Annex I: General Background Information on Belize

 A. Country Background

Belize is bordered in the North by Mexico and in the South and West by Guatemala and in the East by the Caribbean Sea. Geographically, Belize forms part of both the Central American and Caribbean regions. Belize consists of six districts covering an area of 8,867 square miles. The Belize District is the largest with a population of 95,292 concentrated primarily in Belize City. The second largest is the Cayo District with a population of 75,046. The capital of Belize, Belmopan, is located in the Cayo District.

A multi-ethnic, multilingual society, Belize’s estimated mid-year population in 2014 was 368,310 persons comprised of Creole, Garifuna, Mestizo, Maya, Mennonite, Chinese, East Indians, Europeans and Asians. The prominent ethnic groups are the Mestizo, who are descendants of Mexicans and Yucatec Maya and comprise 53 percent of the population, and the Creoles (27%).[[1]](#footnote-2) There is almost even distribution between males and females (184,157: 184,153). The age group of under-24 consists of 199,218 inhabitants, representing 56% of the population. [[2]](#footnote-3)

Belize is located in the hurricane belt and on occasion, is badly affected by these natural disasters. For example, between 2010 and 2015 at least 7 storms of varying intensity affected Belize destroying agriculture, infrastructure and livelihoods.[[3]](#footnote-4)

With respect to education, GoB remains committed to strengthening the sector. For instance, the share of the budget for education remains constant at 26%. However, Belize still faces some challenges with respect to access and quality at most levels of education. Enrolment at the primary school level is not an issue as it is compulsory but this is not the case at preschool level, high school level and beyond. Enrollment at preschool level is well below the regional average of 65%.Primary school enrolment stands at 97%, nearing the achievement of the MDG 2 of achieving universal primary education. In 2010 the literacy rate was recorded at 79.7%.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Secondary School Net Enrolment has increased from 44.9% (2009/2010) to 52.1% (2014/2015). The transition rates from primary to secondary shows that 82.5% of standard 6 (year 8) students went on to secondary schools in 2014/2015. In 2013/14 the dropout rate for secondary school was 8.3% and the repetition rate was 7.2%. For primary school, for the same period, dropout rate was 0.8% and repetition 6.3%.

Belize has achieved gender parity in education at primary and secondary school levels. For the academic year 2014/2015, the ratio at primary school level was at 0.94 female to male, and 1.09 at secondary school level.

Although there have been positive increases in tertiary education, overall participation remains low compared to regional averages. For example, gross enrolment rates estimated at 23.1% is still below the regional average of 27%. University enrolment continues to expand annually with females dominating enrolment, accounting for two-thirds of the total.

The 2014 Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) Labour Survey Report recorded a general unemployment rate of 10.1% with a female unemployment rate of 15.1% and a male unemployment rate of 6.8%.[[5]](#footnote-6) The 14-24 age group recorded the highest rate of unemployment with 45%. For the period 2012-2014, the unemployment rate averaged 13.3%.

The 2009 Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) recorded an increase in the indigent rate (10.8% to 15.8%), and in the population poverty (34% to 41%).[[6]](#footnote-7) Two key pro-poor initiatives in implementation since 2009 are the Building Opportunities for our Social Transformation (BOOST) and the Food Pantry programs coordinated by the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation (Min of Human Development). These programmes combined provide assistance to approximately 17% of the poor population.[[7]](#footnote-8)

As it relates to the Belizean economy, it has continued to perform well despite the 2008 financial crisis, with the economy averaging 2.9% growth between 2010 and 2014 (see Figure V) During 2014, the economy grew by 3.6%, reflecting the robust performance of the tourism sector, expansion in distributive trade and increase in public infrastructure investment. Offsetting the positive performance was the continued fall in oil production and its export earnings which was compounded by the lower international crude oil price. In the first quarter of 2015,Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 7% higher than the same period of 2014.Belize’s average GDP Per Capita for the period 2010-2014 was Bz$9,147.60 and has increased from Bz $8,651.60 in 2010 to Bz $9,520.60 in 2014.

GoB has cut external public debt from 78% of GDP (end-2007) to 77.3% (end-2014), and recorded domestic public debt from 14.6% of GDP to 11.1%. Sound fiscal discipline was maintained but fiscal targets were missed for the most recent Financial Year (FY) 2014/2015 with an estimated primary deficit of 0.3% of GDP and overall deficit of 2.8%.

Inflation has been moderate averaging less than 1.2% between 2010 and 2014. Low oil prices have supported the low prices during 2015. The external current account deficit widened in 2014 despite strong tourism growth as the trade data shows export earnings down by 12.9% and import spending up by 7.8%, widening the goods deficit by 23.1% to US$492m. Despite a strong performance from the tourism sector, the overall deficit on goods and services widened resulting in an increase in the deficit to 8.0% in 2014 up from 4.4% in 2013. The projection for GDP growth is for an average of 2.8% a year and for inflation to remain subdued.

 B. Governance System

In 1981 Belize became independent from England and adopted its own written Constitution which, by virtue of Section 2 is the Supreme Law of Belize.[[8]](#footnote-9)It inherited a parliamentary democracy based on the Westminster system. As such it has three branches of Government, the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary. The Head of State is Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who is represented by the GG.[[9]](#footnote-10)

The Legislature consists of a bicameral parliament called the National Assembly, which is comprised of the Senate (Upper House) and the House of Representatives (Lower House). The HoR is comprised of 31 elected members and the Senate of 13 appointed members. The Legislature is elected in free and fair elections at intervals that are not longer than five years.[[10]](#footnote-11)

The independence of the Judiciary is enshrined in the Constitution. The Judiciary is made up of the Magistrates Court, the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the CCJ. In Belize the CCJ has both original and appellate jurisdiction. The CCJ became Belize’s final appel late Court in 2010 replacing the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.[[11]](#footnote-12)

The CoA has jurisdiction to hear and determine appeals in civil and criminal matters originating from the SC and Magistrates Court. Justices of Appeal are appointed by the GG acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister after consultations with the Leader of the Opposition (Opp), for such period as may be specified in their instrument of appointment. If no period is specified, tenure shall be for one year from the date of issue of the instrument. Justices of Appeal may be removed from office only for inability to discharge their functions (whether arising from infirmity of mind or body, or for any other cause) or for misbehaviour. The question of the removal of a Justice of the Court of Appeal must be referred to the Judicial Legal Services Commission (JLSC) in writing; the JLSC reviews and recommends to the BAC that the matter ought to be investigated. The BAC will sit as a tribunal, enquire into the matter and advise the GG accordingly. Only the GG has the power to remove a Justice of the CoA.[[12]](#footnote-13)

The SC is a superior court of record and has unlimited original jurisdiction to hear and determine any civil or criminal proceedings under any law. The SC also has appellate jurisdiction in all cases determined in inferior courts and in respect of any misdirection or misruling of those courts.[[13]](#footnote-14) The CJ is appointed by the GG upon the advice of the PM, given after consultation with the Opp. Other justices of the SC are appointed by the GG on the advice of the JLSC and with the concurrence of the PM, given after consultation with the Opp. The retirement age of justices of the SC is 65 years but may be extended to the age of 75. These justices may only be removed from office for inability to perform their functions (whether arising from infirmity of mind or body, or for any other cause) or for misbehaviour.[[14]](#footnote-15)

In its criminal jurisdiction, a Judge sits with a jury of no more than twelve members for capital cases, and nine for non- capital cases. By virtue of the Juries Act, CAP 128, and the Indictable Procedure Act, CAP 96 of the Laws of Belize, R.E. 2011, Judges shall conduct trial without a jury in cases of murder, attempted murder, abetment of murder and conspiracy to commit murder.

Magistrate Courts, which are summary jurisdiction courts, are established in every district. Magistrates shall be qualified attorneys-at-law and appointed by the JLSC. These magistrates have security of tenure subject to compulsory retirement age of public officers. Magistrates may only be removed from office for inability to perform their functions (whether arising from infirmity of mind or body, or for any other cause) or for misbehaviour.[[15]](#footnote-16)

The Executive is formed by the political party commanding the support of the majority of the members of the HoR. The policy functions of the Executive are formulated by a Cabinet of Ministers which is collectively responsible to the Legislature, and which is made up of the PM and other Ministers. The GG appoints the member of the HoR who is the leader of the political party that commands the majority of members of the House as the PM. The GG appoints the Deputy Prime Minister and other Ministers on the advice of the PM. The GG allocates portfolios of responsibility to Ministers by Directions in Writing. Ministers may be assisted in the performance of their functions by Ministers of State.[[16]](#footnote-17)

Belize has a system of local government comprising two (2) city councils, seven (7) town councils and a network of 192 village and community councils. The two city councils – Belize and Belmopan – plus the seven (7) town councils cover the urban population in the six (6) administrative districts of the country.[[17]](#footnote-18)The 180 village and 12 community councils cover the rural population across the districts. In the Toledo District and other parts of southern Belize there is an Alcalde System that operates alongside village councils. The Alcalde system is a customary form of governance that is part of the local government of Belize administered through the Inferior Courts Act and the customary law of the communities which they govern. It focuses on, among other things, judicial matters within a given jurisdiction.[[18]](#footnote-19)

 C. Human rights legal infrastructure

The Constitution of Belize guarantees the protection of the fundamental human rights and freedoms entrenched therein. Other domestic legislations that protect these rights are the Ombudsman Act; the Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act; the United Nations Resolutions and Convention (Enforcement) Act; the Pensions Act; the Widows’ and Children’s Pensions Act; and the Education Act. Table I of Annex III contains a list of domestic legislation relating to the protection of human rights of Belizeans.[[19]](#footnote-20)

In addition legislation specifically implements provisions of international human rights and humanitarian treaties such as the Genocide Act, the Refugees Act, the International Child Abduction Act, International Labor Organizations Convention Act, the Belize Red Cross Society Act and the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act. The United Nations Resolutions and Convention (Enforcement) Act provides generally for the enforcement in Belize of United Nations resolutions.

Belize is a party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the optional protocol thereto; the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol, the Convention on the rights of the Child and its optional Protocols, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

It is also a party to the Convention of Belem do Para or the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, the Inter-American Convention on Support Obligations, Inter-American Convention against Corruption and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and their Families.

Belize is also a party to the major international conventions relating to trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, status of refugees, international labor organization conventions, the Hague Conventions on inter-country adoption of minors as well as other international humanitarian law treaties such as the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their protocols.

 E. Human Rights Institutional Infrastructure

The institutional infrastructure to promote and protect human rights in Belize includes both governmental and non-governmental institutions. Amongst the governmental institutions at the forefront is the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation & Poverty Alleviation. The Ministry is tasked with employing rights based approach to the delivery of social services and the protection of vulnerable groups and has oversight of three departments-the Human Services Department, the Community Rehabilitation Department, and the Women’s Department. This notwithstanding, many other ministries have portfolios that impact upon the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms including ministries dealing with education, housing and urban development, youth, sports and culture, economic development, health, labour, local government, rural development, national security, and governance improvement.

The National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC) is a statutory advisory body legally established under the Families and Children Act, CAP 173, R.E. 2011 to promote, monitor and evaluate Belize's compliance with its national and international commitments to children. This coordinating mechanism also monitors the implementation of the CRC.[[20]](#footnote-21)

Established in 1982, the National Women’s Commission(NWC)is a statutory body which serves as a policy advisory bodt to GOB on issues of Gender Equality, Equity, and Women’s Empowerment. It also monitors compliance of CEDAW as well as other regional and international obligations including the Belem do Para Convention which has a Follow-up Mechanism.

The National Council on Aging (NCA) is an advocacy and coordinating body which facilitates the development and implementation of plans and programmes to ensure the protection of basic social and economic rights to secure the welfare of older persons.

The National AIDS Commission (NAC) coordinates, monitors, and evaluates Government’s national response to HIV/AIDS in Belize.

In 1999, an independent Office of the Ombudsman was established pursuant to the Ombudsman Act, CAP 5 of the Laws of Belize, R.E. 2011. The Ombudsman is tasked with investigating and reporting on allegations of corruption, wrong doing and actions taken by an authority resulting in injury, injustice or abuse. The Ombudsman takes a proactive role in promoting and protecting human rights in Belize.

The Professional Standards Branch within the Belize Police Department was established pursuant to the Police Act, CAP 138 of the Laws of Belize, R.E. 2011. PSB facilitates the transparent investigation of police actions, of citizen complaints, and provides an avenue for redress of wrongful police action.

The Integrity Commission (“the commission”), was established under the 2007 Prevention of Corruption Act. The Commission implements the financial disclosure requirements for persons in public life and makes such inquiries as necessary into alleged violations of the Prevention of Corruption in Public Life Act, CAP 12 of the Laws of Belize, R.E. 2011. In January 2017 a new commission of seven members were appointed in accordance to the Prevention of Corruption Act. They were appointed to serve for a period of two years, with effect from 1st January, 2017.

A small but relatively active group of NGOs devoted to different aspects of human rights, play an important role in promoting and protecting human rights in Belize. The work of these organizations, such as the Human Rights Commission of Belize, the Belize Council of Churches, Generation Zero, and the United Belize Advocacy Movement (UNIBAM) include advocacy, public education and awareness and programme implementation.

 Annex II

 Responses to observations

(O. 6)

Please see paragraph 119.

**(O. 7)**

Please see paragraphs 163-164.

**(O. 8)**

Belize is not in a position to remove its reservation to Art. 14 (6).

**(O. 9)**

Please see paragraph 59.

**(O.11)**

Please see page 75.

**(O. 12)**

 Please see paragraphs 19-24.

**(O. 13)**

Please see paragraphs 12-13.

**(O. 14)**

The Attorney General’s Ministry has endeavoured to undertake the review to ensure there is consistency between the Constitution of Belize and the ICCPR.

**(O.15)**

Please see paragraphs 17-24.

**(O.16)**

Please see paragraphs 125-128.

**(O. 17)**

Please see paragraphs 66-84.

**(O.18)**

GoB has instituted strict limitations to the use of corporal punishment. Corporal punishment has been abolished from all child care institutions, and the relevant authorities continue to explore measures to effect the complete abolition of corporal punishment.

**(O. 19)**

Please see paragraphs 54-65.

**(O. 20)**

Please see paragraph 161.

**(O. 21)**

The Libel and Defamation Act, CAP 169 of the Laws of Belize provides certain limitations to the right to freedom of expression. Therefore libel laws provide recourse to protection of a person’s reputation. This can be noted from the number of suits filed in the courts.

**(O. 22, O.23)**

Please see paragraphs 232-235.

The Ministry of Education does not collect data on the drop-out rates of pregnant teenage girls nor of teenage girls who return to school after giving birth. There is no public policy on girls who get pregnant while in school. However, some schools have established a school based policy setting out the terms under which a pregnant teenage girl is accepted at school, and the conditions for returning to school after pregnancy.

**(O. 24)**

Please see paragraphs 260-261

**(O. 25)**

Please see paragraphs 271 -280.

Annex III

 List of tables and figures

# Table I:

**List of Principal Substantive Legislation which protect the fundamental human rights and freedoms of individuals in Belize.**

| *Name of Act* | *Chapter No.* | *Name of Act* | *Chapter No.* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
| Interpretation Act | 1 | School Teachers Pensions Act | 42 |
| Belize Constitution Act | 4 | Social Security Act | 44 |
| Ombudsman Act | 5 | Social Service Agencies Act | 45 |
| Freedom of Information ActFreedom of Information (Amendment) Act, 2008 | 13No. 7 of 2008 | Village Councils Act | 88 |
| United Nations Resolutions and Convention (Enforcement) Act | 24 | Court of Appeal Act | 90 |
| Pensions Act | 30 | Supreme Court of Judicature Act | 91 |
| Widows’ and Children’s Pensions Act | 32 | Family Courts Act | 93 |
| Education Act | 36 | Evidence ActEvidence (Amendment) Act, 2012 | 95No. 1 of 2012 |
| Public Health Act | 40 | Indictable Procedure Act | 96 |
| Criminal Code | 101 | Protection Against Sexual Harassment Act | 107 |
| Juvenile Offenders Act | 119 | Probation of Offenders Act | 120 |
| Genocide Act | 110 | Certified Institutions (Children’s Reformation) Act | 121 |
| Prisons Act | 139 | Intoxicating Liquor Licensing Act | 150 |
| Immigration Act | 156 | Belizean Nationality Act | 161 |
| Refugees Act | 165 | Married Persons (Protection) Act | 175 |
| Families and Children Act | 173 | Married Women’s Property Act | 176 |
| Marriage Act | 174 | International Child Abduction Act | 177 |
| Domestic Violence Act | 178 | Administration of Estates Act | 197 |
| Wills Act | 203 | Labour Act | 297 |
| Trade Disputes (Arbitration and Inquiry) Act | 299 | Trade Unions Act | 300 |
| Wages Council Act | 302 | Workmen’s Compensation Act | 303 |
| International Labor Organization Convention Act | 304 | Belize Red Cross Society Act | 309 |
| Non-Governmental Organizations Act | 315 | General Registry Act | 327 |
| Penal System Reform (Alternative Sentences) Act | 102 | National Institution of Culture and History Act | 331 |
| Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act | No. 2 of 2013 | Prevention of Corruption ActPrevention of Corruption Act, 2007 | 105No. 21 of 2007 |
| Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act  | No. 3 of 2013 | Juries (Amendment) Act 2011 | 128 |
|  |  | Finance and Audit (Reform) ActFinance and Audit (Reform) (Amendment) Act, 2010 | No 12 of 2005No 31 of 2010 |

# Table II:

**Status of MDGs 4 : Reduce Child Mortality and 5: Improve Maternal Health**

| *GOAL*  | *Target* | *Belize* |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
| 4. Reduce child mortality | 5. Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rateIndicators13. Under-five mortality rate (UNICEF-WHO)14. Infant mortality rate (UNICEF-WHO)15. Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles (UNICEF-WHO) | Between 1990 and 2014 the under-five mortality rate has declined by 63% from 39.6 to 14.6 deaths per 1,000 live births Between 1990 and 2014 the infant mortality rate has declined by 62% from 32.1 to 12.3 deaths per 1,000 live births Between 1990 and 2014 the percentage of Children one year old immunized against measles has increased by 10% from 86 to 95 per 100 children one year old |
| 5. Improve maternal health | 5.1 Maternal mortality ratio [MMR} per 100,000 live births5.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel5.3 Current contraceptive use among married women 15-49 years old, any method, percentage5.4 Adolescent birth rate5.5 Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit and at least four visits)5.6Unmet need for family planning [FP], total, percentageAfter years of slow progress, only half of pregnant women receive the recommended amount of antenatal care. | Between 1990 and 2014 the MMR reduced from 75 to 55 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Zero maternal deaths in 2011 and 2013. In 2014, 3 and 8, in 2015.Between 1991 and 2011 the skilled birth attendance rate increased from 76.9 to 95 per every 100 live births.Between 1991 and 2011 the contraceptive use prevalence rate increased from 46.7 to 55.2 per 100 women married / in union.Between 1990 and 2011 the adolescent birth rate decreased from 133 to 64.5 births to every 1,000 women 15 to 19 years of age.Between 1991 and 2014 the antenatal care coverage has maintained from 96 to 95.2 per every 100 women with a live birth.Between 1991 and 2011 the unmet need for FP has reduced from 25.7 to 15.95 per every 1,000 women who are fecund and sexually active. |

*Source*: Ministry of Health, Belize

# Table III:

**Prisoners Convicted and on Remand: 2013-2014**

| *Age groups of Persons Charged but not Convicted* | *Convicted* |
| --- | --- |
| **Age** | **2013** | **2014** |  | **2013** | **2014** |
|  **Under 15** | 31 | 33 |  | 5 | 4 |
| **16- 20** | 352 | 338 |  | 136 | 129 |
| **21- 25** | 330 | 320 |  | 224 | 268 |
| **26- 30** | 241 | 232 |  | 208 | 222 |
| **31- 35** | 185 | 159 |  | 205 | 190 |
| **36- 40** | 106 | 114 |  | 149 | 153 |
| **41- 45** | 60 | 63 |  | 100 | 93 |
| **46- 50** | 64 | 62 |  | 76 | 81 |
| **51- 55** | 38 | 48 |  | 58 | 49 |
| **56- 60** | 19 | 13 |  | 24 | 15 |
| **61- 65** | 6 | 6 |  | 7 | 6 |
| **66- 70** | 2 | 2 |  | 4 | 4 |
| **71- 75** | 1 | 2 |  | 1 | 0 |

*Source*: Kolbe Foundation, Belize Central Prison

# Figure I:

**Complaints of Gender Based Violence**

*Source*: Epidemiology Unit, Ministry of Health

# Figure II:

**Number of Missing Persons by sex and age: 2012-2014**

*Source*: Joint Intelligence Coordinating Center, Belize Police Department

# Figure III:

**Live Births for Ages 10-24: 2008-2014**

*Source*: Epidemiology Unit, Ministry of Health

# Figure IV:

**No of New HIV Cases Per Annum for 2008-2014**

*Source*: Epidemiology Unit, Ministry of Health

# Figure V:

**GDP Growth and Inflation Rate (%)**

*Source*: Central Bank of Belize

1. The Mestizos constitute more than half the population compared with a third in the 1980s while the Creoles are little more than a quarter of the population compared with 40% in 1980. This major shift resulted from a combination of emigration by the Creoles (mostly to the USA) and Mestizo immigration from neighboring countries, especially during the 1980s when there was civil unrest in El Salvador and Guatemala. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. 2014 Mid-Year Population Estimate of the Statistical Institute of Belize [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Initial Damage Assessment Report as of 27 October, 2010, National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), Belize, pgs 6-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Improving Access, Quality and Governance of Education in Belize, Education Sector Strategy: 2011-2016, pg 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. 2015 Labour Survey of the Statistical Institute of Belize. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Household poverty increased from 25% in 2002 to 33% in 2009. The all poor population is comprised of 136,640 persons. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Second Universal Periodic Review, Belize 2013, pg 14: BOOST was launched in 2010 as a national programme with both urban and rural coverage. It is an amalgamation and upgrading of existing social assistance programmes. The programme’s overarching goals are twofold: first, to provide immediate relief to poor families through small but steady cash transfers; and second, to reduce poverty in the long run through improvements in poor children’s human capital potential. BOOST uses a targeting mechanism to identify eligible poor families with children ages 0 to 17 years. The BOOST platform is also used to administer cash transfers to persons with disabilities and older persons who are not receiving any form of pension. The programme has focused on connecting poor families to the formal financial system, therefore the monthly cash payments are made to beneficiary accounts with local credit unions, the vast majority of which GoB has helped beneficiaries to open. Three years into its implementation, BOOST has more than tripled its beneficiaries, reaching 3,500 households and 96% of beneficiaries are now integrated into an alternative financial system. The Government subsidized Food Pantry introduced in 2010 is targeted at the working poor families in Belize, Cayo and Toledo Districts. The LSMS shows that it costs BZD $5 per day for an adult to purchase 2,000 quality calories per day. Eligible beneficiaries are working families who earn less than BZD $35 per person per week. Approximately 10,000 persons were directly benefitting under this scheme in 2012/2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. The legal and institutional system in Belize was born out of the British Colonial experience. Accordingly its legal system is rooted in the common law tradition. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. The Governor-General acts in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet or a Minister acting under the general authority of the Cabinet except when he is required by the Constitution or any other law or act in accordance with the advice of any person or authority or in his own deliberated judgment.

 The Constitution, *Op.Cit*., §36. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. These members are appointed as follows: six members of the Senate are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister; three members are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition; and, one each on the advice of the Council of Churches, the Belize Chamber of Commerce/Business Bureau and the Trade Union/Non-Governmental Organizations. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. In interpreting the law and passing judgments, the Belizean judiciary largely relies on jurisprudence from British and other Commonwealth Caribbean States as judicial precedents. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. The Constitution, *Op.Cit.,* §101- §102. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. According to Section 95(1) of the Constitution, the Supreme Court does not have jurisdiction to hear and determine any application by a person sentenced to death after the expiration of one year from the passing of the sentence. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. The Constitution, Ibid., §98. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. The Constitution, *Ibid*., §93A. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. The Constitution, Ibid., §45(1). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. In the town and city councils, the mayors and council members are directly elected. The term of office is three years for all municipalities. Mayors (other than Belize City) have an executive role and are designated as the Chief Executive officer. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. The Alcaldes are effectively local magistrates operating at the village and community level. They differ from the chairperson of the village as they have a judicial role for which they are paid a small stipend by GoB.

 Registered villages directly elect six councillors and a chairperson who is the leader of the council. Councillors elect a deputy chairperson, secretary and treasurer from their ranks. Councils must meet at least quarterly and the meetings must be open to the public. Decisions are taken by simple majority. Village councils began in the 1950’s but were only formalized by the Village Councils Act 1999. A village that existed and was recognized by the Government before the 1999 Act qualified as a village following the legislation. A new village must have a minimum of 200 eligible voters to qualify as a village. New villages are established by ministerial order. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. The Constitution, Op.Cit., §3-§19. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. The work ofthe NCFC is also guided by Belize’s commitment to the implementation of the outcome of the twenty seventh special session of the General Assembly on children entitled *A World Fit for Children*, the Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum, and theBeijing Rules. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)