World Bank which at times were showing payment arrears when the reverse was true, and data had to be converted into Excel to make manual adjustments before creating official reports.

The project on Belize Investment/WTO Compatibility led to a fundamental policy change for some key agricultural products which were previously benefiting from a WTO-incompatible licensing regime. Also, legislative changes on the import licensing regime generated tangible outcomes in the citrus industry of Belize. It is understood that this industry now provides an interesting business alternative to some of the other less competitive sectors such as bananas.

Other projects that have made a discernible change or contributed towards long-term outcomes include Hub and Spokes, Standardization of Jobs Descriptions for the Ministry of Finance Departments, Assistance to the Judiciary, Justice of the Supreme Court of Belize and the Court Administrator, Multi-grade Education Reform and part of the Market Access for Agribusiness and Light Manufacturing project, which has led, for the first time, to the official export of cattle from Belize to Mexico.

4.5 Sustainability

The issue of sustainability is a difficult and complex one, due mainly to its multi-dimensional nature. However, sustainability related questions that were considered during this evaluation included: did benefits arising from Secretariat project assistance failed to continue once that assistance came to an end? Were there instances where projects were replicated elsewhere? And, were there any multiplier effects through efforts to improve or build upon initial outcomes?

If one were to look first of all at the last question, projects that fulfilled this criterion will include the petroleum and market access projects in creating employment, export revenue and generally contributing to the socio-economic development of Belize. Another project creating multiplier effects was the multi-grade teaching initiative, which from the basis of a national workshop, generated a standardised course and training on mono-grade and multi-grade teaching in classrooms, and led to the general integration of multi-grade teaching in the classroom environment, to the extent that multi-grade teaching is now in 45.3 per cent of classrooms. As far as replicability is concerned, the one project that appears to have been replicated elsewhere is the Standardisation of Jobs Descriptions for the Ministry of Finance, where it is understood that other ministries adopted the new job formats that were put in place for departments within the Ministry of Finance. One can also say that benefits from this project still continue even after the ending of Secretariat assistance. This also applies to the petroleum fiscal regime project and debt management assistance.

An evaluation study specifically on the Secretariat's debt management work⁶ indicated that its debt management activities clearly had a sustainable impact on the debt management capacities of Commonwealth countries, adding that the introduction of an accurate, up-to-date and backed-up debt recording system

6 Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Management Programme, June 2010.

had helped to ensure the sustainability of debt management capacity in recipient countries. However, this study also cautioned that there were two threats to the sustainability of the impact achieved by the debt management programme, both of which are being addressed by the Secretariat. First, there is the possibility that the software may become outdated, which the Secretariat is constantly working on to improve the functionality of CS-DRMS. Second, there is also the continued risk to the long term improvement in capacity due to staff turnover amongst debt management officials, as mentioned by the Ministry of Finance in Belize. The Secretariat is responding by continuing to provide basic training courses in CS-DRMS that can be accessed by new staff.

Overall, one can conclude that sustainable outcomes are more likely to be achieved where the project is in an area of Commonwealth comparative advantage. In general, however, while the 'free standing' nature of much of the Secretariat's assistance allows for speed of implementation, there is a trade-off in terms of sustainable outcomes.

5. Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned

First of all, it must be said that the Belize Government was quite appreciative of the Secretariat's assistance, and acknowledged the fact that the organization operated within a tight resource base. Overall, however, it must be concluded that the Secretariat's operations in Belize appeared to have recorded mixed results/outcomes with regard to their effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Clear success stories comprised of work connected with debt management, the petroleum sector, trade issues (under the Hub and Spokes project), assistance to the judiciary, partially the market access project involving export of beef to Mexico, multi-grade education and the standardisation of job descriptions in the Ministry of Finance. These were all projects where it was possible to note identifiable and meaningful change. Others may need more time to prove their worth.

Not surprisingly, those projects with limited impact or outcomes seemed to have failed to move beyond their initial or output stages, such as production of a feasibility study or roadmap (clear examples being the two projects: *Improving the Export Competitiveness of Professional Services from Belize* and *Development of Certification Marks for Belizean Products*). The Secretariat though cannot be wholly responsible for such lack of progress. Persistent turnover of staff, especially within BELTRAIDE (Belize Trade and Investment Development Service), and movement of officials from one Ministry/Department to another, plus change of government, have all been cited as contributory factors.

With regard to relevance, most projects, if not all, appeared relevant as they fitted in quite easily with the Secretariat's Strategic Plan and the overall economic development plans of the Government of Belize. However, though clearly

important, relevance alone does not necessarily mean a project has been or will be successful. Reference was also made to some efficiency issues, such as implementation time and the lack of flexibility on occasions for some projects.

It is recommended therefore that the Secretariat should in future:

- Abstain from undertaking activities unless it is clear that the requesting government/agency is showing the necessary level of committed support, and generally that the appropriate enabling environment is in place.
- Undertake, where possible, preliminary scoping missions to minimize risks by establishing a better understanding of the proposed project and its implications; establishing any key outstanding issues that remained to be addressed; and clarifying with the government requirements for potential follow-up work.
- For some projects, the Secretariat should approach better resourced agencies operating in the region, such as OAS, CIDA, EC, IDB, UNDP and CDB, with a view to forging partnerships or entering into collaborative efforts in order to take projects/initiatives forward or to another level. Initial requests could also be referred to better placed agencies, and in this regard the Secretariat should have mechanisms in place for directing requests to the appropriate agency or sister organisation (example, directing support for private sector assistance to the Commonwealth Business Council).
- Consideration should be given for a consolidated programme of country assistance under a Technical Cooperation Framework (a key recommendation of

the CFTC evaluation⁷) in line with Belize's Development Plan. This would ensure genuine priority areas for assistance are identified and are in alignment with its development priorities.

- As already established by the Training Evaluation Study,⁸ many workshops/seminars undertaken by the Secretariat in member countries have tended to be short and one-off activities and have not made a noticeable difference or created any identifiable benefits. The recommendations arising from that study are also applicable here.
- Some ministries were still not sure what the Secretariat had to offer. Lack of awareness and limited visibility of the Secretariat's programmes among some member countries seems to be a recurring issue. Better promotion and communication of its work may be needed, particularly its achievements and successes within the Commonwealth.

Lessons learned and good practices are a necessary part of organizational learning and the pursuit of programme excellence. Below are a few of the lessons drawn from the projects that were the focus of this evaluation. Some of these lessons are reflected in the recommendations set out above. They are as follows:

- The Secretariat needs to improve on the planning and implementation time of some of its projects. For example, with regard to SASD's petroleum project, it was remarked that certain critical activities, which needed to be implemented speedily, were slow in their execution. It is understood, however, that in this particular case the delays encountered were largely due to elections in the country and a new team taking over in the Ministry concerned, and that delays continue to be encountered in this project.
- Legislative drafting was still a key area for assistance from the Secretariat. However, the feeling exists that a rethink is needed

on how to address these serious skills-gap and capacity building in legislative drafting in member countries. It was suggested that a longer period of time was needed for effective capacity building – two years was considered not a long enough period to seriously nurture trainees/counterparts and that more practical arrangements were needed. Another serious and common problem is that Belize, like many member countries, was still finding it difficult to retain trained and competent drafters.

- Training of public servants was still a big priority for Belize, particularly for middle management. However, capacity building is a long term process requiring a systematic approach and there is a need to take an integrated view of solutions which involved the individual, organisational and institutional context.
- The Secretariat could be a bit more flexible in its operations at times. Example, it was said that the organisation seemed inflexible in altering the Terms of Reference of the consultant undertaking the project *Belize Market Access for Agribusiness and Light Manufacturing* even though it was found that certain aspects of the work programme were not working out as originally planned.

7 Evaluation of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation, April 2008.

8 Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat Training Programmes, September 2010

Annexes

Annex 1:	Evaluation Framework/Matrix
Annex 2:	Evaluation Interview Questions
Annex 3:	People Interviewed
Annex 4:	References

Annex 1:

Evaluation Framework/Matrix

Evaluation Criteria/Issues	Questions	Information Sources and Methods/Tools
Relevance		
The extent to which the assistance was suited to the priorities and policies of the target group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the objectives of the programmes/projects being implemented by Divisions and are they relevant to the needs and priorities of member countries? What is the relevance of the assistance against the Secretariat's Strategic Plan, as well as the development policy of the member country? Did the Secretariat 'do the right things?' To what extent have member countries/partners been involved in shaping project activities to meet their needs? Are other agencies providing similar services adequate enough to cover member countries? In which areas does/might the Secretariat have a comparative advantage? 	Project documents Secretariat staff Secretariat Strategic Plan Country plans of selected countries Country visits Stakeholder interviews
Effectiveness		
A measure of the extent to which an activity attains its objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have Secretariat projects achieved their objectives? What were the factors that hindered or facilitated realisation and achievement of these objectives? What could have been done differently to improve implementation? How effective has the relationship between Secretariat divisions in delivery of programme results? 	Analysis of project documents Country visits Stakeholder interviews Interviews within Commonwealth Secretariat
Efficiency		
Efficiency measures the outputs - qualitative and quantitative - in relation to the inputs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were objectives achieved on time? Were actual expenditure levels in line with planned expenditure? Were there any significant changes or delays? 	Project documents Country visits Stakeholder interviews

Evaluation Criteria/Issues	Questions	Information Sources and Methods/Tools
Efficiency (<i>continued</i>)		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the assistance been delivered in ways that avoided and minimized duplication, bureaucracy and complexity? How well has the Secretariat collaborated with partner agencies? Are there other possible collaborations which it should have considered? 	Interviews within Commonwealth Secretariat
Outcomes/Impact		
The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has Secretariat assistance made a difference and has there been any identifiable change? What has happened as a result of the programme or project and what is the evidence of this change? What would have happened without the Secretariat's involvement? To what extent has Secretariat assistance contributed towards capacity development, strengthening of institutions and poverty reduction? What positive and negative effects are resulting from Secretariat assistance? Is it demonstrable that the positive effects will outweigh the negative ones? 	Project documents Country visits Stakeholder interviews Interviews within Commonwealth Secretariat
Approach to cross-cutting themes		
	Were issues relating to gender, human rights and youth integrated in the design and delivery of Secretariat's efforts? What difference has this made?	Project documents Secretariat staff and other stakeholder interviews Country visits
Sustainability		
Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after funding has ceased.	<p>To what extent did the benefits accruing from Secretariat interventions continued after the funding ceased?</p> <p>What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme or project?</p>	Project documents Secretariat staff and other stakeholder interviews Country visits

Evaluation Criteria/Issues	Questions	Information Sources and Methods/Tools
Forward looking analysis		
	<p>In future, what should be the focus of the programme of assistance?</p> <p>How can the Secretariat ensure that its assistance will yield demonstrable results?</p> <p>What lessons are to be learnt in the design and delivery of future assistance?</p> <p>Should the Secretariat do things differently to order to be more effective?</p>	<p>Recommendations based on analysis of "relevance" issues</p> <p>Country visits and documents</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews</p>

Annex 2: Evaluation Interview Questions

Part A: External Stakeholders

The questions below are set to serve as a guide and will be used as the basis for data collection during external stakeholder interviews and the analysis of information. Supplementary snowball questions will be added as the interview progresses as well to obtain country specific information. The questions do not necessarily need to be asked in the given order. Separate questions will be used for interviews within the Secretariat to look at the coherence of the assistance with the strategic plan objectives.

Relevance

1. Over the last 5 years, your country has received a diverse range of assistance from the Secretariat on (list the broad area of assistance by category for each country, specify the particular assistance when speaking to specific sectors).
2. How does the Secretariat's work coincide with the national development priorities and visions?
3. How relevant and coherent do you think this assistance has been to the needs and priorities of your country?
4. Were you and your partners engaged in shaping the Secretariat project activities to meet your country needs? What was the nature of this engagement?
5. Are there other agencies providing similar development support to address your country priorities and needs? If yes, who these are and what is the nature of support.
6. Given the nature of assistance provided is very small in size, still there is a huge demand for the assistance from the Secretariat, what

do you think is the reason and how does this add value? *(This question is designed to gauge our comparative advantage, without spelling it out)*

Effectiveness

7. Coming back to the Secretariat projects, to what extent do you think the Secretariat projects were effective in achieving their project objectives?
8. Was the coordination of Secretariat operations effective or could it have been better focussed and integrated?
9. Has the Secretariat made a distinctive contribution to meeting your country needs by working to its strengths, and did it take the activities of other international organisations into account? Are there other possible collaborations which it should have considered or consider in future?
10. How effective, do you think, were the programme of activities in articulating/ mainstreaming gender, human rights and youth perspectives? Is there any evidence of impact?
11. Do you think the Secretariat can do certain things differently to improve the implementation of its projects in future?

Efficiency

12. Looking back, and given your experience with the Secretariat projects, how would you rate the efficiency of Secretariat projects- both in terms of timeliness of response and value for money? Do you think this can be improved?

Outcomes/Impact

13. What difference do you think the Secretariat's assistance has made in addressing the development issues in your country (make this specific to the specific area of assistance when speaking to specific sectoral stakeholders). Has there been any identifiable change? Is there any (qualitative or quantitative) evidence of this change?
14. If trainings/ workshops were the main modes of technical assistance provided by the Secretariat, please use Questions 22-25 to assess the impact.
15. To what extent has Secretariat assistance contributed towards capacity development, strengthening of institutions and policy development? Is there a direct evidence of this change?
16. What do you think would have happened without the Secretariat's involvement?

Sustainability

17. Do you think the benefits (if any) from the Secretariat's assistance are continuing to yield results even after the completion of the project?
18. Was there any follow-up from the Secretariat to ensure sustainability of efforts? OR did you request any follow-up assistance from the Secretariat to support sustainability? OR did your government put in place any mechanisms to sustain the impact of Secretariat's assistance? (Question as applicable)

Looking forward

19. What, in your opinion, should be the focus of Secretariat's assistance in future?
20. How can the Secretariat ensure that its assistance will yield demonstrable results?
21. Can the Secretariat do things differently to order to be more effective?
22. Are there any lessons to be learnt?

Relevance and Impact of training (where workshops/ trainings were the main modes of TA)

23. What was the main reason for your government's decision to approach the Secretariat for training rather than other agencies? (Quick response and flexibility/ specialisation/ sensitivity to government constraints/ no vested interest/ expertise not available locally/ assistance not available from other agencies)
24. How relevant do you think was the training organised by the Secretariat to your country needs (Highly effective/ effective to some extent/ out of context)? Why?
25. How effective do you think the training was in building capacity/ sharing experience/ increasing awareness? Give examples?
26. What, in your opinion, has been the impact of training provided by the Secretariat? Has it made any difference in the ways of working/ contributed to institutional reforms/ led to policy decisions/ any other change? Please explain with examples.

Part B: Internal Stakeholders (ComSec Divisions)

The questions below are set to serve as a guide and will be used as the basis for data collection during interviews with ComSec staff and for analysis of information. Supplementary snowball questions will be added as the interview progresses as well to obtain specific country information. The questions do not necessarily follow any given order.

Relevance

1. Over the last 5 years, your Section/ Division has provided (name the type of assistance) in country (name the country) through (name the projects). How do you think this assistance conforms to the Secretariat's strategic plan priorities and the national development priorities, country needs and visions?

2. How was this project conceived? Did you receive a request from the member government? What were the steps taken to develop the project? Was a situational analysis undertaken to identify project objectives, outcomes, outputs and indicators? Were you and your partners engaged in shaping the Secretariat project activities to meet their country needs? What was the nature of this engagement?
3. Are there other agencies in (name country) providing similar development support to address their country priorities and needs? If yes, who these are and what is the nature of support they provide? Were they also engaged in the project development stage? What was the nature of their engagement?

Effectiveness

4. Given the assistance provided to (name country) in (name specific area) to what extent do you think the Secretariat projects were effective in achieving their project objectives?
5. What do you think has been Secretariat's distinctive contribution in meeting the country needs?
6. How effective has the programme of activities been in articulating/ mainstreaming gender, human rights and youth perspectives? Is there any evidence of impact?
7. Do you think the Secretariat can do certain things differently to improve the implementation of its projects in future and be even more effective?

Efficiency

8. Given that you have implemented these projects from some time now, how would you rate the efficiency of Secretariat projects- both in terms of timeliness of response and value for money? Do you think this can be improved?

Outcomes/Impact

9. What difference do you think the Secretariat's assistance has made in addressing the problem at hand. Has there been any identifiable change? Is there any (qualitative or quantitative) evidence of this change?
10. To what extent has Secretariat assistance contributed towards capacity development, strengthening of institutions and policy development? Is there a direct evidence of this change?
11. If trainings/workshops were used for the TA, what, in your opinion, has been the impact of trainings provided by the Secretariat? Has it made any difference in the ways of working/ contributed to institutional reforms/ led to policy decisions/ any other change? Please explain with examples.

Sustainability

12. Do you think the benefits (if any) from the Secretariat's assistance are continuing to yield results even after the completion of the project? Did you undertake any follow-up activities or are in touch with the member country on the progress following the project/ are you aware if the government has put in place any mechanisms to sustain the impact of Secretariat's assistance?

Looking forward

13. How can the Secretariat ensure that its assistance will yield demonstrable results?
14. Can the Secretariat do things differently to order to be more effective?
15. Are there any lessons to be learnt in the design and delivery of future assistance?

Annex 3: People Interviewed

External

Name of Person	Ministry/ Department
Yvonne S Hyde Chief Executive Officer	Ministry of Economic Development
Marian McNab Chief Executive Officer	Ministry of Public Service
Jackie Joseph	
Andre Cho Director	Ministry of Geology
Christine Smith Director	Youth Department
Lejia Melanie Gideon Executive Director	Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE)
Ruby Pascascio Projects Officer	
Artemio Osorio Budget Director	Ministry of Finance
Azucena Novelo Director	Research Department Central Bank of Belize
Ian Gray Legal Officer	Ombudsman Office
Francisco Zuniga Assistant Chief Elections Officer	Election & Boundaries Election Department
Kim Aikman Chief Executive Officer	Belize Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Venetia Eck-Salazar Chief Policy Analyst	
Cheryl Krusen Solicitor-General	Solicitor General's Office

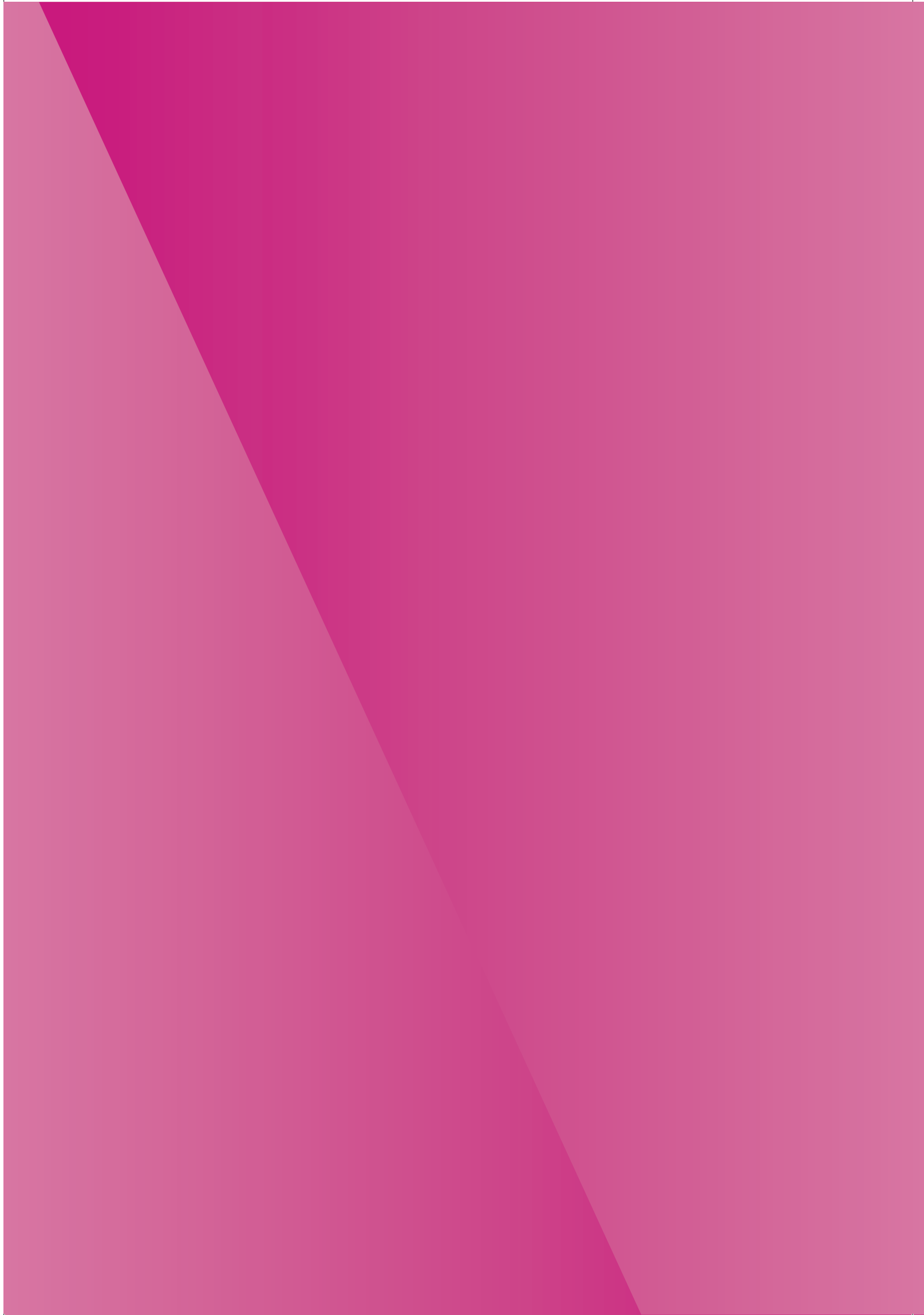
Name of Person	Ministry/ Department
Kenneth A Benjamin Chief Justice	Chief Justice's Chambers
Orla Kantun Coleman Director	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
David Beling Court Administration Adviser (CFTC Consultant)	Chief Justice's Chamber

Commonwealth Secretariat Staff

Name	Division
Joan Imhoff-Nwasike	GIDD
Colin McDonald	GIDD
Tim Newman	GIDD
Pauline Campbell	GIDD
Elroy Turner	ODSG
Jarvis Matiya	LCAD
Mark Guthrie	LCAD
Mark Stevens	PAD
Zippy Ojago	PAD
Meena Shivdas	STPD
Daniel Dumas	SASD
Joshua Brien	SASD
Derrick Akintade	SASD
Watipaso Mkandawire	SASD
Walton Gilpin	SASD
Karen McKenzie	HRU
Amna Jatoi	HRU

Annex 4: References

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2. Belize Horizon 2010-2030 National Development Plan.
3. Government of Belize & United Nations Development Assistance Framework, 2013- 16.
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