

► **Just Transition and NDCs in Belize**

An Employer's Perspective – Case Presentation

Agenda

- ▶ Presentation of Case Study (~30 minutes)
- ▶ Reactions/Comments by Belize BCCI and others (~10 minutes)
- ▶ Open conversation (20-30 minutes moderated by Jorge Ramírez)

► Case Structure: **Employers' Perspectives**

- ❖ How do **NDC actions** involve or affect **businesses**? What specific actions are they?
- ❖ Are policies and frameworks linking climate action and **businesses' needs/realities**? What legislation and norms should my membership be aware of? What **gaps exist**, or where are the burdens?
- ❖ What is the **role of EBMOs** and its membership?
- ❖ What challenges and opportunities exist from a **business lens**?
- ❖ What **actions** can EBMOs and businesses take?

What is Belize?

Economy



Social



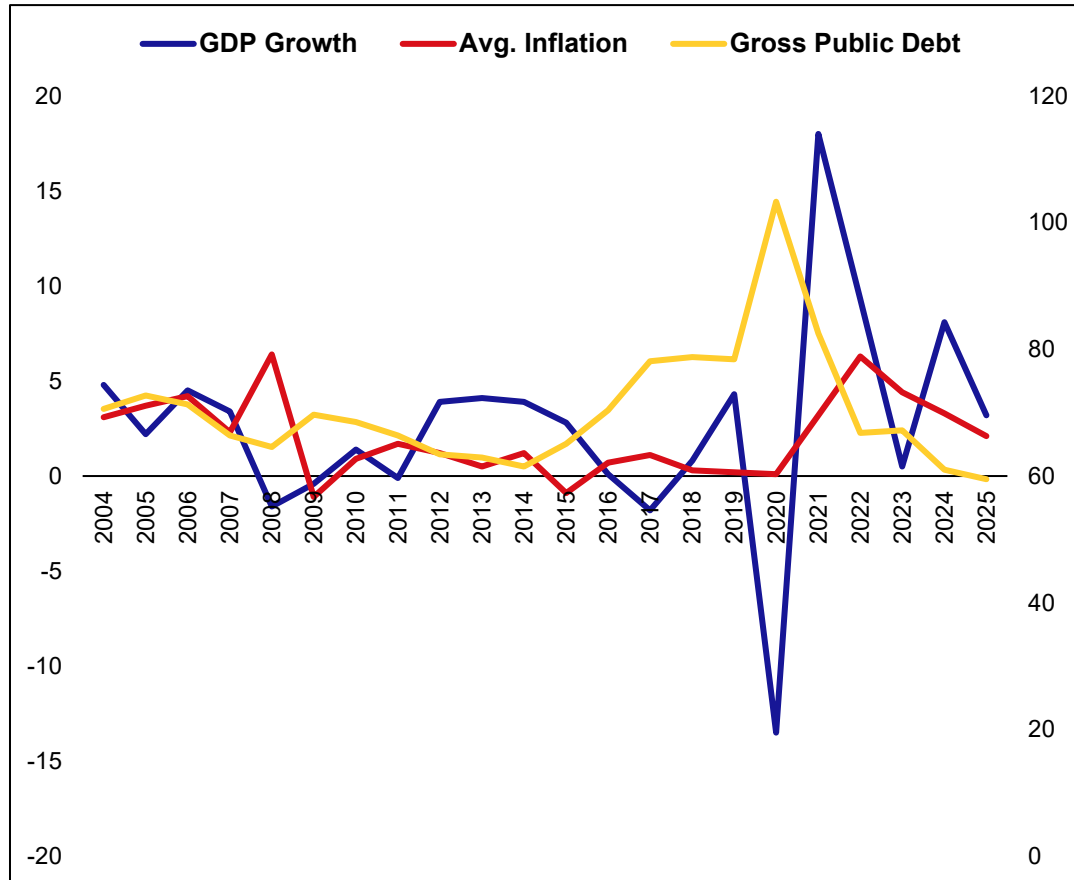
Labour



Environment



Economy



2023 or 2024:

▶ **21% | 40%* GDP**

Tourism

▶ **5.2% GDP**

Agriculture

▶ **70.8% | Tax = BZD 190 m**

Energy supply imported

▶ **Key exports:**

Agriculture and marine products (18% trade)



Social

Population: 441,000 | Least populous in Central America

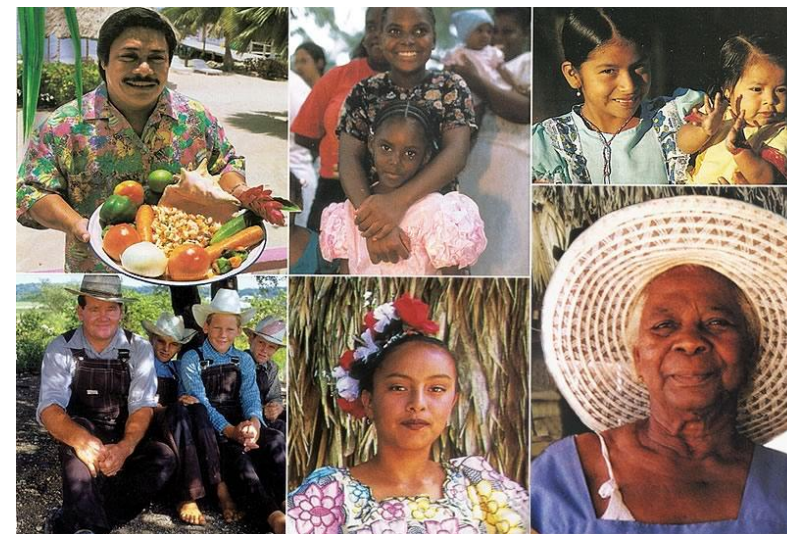
Multi-Ethnic: Mestizos, Creole, Maya, Garifuna, Mennonites | **Declining growth**

$\frac{47\% \text{ under } 25}{5.4\% \text{ over } 65}$ **young population** | **11.5e%** foreign born (Caricom/U.S.)

Upper-mid income: \$13,278 PPP 2024 | < Caribbean small states & LAC

52% below poverty (2018) & 22% MDI (2024) (Rural bias) | **HDI** 115/193

Governance: Two parties alternate | Regulatory and crime concerns

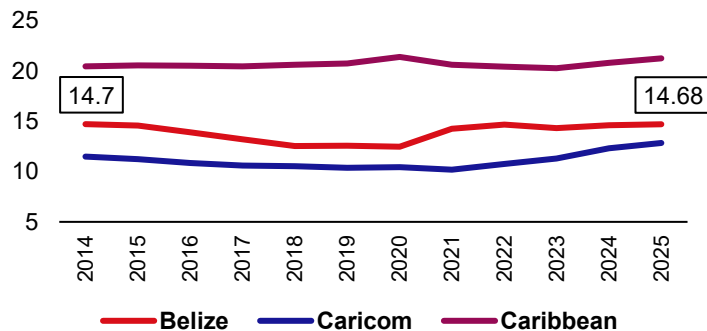


Labour and human capital

Employment data (2025 Q1)

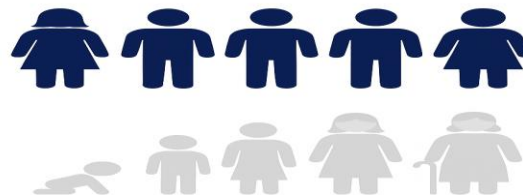
- **Unemployment:** 2.1% ↓
- **LF participation:** 59% ↓
- **Informality:** 37% Labour (retail and agriculture) | earn 60% formal avg.
- **Education (2021):** Enrolments decline: Primary (92%), Secondary (68%), Tertiary (26%)
- **CE & TVET** ~800 students per year

Output per hour worked



Social justice data

- **Gender:** Worse labour outcomes (46.9% participation vs 72% for men)
- **Youth:** NEET: 30.2% (2021e)
- **Rural:** Lower; more for Mayan women
- **Underutilization:** 5.0% ↓
- **Social protection:** Coverage (1 benefit): 32% population | For women = 24%
- **Groups affected:** Women, youth, migrants, small businesses, informal workers (e.g., fishers), rural areas.
- **Dependency ratio:** <50%



Jobs by sector:

- Tourism = 13.5% to 37%
- Services/Sales = 27.6% | Elementary occup. 21.4%
- Agriculture = 10.8%
- Self-employed = 28.1%

MSME = 90% (with 70% micro and mostly by women) (tourism and agri-food)

Wage setting:

- Mostly market determined
- Min. Wage BZ\$5.0 (\$2.50)
- Unionisation is modest | Union common in public sector/regulated industries

Environment

Economic activity	% contribution to total emissions of GHG
Waste, including solid waste disposal and wastewater treatment	55%
Energy (18% of overall transportation)	26%
Industrial processes and product uses, such as in the metals and minerals industries	7%
Agriculture, forestry, and other land uses	Carbon sink (global)

Environment

Belize is highly vulnerable to intensifying climate risks. These include sea-level rise, more erratic weather, stronger storms, flooding, droughts, extreme heat, wildfires, and marine stressors such as warmer seas, ocean acidification, and coral bleaching—all threatening ecosystems vital to tourism, agriculture, fisheries, and coastal protection

**Working hour heat losses
estimated to raise:**

1.63% in 1995 to 2.45% in
2030

GDP annual losses

3-4%

Most affected groups:

Women, indigenous peoples,
migrants, and persons with
disabilities

▶ Lessons from NDCs iterations

► QUESTION

**Was your organization
involved in NDC
development?**

▶ Lessons based on NDC 2016, NDC 2021, and NDC 2025

1. Mitigation ambitions beyond its borders

- ▶ Belize is a net carbon sink, and increasing
- ▶ NDCs covers 12 sectors (e.g., Tourism, Aquaculture, Biodiversity, Infrastructure)
- ▶ Key 2035 targets: 63% increase in AFOLU removals; RE 80%; EV sales 10%; 10% recycling share

2. Ample engagement and partnerships

- ▶ 155 entities engaged for NDC 3.0, including several EBMOs and private companies
- ▶ **UNIONs?**
- ▶ Support of international partners (NDC partnership member)
- ▶ General private sector involvement in policy development

► QUESTION

**Was your organization
involved in NDC
development?**

▶ Lessons based on NDC 2016, NDC 2021, and NDC 2025

1. Mitigation ambitions beyond its borders

2. Ample engagement and partnerships

3. Just Transition

▶ In NDC 2.0 – Specific section but aspirational

▶ In NDC 3.0 – Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

❖ Support women-led innovation;

❖ Expand GEDSI groups' access to climate finance;

❖ Targeted incentives for renewables/EVs;

❖ At least 30% of capacity building in renewables/efficiency to include women, youth, and indigenous-owned businesses;

❖ Ensure GEDSI consultation in sectoral policies.

► Policies and frameworks

In support of a Just Transition

Laws and norms

Belize constitution – Protect environment

Environmental Protection Act

Pollution, effluent, and waste regulations

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)

Fisheries Resource Act & Coastal Zone Management Act

Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) Act

Climate Change and Carbon Market Initiative Bill

International commitments (Paris, SDGs, ABAS) and Support (DWCP, The Nature Conservancy)

Policies, plan, and projects

Medium-Term Development Strategy 2022-2026
(Plan Belize): “inclusive and sustainable growth”

National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Master Plan
2021–2025

Belize Long-Term Low-Emissions Development Strategy
(LT-LEDS)

National Landscape Restoration Strategy for Belize (2022–
2030)

The National Climate Finance Strategy of Belize (2021–2026)

Belize National Energy Policy 2023-2040

Many master plans: Transport, Tourism

National Seagrass Management Policy

Many others: National Seagrass Management Policy, Integrated Coastal
Zone Management Plan, Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan, Loss and
Damage Framework

Climate Change and Carbon Market Initiative Bill (2025)

- First comprehensive legal framework
- Institutionalizes Climate Change Council and a Climate Change Department
- **Carbon Market**

Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) Act of 1996

Manages Belize's protected areas through a public–private governance model and sustainable financing (revenue streams, public and private funding).

- Provide grants for conservations and sustainable tourism (Green Climate Fund fiduciary)

Fisheries Resource Act (2020)

- Managed Access Program (2016, but not institutionalised): Replaces open fishing with designated areas
- Blue Economy Ministry
- Council established with private sector representation

► **Direct support for Businesses**

1. Sustainable and Inclusive Belize Program (2024)

- Grants and TA to agriculture and tourism MSME (co-ownership 15-20%; cash or in-kind)

2. Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future

- Part of Belize Blue Bonds for Ocean conservations; finances project (sustainable fisheries, blue innovation)
- Private business can apply but 1:1 co-financing required

3. Development Finance Corporation (DFC)

- State-owned development bank with MSME focus; Giving loans in alternative energy, efficiency, agriculture, blue economy, recycling, and skills/education (Green Climate Fund accredited)

► Social dialogue mechanisms

Employer's organisation engagement

► QUESTION

**Any involved in Climate
Councils in your countries?**

► Social dialogue and private sector engagement mechanisms

Belize National Climate Change Committee (BNCCC) - EBMO member

Economic Development Council (US\$ 200 m in energy sector investment)

Belize Decent Work Country Programme 2024-2029

Several council: Fisheries, Coastal Management, Protected Areas, Environmental Appraisal, Tourism, Transport

Special Electricity Committee (2025) – to develop National Electrical Energy Mix Master Plan

National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET) + SAGE Programme

Labour Advisory Board

Wages Council

Belize National Climate Change Committee (BNCCC)

- **Main climate advisory body** | 16 members (13 government – No Labour; 1 EBMO, 1 NGO; 1 university | Climate Change Office is the secretariat)
- **Subcommittees** – technical and finance
- **Currently inactive**
- **New bill will:**
 - Institutionalise the BNCCC as a **Council**
 - To meet quarterly
 - Unions or Labour still not part

► QUESTION

**Any involved in Climate
Councils in your countries?**

► Challenges

For the Just Transition in Belize

▶ QUESTION

**Think of a challenge or
opportunity not discussed –
PUT IN THE CHAT**

Challenges to Just Transition in Belize

Fiscal space and import-reliance (incl. fuel tax)

Growth and capacity constraints

Lack of institutionalized **climate policy**

Underdeveloped fiscal incentives

Dialogue and engagement – more informative than consultative

Gender gaps + Youth and Rurality

Social protection needed advancements/coverage, informality levels, vulnerable groups

Productivity stagnation

Financial access AND awareness

Not timely data systems

NDC involvement by other social partners

Challenges – To Private Sector

Skill mismatch = **Main challenge**

Limited access to **green finance** and high upfront costs (Severe)

Availability of **technical support** and expertise (Severe)

Gaps in actionable **information** and best practices (Moderate)

Regulatory uncertainty and clarity (Moderate)

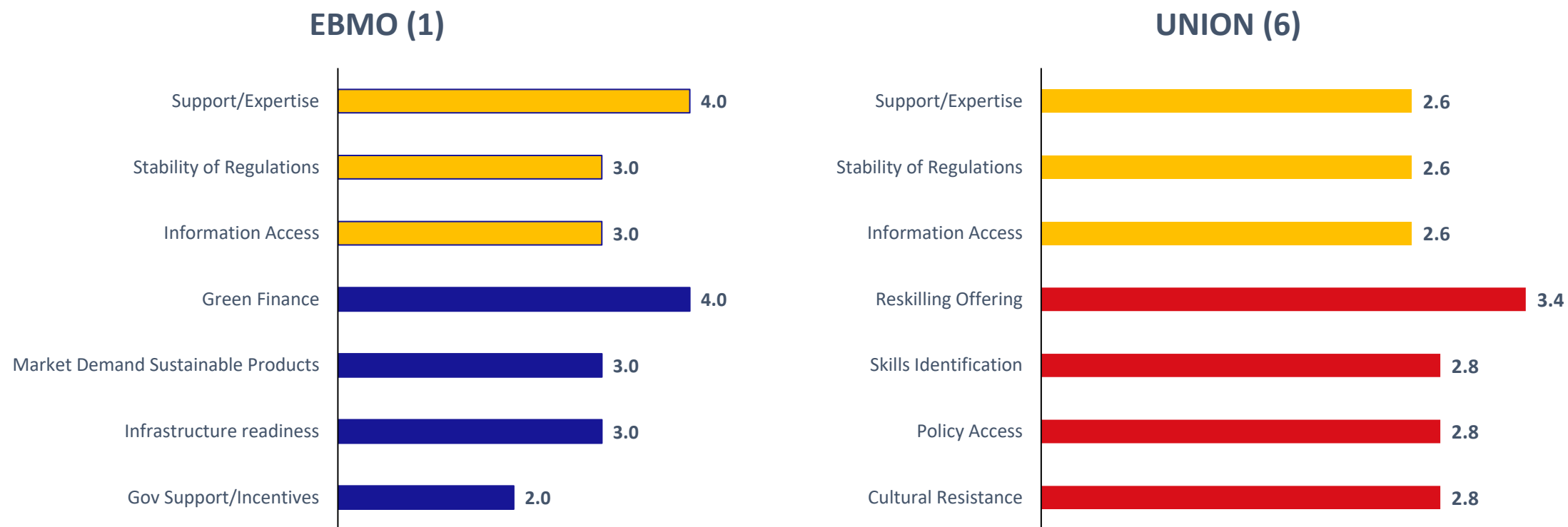
Infrastructure limitations (Moderate)

Market demand/competitiveness for **sustainable products** (Moderate)

Public **incentives** and support (Low obstacle).

Challenges – Survey to Tripartite Partners [SOCIAL PARTNERS]

Please rate the extent to which each of the following factors acts as an obstacle to transitioning toward a sustainable economy:



Scale: 1 (not an obstacle), 3 (moderate), 5 (very severe obstacle)



► Opportunities For the Just Transition in Belize



Green jobs



Tourism



Blue economy



Renewable
energies



Bioenergy



AFOLU

Strong emerging policy agenda + Sectoral focus

Institutionalised spaces for private sector engagement

Innovative finance + Private sector inclusion

Decent Work Country Programme (2024-2029)

NDC specificity and business-linked actions

Belize Long-Term Low-Emissions Development Strategy (LT-LEDS)

- First in the Caribbean (2021)
- Maps 2050 zero emission paths | Identify mitigation priority (sectors) | Job growth
- Bring credibility and opens opportunities

Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) 2024-2029

Some highlighted pursued outcomes:

- Strengthened **social dialogue** to facilitate harmonious industrial relations
- Increased **participation of women** and men in productive and decent employment
- **Technical education** and training programmes are upgraded to focus on current and future labour market needs
- An advanced **Labour Market Information System** is established and operationalized
- Institutional and policy framework for **increased productivity and competitiveness**
- Increased **support for enterprises – especially MSMEs** – to achieve decent work and improve productivity

Relevant actions from Belize NDC 3.0 (Employers' perspective)

Targets and actions	Just Transition relevance
Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)	Focus on vulnerable groups as cross-cutting action. Support women-led innovation ; expand GEDSI groups' access to climate finance; targeted incentives for renewables/EVs; at least 30% of capacity building in renewables/efficiency to include women, youth, and indigenous-owned businesses; identify job segregation in recycling; ensure GEDSI consultation in sectoral policies .
Loss and Damage	Proposed measures include crop insurance , integrated early warning systems , community-based capacity building (e.g., fire response), coastal buffer zones, post-storm repair systems , sectoral disaster relief planning, retrofitting infrastructure, and tailored financial instruments.
Electricity	Targets include: renewable energy 80% by 2035 of domestic electricity mix; distribution losses capped at 10% by 2030; Other business-relevant actions: financial schemes and support for rooftop solar PV in public/commercial/ residential buildings and energy-efficiency; expand solar water heating; enforce energy efficiency standards by 2026 ; provide business capacity building.
Transport	Target include: cut emissions, boost energy-efficient transport , and raise EV sales to 10% by 2035. Other business-relevant actions: create incentive schemes and expand public transport in tourism areas.
Waste	Relevant actions: raise recycling share by 10% by 2035; expand waste management coverage; adopt a circular economy legal framework ; assess waste-to-energy options .
AFOLU	Relevant actions: boost climate-smart/sustainable agriculture (CSSA) penetration (e.g., irrigation, solar, water retention) by 25% by 2035; promote sustainable practices and nature-based solutions ; conduct crop vulnerability assessments; expand sustainable forest management on private lands; skills/training in CSSA and agro-silvopastoral practices .
Coastal Zones and Marine Environments	Relevant actions: implement the revised Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan and the Sustainable Ocean Plan; develop plan for seagrass adaptation .
Fisheries	Relevant actions: Develop sustainable fisheries management plan; build fisheries sector capacities on sustainable practices ; enable transition into sustainable non-fishing income streams ; and increase enforcement.
Aquaculture	Relevant actions: develop Aquaculture and Mariculture Management Plan with investment priorities and sector capacity building; evaluate creation of economic recovery financial instruments
Tourism	Goals: strengthen sector resilience and adaptation. Actions: conduct vulnerability assessments in key tourism areas; integrate private sector participation in coastal management ; establish remediation plans for environmental impacts; build capacity of tourism businesses; promote sustainable practices and standards ; disaster preparedness for private sector .
Human Settlements	Relevant actions: Develop a Land Use Policy; examine opportunities for grey, green and blue infrastructure constructions .

► **Role of Employers' Organizations**

In support of a Just Transition

ILO resolution concerning a just transition (International Labour Conference- 111a meeting, Geneva, 2023) states that employers' and workers' organizations must:

- a) Participate in social dialogue in all its forms to ensure the distributions of benefits and promote a just transition and decent at the company, sector and national level;
- b) Develop the capacity of its members to analyse the effects and give answers;
- c) Design and introduce its own initiatives in favour of the just transition, including initiatives by specific sectors, and contribute to the development of balanced policies;
- d) Contribute, as interlocutors, to training activities and the reskilling of professionals;
- e) Elaboration and application plans in favour of a sustainable transition at the company and sector level through bipartite social dialogue

NDC Involvement

EBMOs in Belize

- **Social dialogue**
- **Vocational training**
- **Capacity building in sustainable practices**
- **Financial access facilitators**
- **Research activities**
- **Awareness raising**
- **Mediation**
- **Policy tracking and advocacy**

► Recommendations

Recommendations

1. Strengthen social dialogue and make Just Transition an explicit agenda item.

Revitalise existing forums—the Economic Development Council, BNCCC, and Labour Advisory Board—and establish thematic working groups on the Just Transition.

2. Improve access to green finance.

Advocating for simplified procedures and expanding information awareness around the DFC, the Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future, and the Sustainable and Inclusive Belize Programme.

3. Advance enabling conditions for sustainable enterprises

Accelerate regulatory and incentive reforms under the Climate Change Bill, National Energy Policy, Plan Belize, and others. For businesses, promote the adoption of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards and certification to improve market access.

4. Close skills and data gaps

Map green-occupation needs, strengthen TVET alignment with priority sectors, and integrate gender and youth-responsive training. Develop labour-market data systems to monitor transition impacts.

5. Deepen NDC ownership

Ensure that NDC 3.0 implementation explicitly reflects employment, a small business lens, and Just Transition dimensions, with social partners contributing to monitoring and implementation. Seek direct company involvement in climate targets.

► Intervention by Social Partners

- **Yorshabell Cattouse** | Manager of Member Relations | **Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)**
- Belize workers' organizations present



► Highlighted activities - Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)

- Established 1920
- ILO's Recognized EO – Since 1997
- **Triple C Philosophy: To Champion, Capacitate and Connect**
- **Champion** – represented on 70+ committees including
 - ❑ Labour Advisory Board (comprehensive Labour ACT review & amendment)
 - ❑ Belize National Climate Change Committee
 - ❑ Business Climate Action Plan
 - ❑ Coastal Zone Management Authority
 - ❑ National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET)
 - ❑ National Environmental Appraisal
 - ❑ Tourism Advisory Council
 - ❑ Science Technology & Innovation
 - ❑ Skills to Access the Green Economy Program (SAGE)

► Highlighted activities

- **National development frameworks are in place to support green skills development** (Horizon 2030, Plan Belize, National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan the National Environmental Action Plan...)
- **Labour Advisory Board** – Ongoing comprehensive Labour ACT review & amendment (2024)
- **NCTVET – Draft National Policy for Technical Vocational Education and Training** (Dec 2024)

- **SAGE** - 2019 – 2024 program - Extended outcomes to a 2 yr (SAGE Plus) program
- ❖ Green Skills Audit Regional report
- ❖ Women and Green Skills Regional Report; examined the challenges and opportunities for women in skilled trades.
- ❖ Pilot apprenticeship -trained small cattle ranchers

- **BCCI – Curricula Mismatch Skills Studies** - Agriculture and ICT sectors (2017) & (2019) Food processing and tourism sectors
- **DWCP** - Strengthening tourism and agri -food value chains
- **Connect – Women’s Empowerment Forum** under theme: “Wealth & Wisdom – Empowering Women in Business” (sponsored by the Development Finance Corporation)

► **Thank you!**