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BELIZE



SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS



2023

UNITED NATIONS BELIZE

**COUNTRY
RESULTS
REPORT**

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FOREWORD

RAÚL SALAZAR

Resident Coordinator of the United Nations
in Belize



It is my great pleasure to present the **2023 UN Country Results Report (CRR) for Belize**, a comprehensive account of our collective efforts to drive sustainable development in this vibrant nation. This report captures our commitment to the people of Belize and highlights the significant strides we have made together toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2023, the United Nations in Belize has worked closely with the Government, private sector, civil society, and other key stakeholders to address some of the most pressing issues facing the country. Our collaboration has been instrumental in advancing inclusive economic development, enhancing social protection, and promoting resilient and sustainable growth.

Our initiatives this year have focused heavily on ensuring quality education and equitable access to health services, strengthening the foundation for a more inclusive society that respects and promotes the human rights of all. Through innovative projects and strong partnerships, we have made notable progress in several critical areas.

A key accomplishment in 2023 was the expansion of social protection initiatives, providing critical support to vulnerable populations through enhanced safety nets. These efforts are intended to significantly contribute to improving the well-being and livelihoods of those most in need.

In 2023, our endeavours in Belize also prioritized improving education access and quality through the introduction of digital learning solutions and enhancing student performance. Healthcare initiatives focused on enhancing maternal and child health services, particularly in remote regions. Disaster resilience efforts aimed to strengthen community preparedness against environmental risks, while gender equality programs empower women economically and support gender-based violence survivors. Additionally, several initiatives were completed in an effort to integrate migrants and foster inclusivity into the Belizean society.

While challenges such as climate change and inequalities persist, they have spurred innovative collaboration opportunities. Through strategic partnerships and interdisciplinary approaches, the UN in Belize consistently works towards driving positive change and fostering sustainable development.

The 2023 UN Country Results Report for Belize underscores how a collective commitment to the SDGs has resulted in concrete actions and outcomes that benefit the people of Belize. As we look ahead, the United Nations in Belize remains dedicated to supporting the nation's journey towards a more just, prosperous, and sustainable future. Together with our partners, we will continue to forge a path of resilience and progress for all Belizeans.

H.E AMALIA MAI

Chief Executive Officer in the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade



At the core of Belize's vision for transformation lies the unwavering commitment of the Government of Belize to foster multi-dimensional socio-economic progress. This dedication is exemplified through initiatives ensuring that every Belizean has access to essential services such as relevant education, primary healthcare, employment opportunities, as well as land and housing.

The UN Development System has been a catalytic partner for Belize's development. This UN Country Results Report (CRR) 2023 is a moment to not only reflect on our joint commitment to impactful and transformative development actions, but also an opportune time to chart the way forward to a prosperous and resilient future for Belize.

The Government of Belize with visionary leadership of the Prime Minister, the Hon. John Briceño, has adopted a new Medium Term Development Strategy #Plan Belize, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The CRR highlights the main achievements and progress, which could not be achieved without the commitment of the state, civil society, academia and other development partners. Together we convened the First SDG Partnership Dialogue to identify strategic areas of action to accelerate Belize's achievement of the SDGs.

UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes provided joint UN support for the advance of major Government priorities including the Amnesty programme, the development of Belize's Social Protection Strategy, the costed Social Protection Floor and the completion of the post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) following hurricane Lisa.

In 2024, we look forward to building on the achievements of the CRR 2023 including in strategic areas such as the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) and the 2024 Voluntary National Review, which are supported by the UN.

Belize will continue to count on the partnership of the UN Development System as we continue the implementation of the Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNMSDCF) 2022-2026, which supports Belize's MTDS and the SDGs.

Belize is grateful for the strategic and collective leadership of the UN Country Team in supporting our country's development priorities and agenda. I reiterate the steadfast commitment of the Government of Belize to working with the UN System in Belize to ensure that no Belizean is left behind. I express Belize's deepest gratitude and our willingness to continue deepening and expanding the partnership to achieve results that will ultimately

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AVR	Assisted Voluntary Return	NSO	National Statistical Office
BFLA	Belize Family Life Association	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
CARICOM	Caribbean Community	OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
CIP	Country Implementation Plan	OPDs	Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
CCA	Common Country Analysis	PAHO/WHO	Pan-American Health Organization/World Health Organization
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women	PLHIV	Persons living with HIV
CPA	Country Poverty Assessment	PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	PWDs	Persons with disabilities
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	RIA	Rapid Integrated Assessment
CSME	CARICOM Single Market and Economy	SBCC	Social Behaviour Change Campaign
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	SERP	Socioeconomic Response Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	SIB	Statistical Institute of Belize
GHG	Greenhouse gas	SIDS	Small Island Developing States
GSDS	Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy	SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
HCT	Humanitarian Cash Transfer	TES	Transforming Education Summit
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education	UB	University of Belize
HRW	Human Rights Watch	UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank	UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ICT	Information and communications technology	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IDP	Internally Displaced People	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
ILO	International Labour Organization	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
KHMH	Karl Heuser Memorial Hospital	UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean	UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
LGBTQI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex	UN RCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office
LNOB	Leave no one behind	UPR	Universal Periodic Review
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey	VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
MPA	Marine Protected Area	WFP	World Food Programme
MSDCF	Multi-country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
MSME	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises		
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification		
NCDs	Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)		
NGO	Non-governmental organization		
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution		

United Nations Country Team in Belize



International
Labour
Organization



UN MIGRATION



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UNCTAD



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Key Implementing Partners in 2023

Government & Statutory Bodies

- Attorney General's Ministry
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, & Enterprise
- Ministry of Blue Economy
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, & Technology
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Economic Development, & Investment
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade
- Ministry of Health & Wellness
- Ministry of Home Affairs
- Ministry of Human Development
- Ministry of Rural Transformation
- Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change, & Disaster Risk Management
- Ministry of Youth, Sports, & Transport
- E-Governance Unit
- Immigration Department
- National Emergency Management Organization
- Statistical Institute of Belize
- National Commission for Families and Children
- Belize Social Investment Fund
- National AIDS Commission
- Department of Youth Services
- National Women's Commission
- Women's Department
- RESTORE Belize

Civil Society Organization, Regional Bodies and other NGOs

- Belize Red Cross
- Belize Young Women Christian Association (YWCA)
- Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)
- Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology (BEST)
- Belize Family Life Association (BFLA)
- Belize Network of NGOs (BNN)
- Belize Women's Issues Network (WIN)
- Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility
- Caribbean Community (CARICOM)
- Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)
- Friends for Conservation and Development
- Galen University
- Help for Progress
- Human Rights Commission of Belize
- Humana People to People
- National Trade Union Congress of Belize
- Productive Organization for Women in Action (POWA)
- The Child Development Foundation of Belize
- The National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC)
- United Belize Advocacy Movement
- University of Belize
- University of the West Indies (UWI)
- Ya'axche Conservation Trust

Contributing Partners in 2023

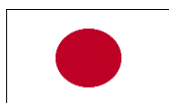
Countries, Governments & States



Belize



Canada



Japan



Norway



Republic of Korea



Sweden



United Kingdom



United States of America

Donor Institutions



Global Environment Facility



Green Climate Fund



The Global Fund



The UN Joint SDG Fund



The European Union



Humanitarian Action for Children

CHAPTER 1

Key Development Trends in Belize



Chapter 1

Key Development Trends in Belize

1.1 National Context

In the realm of economic progress, Belize witnessed a positive trajectory in GDP growth, estimated at 4.7% in 2023 by the IMF, with nominal GDP per capita surging to US\$6,865. This growth was prominently fueled by expansions in key sectors such as tourism, construction, retail and wholesale trade, transport, and business process outsourcing. The nation's adherence to sound fiscal policies has provided a sturdy underpinning for sustainable development, resulting in a noticeable enhancement of the fiscal position; the Government's primary deficit reaching 1.2%, while public debt relative to GDP stood at 66.2% in 2023 according to the IMF, supported by robust nominal GDP growth. Additionally, in 2023, Belize displayed promising signs of economic stability as inflation demonstrated a positive downward trend, reaching 4.4%.

Within the services sector, the latest available data for 2022 showcased good performance indicators. The tourism sector, integral to Belize's economy, demonstrated growth by surpassing its 2021 earnings by 59.6%, soaring to US\$598.9 million. Concurrently, remittances outshined the previous year's figures by 5.3% in 2022, whereas Foreign Direct Investment saw a substantial surge of 13.6% in 2021, reaching US\$139 million in 2022.

In 2023, Belize experienced a significant surge in visitor numbers across various sectors, with cruise-ship visitors, airport arrivals, and inland visitors reaching 903,977 (a 46% increase), 356,154 (an 18% increase), and 108,569 (a 50% increase) respectively compared to 2022. The country's natural attractions, including its renowned barrier reef, archaeological sites, and eco-tourism destinations, coupled with a well-

executed marketing strategy, played a pivotal role in attracting airlines back and establishing new routes. Consequently, this initiative stimulated heightened demand from tourists, enticing them to opt for extended stays in Belize compared to pre-COVID times.

The growth of the tourism sector has spurred investments in infrastructure, accommodations, and recreational activities, catalysing job creation and economic growth. Furthermore, the expansion of the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry has significantly boosted Foreign Direct Investment, increasing by an average of 40% annually from 2020 to 2022. The BPO sector's reach now extends to every district in the country except for Toledo, playing a pivotal role in reducing unemployment rates and elevating wages for high school graduates. Employment estimates within the BPO sector tally at approximately 14,000 individuals, constituting around 7.6% of the employed labour force.

As of October 2023, Belize recorded an unemployment rate of 3.9%, reflecting ongoing positive trends in the labour market. Additionally, the multidimensional poverty rate, which stood at 35.7% in 2021, marked significant progress as it decreased to 26.4% by 2023. However, tackling this remaining high poverty rate necessitates focused policies and investments geared towards enhancing productivity, competitiveness, and fostering inclusive growth to ensure widespread prosperity for all citizens.

While economic growth is underway, significant challenges persist due to energy market volatility and supply chain disruptions. The resulting 4.4% inflation rate in 2023 presents both obstacles and opportunities for the nation. Belize's growing population and economic activity have led to a surge in energy demand. SIB data shows that electricity consumption increased by 6.5% in 2023 compared to the previous year. However, the nation's current energy mix, heavily reliant on imported fossil fuels and electricity, presents significant challenges. These factors highlight the need for strategic solutions to safeguard its energy future.

Despite making strides, Belize remains exposed to global economic turbulence, climate change risks, limited productivity, competitiveness, skill shortages, and structural constraints such as dependence on traditional sectors. Institutional shortcomings in governance and regulations further compound these challenges. Strategic interventions in emerging industries, technology integration, skill development, and market diversification are imperative to enhance competitiveness and fortify resilience against external shocks.













Closing existing gaps and structural barriers through targeted strategies and investments will be vital in fostering inclusive and sustainable economic progress.

Looking Ahead:

Belize stands at a critical juncture in its development trajectory. The country has made significant strides in recent years, but substantial challenges remain. Addressing environmental degradation, reducing social inequality, and strengthening governance are paramount for achieving sustainable development for all Belizeans. The United Nations can play a vital role in supporting Belize's efforts by providing technical assistance, financial resources, and knowledge sharing. Through collective action and a shared commitment to sustainable development, Belize can harness its potential and create a future where economic progress, social justice, and environmental sustainability go hand in hand.



Key Development Trends in Belize

 <p>Real GDP Growth 2022 : 8.71% 2023: 4.7%</p>	 <p>Inflation Rate 2022 : 5.2% 2023: 4.4%</p>
 <p>Unemployment 2022 : 5.0% 2023: 3.9%</p>	 <p>Cruise Ship Arrivals 2022: 618,255 persons 2023: 903,977 persons</p>
 <p>Primary Education Enrolment 2022: 61,582 2023: 59,505</p>	 <p>Infant Mortality Rate 2022: 12.5 per 1,000 live births 2023: 11.8 per 1,000 live births</p>
 <p>Multi-dimensional Poverty 2021: 36.6% 2023: 26.4%</p>	 <p>Global Gender Gap Index 2022: 95th in 2022 2023: 93rd in 2023</p>
 <p>Environment Performance Index 2022: 12.5% 2023: 14.2%</p>	 <p>Renewable Energy Share of Electricity 2022: 61.8% (386.6GWh) 2023: 61.5% (320.2GWh)</p>
 <p>Control of Corruption (World Bank) 2022: -0.45 2023: -0.43</p>	 <p>Violent crimes committed 2022: 1,035 2023: 1,087</p>



Economic growth in 2023 has been relatively modest, increasing to 4.7%, a decrease from 8.7% growth rate experienced in 2022.



84.8% of students transitioned from Primary School to High School in 2023. A 12.2% increase from 2022



For the period January to December 2023, domestic violence reports increased 5% relative to the same period in 2022.



SIB data portal on the SDGs indicates proportion of the population experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity at 45% for 2021.

CHAPTER 2

UN Support to Belize's National Development Priorities



CHAPTER 2

2.1 UN Support to Belize's National Development Priorities through MSDCF 2022 – 2026

2.1 Overview of 2023 MSDCF Results

The UN MSDCF 2022 - 2026 is the principal framework for orchestrating and executing UN development activities in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. The UN aims to significantly influence the structural transformations necessary to achieve Agenda 2030 in Belize across four regional pillars and eight regional outcomes.

This Annual Country Results Report highlights the results, progress, and challenges for the 15 contributing UN agencies implementing the UN Country Implementation Plan (CIP) in 2023.

The Medium-Term Development Strategy (MTDS) 2022–2026 delineates Belize's national development vision and strategic objectives, grounded in a pragmatic evaluation of existing and prospective ministerial programmes and projects. Aligned in both implementation timeline and anticipated outcomes with the MSDCF, the MTDS's strategic goals are also aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2023, the United Nations Country Team remained committed to assisting the Government of Belize in advancing its national development agenda as shown through the progress across the MSDCF pillars.

Strategic Pillar 4: Peace, Safety, Justice, and Rule of Law

- **Outcome 7:**
Laws, policies, systems, and institutions at regional and national levels enhance justice accessibility, peace, and security promotion.
- **Outcome 8:**
Caribbean individuals and communities actively engage in building and benefiting from safer, inclusive, and equitable societies.

Strategic Pillar 3: Resilience to Climate Change and Sustainable NRM

- **Outcome 5:**
The Caribbean improves adaptive capacity for inclusive, gender-responsive disaster risk management, and climate change actions.
- **Outcome 6:**
Caribbean nations sustainably manage natural resources and ecosystems to bolster resilience and prosperity for dependent populations.

Strategic Pillar 1: Economic Resilience and Shared Prosperity

- **Outcome 1:**
Increased productivity and competitiveness in business sector enhancing people's well-being and living standards
- **Outcome 2:**
The Caribbean has transitioned to a diversified, sustainable economy fostering inclusive and resilient growth

Strategic Pillar 2: Equality, Well-being and LNOB

- **Outcome 3:**
Governments and institutions use data to create laws and policies that eliminate discrimination and address inequalities for those left behind.
- **Outcome 4:**
Individuals in the Caribbean access universal, quality social protection, education, health, and care services equitably.

Economic Resilience and Shared Prosperity



700+ Households were reached with **backyard garden investments in 2023**. Packages offered included vegetable gardens, poultry or pigs.



Local Inclusive Sustainable Tourism Opportunities (LISTO) initiatives benefitted over 1,800 entrepreneurs across the formal and informal economy.



12 out of 14 **Digital Connect Centres established** to serve as hubs access to technology and internet for individuals and communities to thrive in the digital age.



18 Enterprises (8 were led by women entrepreneurs) received **incubation support** and equipping entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to make informed decisions.



Official **removal of all fees at public hospitals** and a **five-fold increase in the monthly stipends** for community health workers



11 Matching grant fund agreements with producer organizations currently under implementation.

Equality, Well-being and LNOB



440+ Families with children below 5 years old received **cash assistance through the HCT implementation** with Digi Wallet.



13,000+ Children (ages 5 and 6, received access to learn social and emotional skills with the use of the **'Think Equal curriculum'**



450+ men & boys received training to **advance gender equality and help prevent GBV** through Spouses of CARICOM Leaders Action Network (SCLAN)



70+ Migrants assisted through the **AVR Programme**. This included 2 unaccompanied minors, 7 medical cases, 8 elderly and 1 victim of human trafficking.



4 Migrant Hubs and 23 Amnesty Mobile Migrant Hub events countrywide to support the **integration of migrants in Belize's platforms**



Belize certified by WHO as having **eliminated Malaria and mother-to-child transmission of HIV** and syphilis

Resilience to Climate Change and Sustainable NRM



Draft Agriculture Sector Policy completed that seeks to define the vision for development of the sector.



13 cooperatives (6 women-led) and 2,500 rural dwellers directly benefitted from grant submissions through the UN GEF Small Grants Programme.



150 teachers and 150 Health workers have been trained using the 'BEAT the heat' communication framework



3.7 million out of 7.1 million people (52 percent) of the population of the English-speaking Caribbean, remain food insecure.

[Food security and livelihoods survey on CARICOM.](#)



48 climate change officials participated in formal capacity building sessions related to Transparency requirements and MRV



Presentation of **comprehensive Climate Change Bill to Cabinet**. This Bill and its components are key to advancing the country's climate risk management goals.

Peace, Safety, Justice, and Rule of Law



169 Belize Defence Force Officers increased understanding of **gender roles; GBV in their platoon** and anger management approaches.



148,000+ persons reached with information on **preventing violence against women** and girls through the SBCC Campaign.



18 CSOs received **CSO capacity strengthening training** in Belize in Project Cycle Management Skills, Monitoring, Procurement, Finance etc.



350+ Asylum Seekers received support financially for **documents needed as part of their amnesty application**



Training of 350 police recruits and senior officers on the **application of human rights in principles** and standards in policing in Belize.



1,500+ persons were supported with **legal guidance related to the amnesty process**.

2.2 UN MSDCF 2022 – 2026 Results by Priorities, Outcomes and Outputs



MSDCF Priority 1: Economic Resilience and Shared Prosperity

Relevant Plan Belize MTDS Goal:

6.2 Economic Transformation *“The transformation of the Belizean economy is a monumental and long-term undertaking. It requires a unified effort between the public and private sectors and the social partners, which the government is committed to and prepared to inspire, lead, and facilitate.”*

Relevant SDGs:



Contributing Agencies:



Total Expenditure – Pillar 1



● OUTCOME 1
Diversified and inclusive macro-economy
Expenditure (2023)
USD \$2,295,164

● OUTCOME 2
Thriving micro-economy with elevated living standards
Expenditure (2023)
USD \$1,318,598

Financing the Future: Empowering Businesses with Accessible Finance, Digital Transformation & Robust Policies

Amidst the natural beauty boasted by Belize, the UN continues its unwavering commitment to supporting the country's journey towards sustainable financing and digital inclusion.

Recognizing the importance of agriculture and its potential to empower rural communities in Belize, the UN partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture in 2023 to *digitize agricultural services*. This initiative ensured efficient and accessible services for vulnerable groups, including smallholder farmers, youth, and women. Additionally, the development of a national *seed policy and avian influenza surveillance protocols* further promotes sustainable agriculture and food security.

The UN continued its effort in bridging the digital divide in 2023 through the establishment of *Digital Connect Centres*, situated in rural and inner-city locations, providing valuable opportunities for citizens to access digital tools and training. This empowers individuals to engage in self-employment and entrepreneurship, fostering an inclusive and innovative society. *The National MSME Directory and Virtual Knowledge Centre* also further connect entrepreneurs with markets and resources, enhancing their business operations and growth potential.

In 2023, the UN also supported the development of a *costed ECD Strategic Plan*, leading to the government's decision to fund additional positions under the *Roving Caregivers Programme*. This investment in early childhood education ensures that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

UN agencies recognize the importance of data-driven decision-making. Therefore, the UN's initiative to develop a *Health Sector Digital Transformation Governance Framework* will provide a robust foundation for data collection and analysis, enabling the Ministry of Health and Wellness to make informed decisions for the benefit of the entire population.

Climate-Smart Growth: Increasing Access to Climate Finance, Fostering Green Jobs and Regional Value Chains

The UN in Belize led the charge in empowering the National Climate Change Office (NCCO) through targeted capacity building initiatives. Climate change officials gained expertise in *transparency requirements, MRV platforms, climate finance access*, and international negotiation strategies.


The UN's support facilitated *Belize's successful participation at CoP 28 in 2023*, allowing the nation to effectively advocate for its climate priorities on the global stage. Strategic partnerships with the UN, WWF, and the Commonwealth Secretariat also yielded tangible results in the transport sector, paving the way for a low-carbon future. Policy frameworks were reviewed, financial barriers addressed, and a *National Strategy for transport sector transformation* was developed.

The UN also made significant strides in 2023 in promoting ethical recruitment practices through the groundwork laid for *the Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program*. While the phased-out approach to recruitment fees was not incorporated into the program, the UN remains committed to ethical recruitment.



 **727**
Households

were reached with backyard garden investments in 2023. Packages offered included vegetable gardens, poultry or pigs.

 **67**
Climate Change Officials

(38 males & 29 females) participated in formal capacity building sessions related to (i) transparency requirements/Monitoring & Reporting (MRV) platforms.

 **12 out of 14**
Digital Centres

established to serve as hubs of innovation, providing access to technology and internet for individuals and communities to thrive in the digital age.

 **18**
Enterprises

(8 were led by women entrepreneurs) received incubation support and equipping entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to make informed decisions.

From Seed to Market: Cultivating Belize's Soursop, a Story of Collaborative Growth

More than just a delectable fruit, the Soursop holds immense potential for the Belizean people. Under guidance of FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, a collaborative forum brought together over 50 stakeholders in February 2023 - farmers, processors, government representatives, and regional partners - to chart a course for the Soursop's future.

The analysis of the Soursop value chain revealed a landscape of opportunities and challenges. Global market trends pointed to a booming sector, yet constraints such as input availability, pest management, and technical knowledge emerged as hurdles to overcome.

FAO's Caribbean Value Chain Development Specialist, echoed the importance of collective action and underscored that a thriving Soursop industry could only be built through collaboration and addressing challenges across the entire value chain.

It therefore becomes more than just a story of a fruit, but instead a story of empowerment, inclusivity, and a collective journey towards a more sustainable future



Diversifying for Sustainable Growth: Productivity, Exports, and Green-Blue-Orange Policies for Sustainable Growth

The UN continued to stand as a pillar of support for women entrepreneurs, nurturing their dreams and propelling their enterprises to success. In 2023, eight **women-led businesses received comprehensive business and technical assistance**, along with grant funding to scale up their incubated service and operations, paving the way for them to become catalysts for economic growth. The UN serves as a bridge, connecting farmers with the knowledge and technology needed to thrive. Through **matching grant fund agreements**, producer organizations receive training and technical support, enabling them to implement sustainable practices and access essential resources. Additionally, infrastructure upgrades, like the **rehabilitation of Nago Bank and Valley of Peace roads**, enhance connectivity and market access, propelling rural communities forward.

The UN also acts as a catalyst for green initiatives, aligning with Belize's ambitious climate goals outlined in its Medium-Term Development Strategy. The **GEF 6 project on integrated landscape management** empowers the Ministry of Agriculture and the Belize Livestock Association to adopt sustainable practices, reducing carbon emissions and safeguarding the environment. By supporting **agro-silvopastoral systems and promoting Voisin Rational Grazing** in 2023, which minimizes soil degradation and encourages biodiversity, the UN equipped farmers with the tools to enhance productivity while preserving natural resources.

The **Farmer Field School concept**, spearheaded by the UN-administered EnGenDER project, fosters innovation within Belize's livestock sector. This approach empowers smallholders with the knowledge and skills to experiment with sustainable practices, contributing to greenhouse gas emission reduction and land rehabilitation. Through practical demonstrations and hands-on training, farmers learned about improved grazing management techniques, composting, and water conservation methods. **Voisin rotational grazing** emerges as a beacon of hope, offering a viable alternative for sustainable livestock production, reducing methane emissions by 10% by 2030.

These initiatives resonate with the overarching theme of "*Diversifying for Sustainable Growth*" underscoring the significance of productivity, exports, and green-blue-orange policies in propelling Belize towards a future where economic prosperity and environmental stewardship go hand-in-hand. From the empowered women entrepreneurs to the knowledge-equipped farmers, from the rehabilitated roads to the flourishing green landscapes, Belize's journey serves as an inspiration, showcasing the transformative power of collaboration and innovation in shaping a sustainable future.

Resilient Growth: MSMEs and Informal Sectors across Orange, Green, and Blue Economies for Climate-Smart Food Systems

Imagine a community in Belize where refugees, armed with newfound technical skills, confidently navigate the entrepreneurial landscape, launching sustainable businesses that cater to the evolving needs of their community. In 2023, this vision became a tangible reality, thanks to the collaborative efforts of various UN agencies working in these communities. The story begins to unfold in the vibrant communities of Bella Vista and Belmopan, where the UN has empowered **395 refugees and asylum seekers with access to technical and vocational training and certification**. These individuals, previously limited by their lack of formal employment opportunities, are now equipped with the knowledge and skills to build their own livelihoods. Through the Rural Resilient Belize Program, the UN complements these efforts by **offering entrepreneurship and SME development training**, further strengthening the foundation for sustainable business ventures.

The UN took the initiative a step further by providing **virtual business management training** accessible to smallholder farmers and other stakeholders. This initiative leverages the power of technology and social media to equip individuals with the critical tools to manage their businesses effectively, fostering an environment conducive to growth and resilience.

The UN also focused on enhancing food security at the household level in 2023. By distributing **backyard garden packages**, including vegetables, poultry, and pigs, the UN continues to empower families to cultivate their own nutritious food sources. This not only improves individual well-being but also contributes to the development of local, sustainable food systems.

These seemingly disparate initiatives are intricately linked, contributing to the overarching theme of "*Resilient Growth*". The empowered refugees and entrepreneurs represent the flourishing orange economy, while focus on backyard gardens embodies the green economy. Together, they contribute to a thriving and resilient blue economy by promoting sustainable food systems and responsible resource utilization.





MSDCF Priority 2: Equality, Well-being, and Leaving No One Behind

Relevant Plan Belize MTDS Goal:

6.1 Poverty Reduction "The government will enable and assist those without resources and opportunities to rise above poverty by ensuring they have access to enough healthy foods, relevant education, timely healthcare, land ownership, decent housing, and social protection when they are unable to provide for themselves."

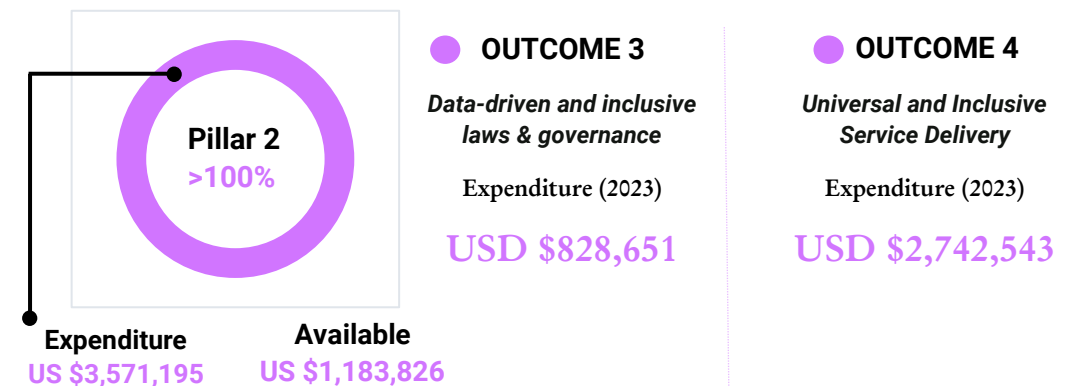
Relevant SDGs:



Contributing Agencies:



Total Expenditure – Pillar 2



Strengthening Data Systems: Enhancing capabilities for effective monitoring and policy responses on structural inequalities

In 2023, Belize navigated a year marked by both growth and challenges. Through dedicated efforts, impactful initiatives, and a shared vision for a brighter future, the UN in Belize continued its work to ensure inclusivity and equal opportunities for all. Each UN agency played a vital role in this transformative process, ensuring that every individual, regardless of gender or circumstance, had the chance to thrive.

In 2023, the **Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) program** open its doors to migrants, including unaccompanied minors, persons seeking medical care, elderly individuals, and a victim of human trafficking. Beyond offering immediate support, the UN also supported the **establishment of four Migrant Hubs and 23 Amnesty Mobile Migrant Hub** event days. These endeavours facilitated re-integration into their new communities while providing access to information.

As part of 2022 Population and Housing Census process, a Post Enumeration Survey (PES) was carried out to verify data accuracy by re-enumerating households. With support from the UN, SIB staff enhanced their technical capacity to conduct future Post Enumeration Surveys. Furthermore, the groundbreaking **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)** shed light on the multifaceted nature of poverty, moving beyond income to consider access to education, health, and living standards. This nuanced understanding of poverty should empower policymakers to design targeted interventions for a more equitable society.

The Minimum Initial Service Package (**MISP initiative**), meanwhile, strengthened Belize's emergency preparedness by training professionals as trainers in delivering lifesaving sexual and reproductive health services during crisis situations. This foresight ensures that even in challenging times, women and girls receive the essential care.

The First-Ever **Nutrition Study on the First 1000 Days of Life** highlighted the crucial role of early childhood nutrition in shaping a healthy future. This research is expected to drive key programmatic changes to combat malnutrition, ensuring children receive vital nourishment to grow and thrive.

In tandem, a **Gender Analysis and Gender Sector Review**, supported by the UN, was completed in 2023 and outlines a path towards a more equitable and gender-transformative society.

In 2023, the UN facilitated efficient record verification and **determination of nationality status** through innovative digitization strategies. This streamlined process benefited over 15,000 records, enhancing accuracy, reducing processing times and improving data management in the Ministry of Immigration.

The UN also collaborated with the Government of Belize to **strengthen the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) process** and enhance protection for refugees. Training programs for government officials focused on international refugee law, and case assessment techniques, resulting in improved asylum processing.



The National Nutrition Policy 2022-2023: A Catalyst for a Healthier Belize

The **National Nutrition Policy 2022-2023**, orchestrated by the Ministry of Health & Wellness and fueled by the unwavering support of the United Nations, stands as a transformative blueprint for a healthier Belize. This policy, meticulously crafted through collaboration and insights from diverse stakeholders, marks a pivotal moment in the nation's fight against chronic diseases and nutritional imbalances.

Launched in June 2023, the National Nutrition Policy adopts a multifaceted approach, encompassing a wide spectrum of strategies designed to improve Belize's nutrition landscape and promote healthier lifestyles for its citizens.

The Policy stands as a testament to the transformative power of collaboration and the UN's commitment to public health. It serves as a beacon of hope for a brighter and healthier future for Belize, paving the way for a nation where good health and well-being are not just aspirations, but realities.

Fostering environments that encourage healthy food choices and physical activity is crucial to changing behaviours and promoting long-term health. Equipping healthcare professionals and community leaders with the knowledge and skills to effectively promote healthy eating habits is vital to the policy's success

And in this endeavour, Belize does not stand alone. The UN family, led by PAHO/WHO, remains a steadfast partner, committed to supporting the nation's journey towards a healthier future.

75 Migrants

Were assisted through the AVR Programme. This included 2 cases of unaccompanied minors, 7 medical cases, 8 elderly and 1 victim of human trafficking.

5,089 persons

Received assistance through cash transfers in multiple districts. Up to 500 families with children below 5 years old and pregnant women in Toledo district received cash assistance through the HCT implementation with Digi Wallet.

13,500 children

ages 5 and 6, received access to learn social and emotional skills with the use of the 'Think Equal curriculum'.

450 Men & boys

Received training to advance gender equality and help prevent GBV through UN support to Spouses of CARICOM Leaders Action Network (SCLAN).

Strengthening Accountability and Governance for Inclusive Social Services: Reducing Structural Inequalities

The UN focused on improving health outcomes by addressing risk factors associated with Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). *Health promotion and community outreach strategies* targeted vulnerable communities with limited access to primary healthcare and schools. This multifaceted approach aimed to prevent NCDs and ensure equitable access to essential health services.

In 2023, the UN also expanded its programme in *WASH in schools into WASH in communities* and health facilities. A comprehensive assessment revealed critical needs, with only 16% of schools having validated emergency plans and 73% of school personnel lacking emergency preparedness training.

A groundbreaking *Humanitarian Cash Transfer program* partnering with digital financial services provided vital financial aid via mobile wallets to over 5,000 people affected by Hurricane Lisa in 2022, supporting essential needs and smallholder farmers' agricultural recovery.

Enhancing Capacity for Social Resilience and Protection: Strengthening assessment, response, and access to support for vulnerable populations.

The UN focused on building the capacity of national institutions to respond effectively to shocks and emergencies. This involved training government officials, developing digital tools for vulnerability data capture, and updating *standard operating procedures for disaster response* and expanding social protection delivery via digital payments through research.

Significant progress was achieved in *drafting legislation to address domestic violence* and sexual offenses, establishing a national GBV response framework, and *creating a Sexual Offenders registry*. Additionally, the UN supported the establishment and improvement of safe houses for victims of GBV and human trafficking.

The UN is collaborating with the Social Security Board in Belize to conduct an *actuarial study and pension reform*. A key highlight of 2023 is the preparation for the deployment of the *new ILO/PENSIONS model* which will empower the Social Security Board to analyse pension benefits and introduce necessary adjustments, paving the way for a more robust and sustainable pension system.

The establishment of a *Community-Based Protection Network in Bella Vista*, with the engagement of volunteers, also ensured on-the-ground support and advocacy for refugees and asylum seekers, fostering a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

Boosting Education and Health Access for Marginalized Communities: Enhancing sector resilience to infectious and socioeconomic shocks

The UN continued its support in 2023 for the government's *national curriculum reform*, which emphasizes student competency and holistic development. Through partnerships, over 13,500 children in early childhood education received social and emotional learning opportunities, fostering essential life skills. Additionally, the UN provided technical and financial support for the development of *a Competency-based National Curriculum*.

The UN also actively supported *the launch and promotion of the National Mental Health Policy*, emphasizing community-based care, prevention, and access to services. The UN also championed the *National Immunization Plan*, Polio Outbreak Response Plan, and Vaccination Week Action Plan, ensuring timely and equitable access to life-saving vaccines.



Weaving Social Protection for All: Belize's Transformative Journey Towards Universal Social Protection

A transformative dialogue unfolded in October 2023 - **The Social Protection Summit**, a monumental milestone in the nation's pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals. This gathering served as a crucible where stakeholders from across the spectrum – from government officials, international experts, and community representatives – converged to forge a path towards a robust social protection system, weaving a safety net for all Belizeans.

The Summit's central theme, "**Social Protection for All**" echoed through the halls, emphasizing the imperative for inclusivity. Keynote addresses by Minister Dolores Balderamos Garcia (Ministry of Human Development), CEO Osmond Martinez (Ministry of Economic Development), and Minister Oscar Requena (Ministry of Labour) underscored the government's unwavering social protection commitment to building a comprehensive social protection framework that leaves no one behind.

Building upon the momentum of the first Social Protection Conference held earlier in April 2023, the Summit delved deeper into the technical aspects of establishing a social protection policy and strategy, inclusive of social protection floor.

A dynamic range of voices emerged from the discussions, each contributing to the intricate design of Belize's social protection strategy. By emphasizing gender-responsive approaches, strong financial foundations, and robust legal frameworks, the strategy aims to be equitable, sustainable, and responsive to the evolving needs of the nation.

As the Summit drew to a close, a palpable sense of optimism filled the air. The commitments made, the knowledge exchanged, and the spirit of collaboration ignited a collective belief that Belize was poised to achieve its vision of universal social protection. This monumental event marked not just the culmination of extensive efforts by the United Nations but also the genesis of a transformative journey towards a more just and equitable society.

As the UN Secretary General has stated, "Social protection is not just a safety net, it is an investment in our future. It lifts people out of poverty, promotes gender equality, and fosters social cohesion." The UN's commitment to supporting Belize's social protection journey aligns with its broader mission to achieve the SDGs and create a more just and equitable world for all.

Hope Anchors: Asylum-seekers Offer Helping Hand to Others Seeking Refuge in Belize

The shuffling of chairs and papers is heard across the campus. The outdoor tent fills with hopeful faces waiting to be assisted in applying for the Government of Belize's amnesty.

Luz, 50, and her daughter Ada, 18, are setting up tables, printers, and other necessary items that will be used throughout the day for an amnesty support program led by UNHCR and local partner, HUMANA People to People in southern Belize. About twenty percent of Belize's asylum-seekers reside in the region.

She and Ada came to Belize three years ago in search of their own new opportunity as well as a new home after suffering the tragic loss of a family member by gang violence in Honduras.

The day after Luz's oldest son was murdered while he was on his way to work, men in ski masks started coming to her home at night. They would park their motorcycles in her yard and terrorize her by walking around the house, checking to find any unlocked entry points.

One night, as she peeked through her window, she heard a gang member on the phone talking about her and her daughter. At that moment, she realized they needed to flee. Luz, her daughter Ada, and 4-year-old son Danny left in a hurry, only carrying a piece of small luggage and her purse - the last sign of a normal life.

After finding some stability in Belize, Luz and Ada joined Manos Unidas, a volunteer group led by HUMANA that helps asylum seekers and locals living in the community of Bella Vista.

She and Ada attended an educative session on amnesty, led by UNHCR with informational support from the Government of Belize, which explained the process of applying and who were eligible. From that moment on, Luz and Ada reached out to others in their community to ensure they accessed this opportunity.

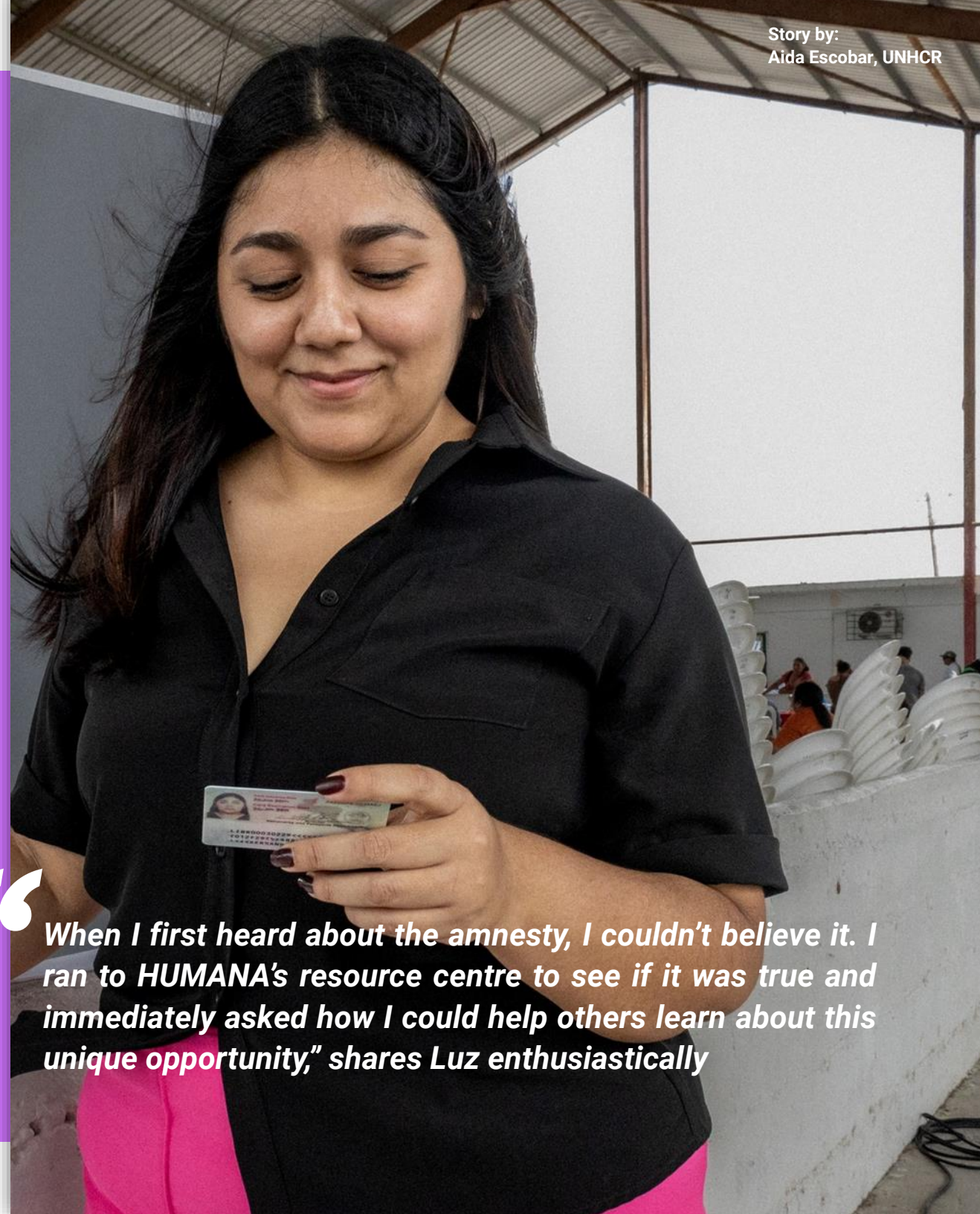
UNHCR and local partners, including Help for Progress, Human Rights Commission of Belize, and HUMANA People to People began visiting communities across Belize to provide this assistance. Ada and Luz began volunteering.

Ada fills out the application forms in English, which she can now do after learning the language through HUMANA's English as a Second Language (ESL) course.

Ada was also able to fill out her family's application forms and submitted them at the start of the amnesty process. Luz and Ada feel grateful for this opportunity, especially after the tragedy they endured in Honduras two years ago.

UNHCR has been able to assist 2,639 asylum seekers and other vulnerable individuals to apply for the Government of Belize's amnesty program, including Luz and Ada.

“When I first heard about the amnesty, I couldn't believe it. I ran to HUMANA's resource centre to see if it was true and immediately asked how I could help others learn about this unique opportunity,” shares Luz enthusiastically





MSDCF Priority 3: Resilience to Climate Change and Sustainable Natural Resource Management

Relevant Plan Belize MTDS Goal:

6.5 Protection of The Environment and Natural Resources "As the country transitions to Green and Blue Economies, sustaining and improving the health of Belize's natural resources and biodiversity is paramount as it provides the substrate for such initiatives. We can achieve this improvement while supporting local communities as partners and custodians of the natural capital for future generations."

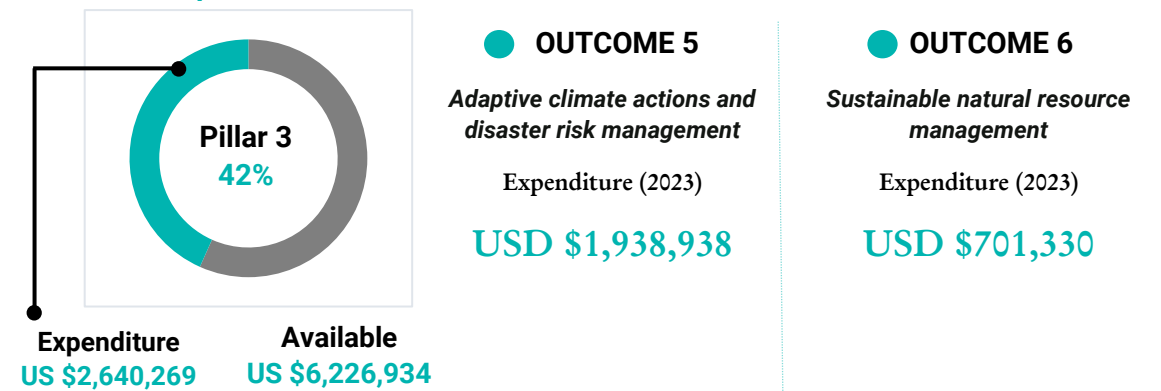
Relevant SDGs:



Contributing Agencies:



Total Expenditure – Pillar 3



**Enhancing Disaster Risk Management
And Climate Change Adaptation:
*Strengthening national data and
community resilience***

The impacts of climate change are becoming increasingly evident in Belize, with more frequent and intense storms, and prolonged droughts threatening the livelihoods of communities across the country. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the government, in collaboration with the United Nations, embarks on a transformative journey to strengthen national data and community resilience.

In 2023, the UN equipped 48 climate change functionaries with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively **monitor and manage climate risks**. This capacity building initiative, coupled with the development of a **Climate Change Bill**, paves the way for a robust national framework for climate action.

The UN also continued to work hand-in-hand with local communities to build resilience and adapt to climate change. Through the **Climate Information System**, farmers gain access to real-time weather data and tailored advisories, enabling them to make informed decisions about their agricultural practices.

The UN also focused on safeguarding the most vulnerable communities, primarily by **constructing and refurbishing hurricane shelters in areas prone to flooding and storm surges**. In 2023, a primary school in Billy White is undergoing refurbishment, while two new shelters in Santa Familia and Duck Run 3 are nearing completion. These shelters provide a safe haven for displaced individuals and families during times of crisis

Additionally, the UN provided support for conducting **vulnerability assessments and developing sustainable fishing practices** to safeguard the livelihoods of coastal communities. This knowledge-based approach ensures that resource management adapts to the changing climate, preserving the delicate balance of Belize's marine ecosystems.

At the heart of this transformation lies the Belize **Environment Outlook (GEO - Belize)**, a comprehensive digital platform developed with the support of UNEP. This invaluable resource provides critical data and insights on climate change and its impacts.

The UN sought partnership with the Government of Belize to link climate risk insurance through the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF SPC) to social protection programmes. In 2023, the UN **topped up the CCRIF SPC tropical cyclone and excessive rainfall policies by US\$100,000**. To enable practical planning, a complementary disbursement plan was developed outlining processes for the receipt and distribution of CCRIF funds after an insured event, better enabling the government's readiness to respond and leading to better reach and targeting of shock-affected people.

Enhancing Green Technology Access: *Building multi-sector resilience by developing and integrating climate change adaptation, mitigation, and disaster risk reduction strategies*

The UN supported Belize in **updating and developing critical national policies and strategies**, including the Low Emission Development Strategy, Climate Change Master Plans, and Nationally Determined Contributions. These policies provide a strong framework for guiding climate action, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and building Belize's resilience to climate-related risks.



Paddling Towards Change: Where Sport Scores for Climate Action in Belize

The UN and the National Climate Change Office (NCCO) orchestrated a symphony of climate change awareness through the universal language of sport. Inspired by the UN's **Sport for Climate Action Initiative**, they have transformed sporting events into powerful platforms for environmental stewardship, weaving a tapestry of change that resonates throughout the nation.

With the support of the UN, the Belize Coast Guard Elite Paddling Teams, now bestowed with the title of "**Climate Change Ambassadors**," have gracefully navigated the waters of the La Ruta Maya River Challenge and Belize's Sea Challenge, their paddles not only propelling them forward but also carrying the message of sustainability.

On the basketball court, the **Regional Youth Champions of Climate Change Basketball Tournament** has ignited the passion of young players in the Cayo District, sparking lively discussions about climate change and its impact on their beloved Belize. These events, pulsating with energy and enthusiasm, have transcended the boundaries of competition, becoming beacons of awareness that reach far beyond the confines of the court.

Through these strategic initiatives, the UN and its government counterparts, have successfully woven climate change awareness into the very fabric of Belizean society. This is a story of unity, of collective action, and of the transformative power of sport to bridge divides and inspire change.

Utilizing the strengths of various UN agencies, Belize has improved its data and information systems. UN support for climate data initiatives, coupled with its efforts to implement a unified market information system for the agricultural sector, is expected to *provide valuable data and insights for informed decision-making and early warnings* regarding climate extremes and market fluctuations.

Additionally, the UN's 2023 *"BEAT the heat" communication framework* has been integrated into health worker training, and a guide for health workers on climate and environmental hazards has been developed. These initiatives empower communities to adapt to climate change and contribute to improved public health outcomes.

As highlighted in the GCF Stakeholder Engagement 2023 report, developed with support from the UN, a *Gender Analysis of Belize's Coastal Zone and Fisheries Sector* has been completed, and the findings are being integrated into relevant programs, ensuring equal participation and benefits for all members of society.

Beyond policy frameworks and data systems, building a resilient Belize requires empowered communities equipped to adapt to climate change. Through various initiatives, the UN has been fostering community resilience across Belize.

The UN support to the National Climate Change Office (NCCO) in *incorporating climate risk and disaster risk into local development planning* processes was a crucial step towards building resilience from the ground up. UN's *"Integrated management of production landscapes to deliver multiple global environmental benefits"* project also provided key leverage financing for the Ministry of Agriculture and the Belize Livestock Producers Association (BLPA) to scale up NDC-prescribed actions, including the greening of the livestock sector.

As Belize continues its journey towards climate resilience, the UN remains its steadfast partner, providing invaluable expertise and resources. Our partnership exemplifies the importance of international cooperation in building a more sustainable and equitable Belize.



Aligning Livelihoods and Sustainable Management: Transitioning to a greener circular economy with the creation of decent jobs

The **2023 Belize Investment Summit**, co-organized by the Government and UN, presented a compelling roadmap for economic recovery built upon the development and expansion of Belize's Blue, Green, and Orange Economies. This approach prioritizes sustainable utilization of marine resources, conservation efforts, and the promotion of responsible agricultural practices.

The UN's Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme continues to empower local communities through green jobs and livelihood initiatives. Notably, a **grant awarded to the Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technologies (BEST)** directly impacts the lives of 2,500 rural dwellers, supporting small enterprise growth, female participation in the economy, and improved income, livelihoods, and food security.

In 2023, the UN also extended its support to the Ministry of Agriculture in developing a **draft Agriculture Sector Policy**. This document outlines a comprehensive vision for the development of the sector, prioritizing sustainability and equity. While awaiting technical validation, the draft policy serves as a roadmap for future agricultural development in Belize.

Building on this momentum, Belize's participation in the **2023 UN Climate Change Conference (COP28)** proved pivotal in showcasing the country's ambitious climate action agenda. The Belize delegation presented its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), outlining concrete actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance resilience to climate change.



KEY RESULTS 2023:



Draft Agriculture Sector Policy completed that seeks to define the vision for development of the sector.



13 cooperatives (6 women lead) and 2,500 rural dwellers directly benefit from grant submission through the UN GEF Small Grants Programme.



150 teachers and 150 Health workers have been trained using the 'BEAT the heat' communication framework



A **national food security and livelihood survey summary** and a market price monitoring report was developed to capture the state of food security.

[Market Price Monitoring Report](#)



48 climate change officials participated in formal capacity building sessions related to Transparency requirements and MRV platforms



Presentation of **comprehensive Climate Change Bill to Cabinet**. This Bill and its components are key to advancing the country's climate risk management goals.



MSDCF Priority 4: Peace, Safety, Justice and Rule of Law

Relevant Plan Belize MTDS Goal:

6.6 No Corruption and Good Governance "The government aims to operate more sustainably to deliver quality services in the delivery of Medium-Term Development Strategy (MTDS 2022 – 2026). Henceforth, the government must restore meritocracy and strengthen leadership and management to provide effective and efficient services to the people."

Relevant SDGs:



Contributing Agencies:



Total Expenditure – Pillar 4



Strengthening Human Rights Governance: Building institutional capacity and aligning efforts with global standards to combat and end violence

In 2023, the UN actively supported the establishment of a **National Human Rights Institution (NHRI)**, ensuring alignment with the Paris Principles. This paves the way for an independent and effective independent body to champion human rights in Belize. Additionally, the submission of treaty body reports and participation in the **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** provided valuable recommendations for further human rights progress.

The UN partnered with the government in 2023 to improve citizen security data through the **Integrated Information Management System (IIMP)**, leading to the production of quarterly crime reports including data on gender-based violence. This initiative resulted in a 15% increase in reported gender-based violence cases within the first year, highlighting the importance of data-driven approaches in addressing critical issues. Additionally, the UN supported the **modernization of the Domestic Violence Act**, the establishment of a roving Sexual Offences Court, and the expansion of the Diversion Programme for offenders. These initiatives contribute to a safer environment and more accessible justice for all citizens.

The UN also implemented a comprehensive **social and behaviour change campaign**, reaching communities across Belize with crucial information on preventing violence against women and girls. Additionally, the **Gender Equality & Diversity Seal** was rolled out, fostering a more inclusive workplace culture across public and private sectors.

The UN further contributed to gender equality by supporting 123 individuals with **mental health and psychosocial support**, many of whom were survivors of gender-based violence. Additionally, the UN held a **resilience-building support session** led by a psychologist for 39 asylum-seeker survivors of gender-based violence, focusing on maintaining positive self-esteem and managing traumas related to GBV and forced displacement.

In 2023, The UN's active **engagement in PSEA working groups** and its coordination of regional intergenerational South-South exchange for civil society organizations, including Belize, provide critical platforms for addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and strategizing on eliminating violence against women and girls.

Enhancing Social Protection Systems and Legal Frameworks: Increasing judicial capacities to tackle human rights and corruption issues

In 2023, the UN played a crucial role in supporting the **revision of Belize's Immigration Act**. Through stakeholder consultations, technical expertise, and organized consultative sessions, the UN facilitated a comprehensive review and consolidation of the existing legislation. This resulted in the finalization of a replacement bill, currently pending internal reviews before submission to the Cabinet for approval.



18 CSO personnel

received CSO capacity strengthening training in Belize in Project Cycle Management Skills, Monitoring, Procurement Procedures, Finance etc.



169 BDF Officers

increased understanding of gender roles and gender equality; GBV in their platoon and anger management approaches



148,896 Persons

reached with information on preventing violence against women and girls through the SBCC Campaign



353 Asylum Seekers

received support financially for documents needed as part of their amnesty application



Resilience Rising: Enhancing Refugee Support and Legal Framework in Belize

Behind every policy change and procedural update, there were real stories of hope and resilience in Belize. At the heart of UNHCR's initiatives was a firm belief in the inherent dignity and worth of each person they assisted.

A total of 119 asylum seekers were supported with legal assistance. These were not just numbers on a page but individuals with hopes, dreams, and fears. They found guidance, support, and a sense of belonging through the efforts of the UNHCR team.

The Government of Belize's Amnesty Program stood as a beacon of hope for many, offering a pathway to regularization for those who had faced unimaginable hardships. The UNHCR team, in collaboration with other UN agencies, provided not just technical support but a sense of comfort and assurance during a time of uncertainty. But the support didn't stop at legal matters. In collaboration with local organizations and refugee women, UNHCR organized workshops on preventing gender violence.

Each number in this report, each policy amendment, and each workshop held a story of courage, resilience, and human spirit. Through their tireless efforts and compassionate approach, UNHCR and the UN transformed the lives of individuals in Belize, demonstrating that at the core of their work lies a deep commitment to supporting people and making a tangible difference in their lives.

Beyond the immediate revision of the Immigration Act, the UN continues to support the development of *draft amendments and the consolidation and updating of other migration-related laws*, including the Nationality Act, Passport Act, and Permanent Residence Act. These efforts are crucial in modernizing Belize's migration framework and ensuring its alignment with international standards, ultimately leading to a more efficient and humane migration system that protects the rights of all individuals

The UN partnered with the Good Governance Unit (GGU) of the Ministry of Public Service to support the *first-ever Anti-corruption series of activities* leading up to the Anti-Corruption Day forum in Q4 2023. This collaboration strategically aligned the UN with the GGU's efforts to implement the government's anti-corruption initiatives outlined in the Medium-term Development Strategy (MTDS 2022 - 2026).

Building on this momentum, the UN will collaborate with its Global office to execute *Belize's first-ever corruption baseline study in 2024*. This study will provide valuable data and insights to inform the development of a comprehensive Good Governance Agenda aimed at strategically tackling corruption within the public service.

The UN also extended support to the *People's Constitution Commission (PCC)* by facilitating onboarding and capacity building for its members. This assistance included clarifying their roles and responsibilities, sharing Commonwealth experiences through South-South cooperation, and offering guidance on constitution-making and constitutional design. Concurrently, the UN aided in the finalization of *the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)*, digitizing the forensic process. By ensuring transparency and safeguarding forensic evidence against tampering, the implementation of LIMS bolsters the justice system, fostering a more secure and accountable environment.

The implementation of LIMS reinforces the rule of law, leading to increased public confidence in the justice system and promoting sustainable development through the fair and efficient resolution of disputes. While, empowering the PCC with the necessary knowledge and skills, the UN will continue to contribute to the development of a robust and inclusive constitution.

The UN's multifaceted approach in Belize underscores its unwavering commitment to supporting the country's development goals. By strengthening migration management, promoting good governance, and tackling corruption, the UN contributes to a more equitable, secure, and just society for all Belizeans.

Advancing Human Rights and Empowering Communities: Enhancing capacities to use national and international frameworks for equality

In 2023, Representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs) actively engaged in activities commemorating the *Decade for People of African Descent (DPAD)*. Notably, delegates from three NGOs partook in a regional consultation in Panama City aimed at advancing racial justice and equality for Africans and Afro-descendants in Central America.

In 2023, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus Belize facilitated the commemoration of the *75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR 75)* during a forum to enhance awareness about the human rights. Support from the UN provided a meaningful space for stakeholders to discuss rights-based initiatives that can contribute to the recognition of our inalienable human rights.

Moreover, by the conclusion of 2023, the UN had extended *technical cooperation to the Belize Police Department*. This collaboration involved training 350 recruits and senior officers on applying human rights principles and standards in policing practices across Belize. The training sessions significantly enhanced the rights-related competencies of law enforcement officials, reinforcing the safeguarding and advancement of human rights within the framework of the rule of law.



Transforming Communities and Empowering Change: Promoting gender equality to combat gender-based violence through empowerment initiatives in Belize

The power of Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) campaigns resonated through the heart of communities in Belize, sparking a wave of awareness and action against violence targeting women and girls. The numbers in reports reflected not just statistics but real lives touched and transformed by the dedicated efforts of the UNFPA team:

- In 38 communities, knowledge on preventative measures on VAWG was shared in an effort of fostering a culture of respect and safety.
- 16 Community outreach/ information sessions completed
- 18 Education sessions conducted to prevent violence against women and girls
- 12 Training of Trainers sessions conducted on preventing violence against women and girls

The relentless pursuit of social and behaviour change received a powerful endorsement from the House of Representatives in Belize. The unanimous denouncement and condemnation of domestic violence as a crime and violation of human rights illuminated a path towards a more just and equitable society. Minister Dolores Balderamos Garcia's words echoed a collective commitment to action, sending a clear message that change was not just desired but imperative.

The National Women's Commission's leadership, bolstered by UNFPA's support, heralded a new phase of empowerment and awareness in the pursuit of gender equality. This was evidenced through the Gender Equality & Diversity Seal initiative, part of the Spotlight Initiative, drives public and private sectors in Belize towards workplace inclusivity and gender equality.

2.3 Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

The United Nations recognizes the crucial role of partnerships in achieving the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda. To this end, the UN leverages various partnerships with diverse stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, and academia. Some key examples of such partnerships in 2023 include:



Convening the First Belize SDG Partnership Dialogue

Belize held its first National SDG Partnership Dialogue on 17 August 2023 to reaffirm its commitment to the 2030 Agenda. Organized by the UNCT and UNRCO with the Ministries of Sustainable Development, Foreign Affairs, and Economic Development, the event gathered over 120 leaders and stakeholders from various sectors. The Dialogue aimed to strengthen national partnerships and enhance collaboration for SDG acceleration. It also aimed to identify and prioritize national commitments for the 2023 SDG Summit. The results will contribute to the 2024 Voluntary National Review. The Dialogue emphasized cross-sectoral engagement for holistic solutions, proactive collaboration, and fostering innovation for sustainable change.

Initiating the Belize Development Partners Network (BDPN)

In 2023, under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, Belize enhanced its coordination with development partners. The Diplomatic Corps engaged with the UN on key topics, including a presentation on Climate Action in October 2023. Additionally, key steps were taken for the advancement of the *Belize Development Partners Network* in collaboration with the U.S. Ambassador and various development partners. This initiative complements the Government's establishment of an International Cooperation Council and plans for a Donor Coordination Conference to support the #PlanBelize Medium-term Development Strategy 2022-2026 for SDG acceleration. The UNRCO and UNCT continue to support these efforts.



Expansion of Partnership with Parliamentarians

Following the signing of the [Joint Declaration of Intent \(DOI\)](#) formalizing the partnership between the UNCT and the National Assembly of Belize in December 2022, the year 2023 saw the implementation of several activities in partnership with parliamentarians. A 2023/2024 work programme was agreed upon with both Chambers of the National Assembly.



Key results realized in 2023 in partnership with the UN include:

- Joint Advocacy on the Human Rights Legislative Agenda
- Technical exchange on the Escazú Agreement with ECLAC
- Two strategic planning retreats for the Women's Parliamentary Caucus
- Climate Crisis Forum for Parliamentarians in preparation of COP28
- Human Rights Forum to mark the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

South-South Cooperation: India-UN Development Partnership Fund

In 2023, implementation also continued under the USD one million funded project between the Governments of India and Belize.

I reiterate Belize's urgent call for reform of the international financial architecture and the adoption of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index.



The project continued to bolster Belize's health system resilience following the COVID-19 pandemic. It facilitated the purchase of critical medical equipment and expanded infection prevention control measures, including a medical waste incinerator for Caye Caulker. The project, which began in December 2020, was fully executed by September 2023.



Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs)



Advancing an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF)

More than 85 countries are currently using Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) to develop a more sustainable and resilient financing architecture. This includes 13 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and 21 Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Belize has expressed interest in adopting the INFF approach, as discussed during UN GoB-UN Joint National Steering Committee (JNSC) meetings on 24 November 2022 and 16 June 2023, a high-level ministerial meeting on 15 June 2023, and a GoB-UN technical meeting on 15 August 2023. The focus is on using INFFs to support the implementation of Belize's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement and to address the US\$7 billion financing gap for NDCs and the Government's Medium-term Development Strategy (MTDS) 2022-2026. Following technical engagements led by the UNRCO and UNDP, the Government has agreed to convene an INFF technical workshop in Q1 2024 to leverage expertise and lessons from other countries to develop an action plan for Belize to adopt the INFF approach for its key priorities.

Private Sector Engagement

In 2023, the UN advanced private sector engagement to support the 2030 Agenda. In March 2023, the UNRCO connected the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) with the UN Global Compact (UNGC) team for the Caribbean. Following the discussion, the Chamber agreed to identify potential firms to commit to UNGC principles on human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption, emphasizing the region's context where most firms are MSMEs (90% in Belize). Additionally, the UNRCO, UNDP, and UNICEF participated in the second Belize Investment Summit from 30 August to 1 September, focusing on Blue, Green, and Orange economies. The UNCT continues to engage the private sector as a key partner in accelerating the SDGs and 2030 Agenda.



Acceleration of Joint Programmes between Agencies, Funds and Programmes.

2023 also witnessed the acceleration of several key milestones under active joint programmes with several in the pipeline awaiting finalization with donors. Currently, there are three (3) active UNCT joint programmes including:

1. **Belize Spotlight Initiative**
RUNOs: UNDP, UNICEF, and UNFPA
Funded by: EU / UN
Total Budget: US \$3,535,714 - EU
 US \$893,595 - UN (Phase I and II)
Duration: Jan. 2020 – Sept. 2023 (Closure Dec 2023)
2. **Strengthening Belize's Evidence Base and Systems for Crisis Response**
RUNOs: WFP, UNICEF, FAO, and UNESCO
Funded by: Joint SDG Fund – Development Emergency Modality (DEM) Response to the Global Crisis on Food, Energy, Finance
Total Budget: US \$302,477
Duration: Jun. 2022 – Mar. 2023
3. **Building a resilient Belize through universal, adaptive and sustainable social protection**
RUNOs: UNICEF, WFP, and ILO
Funded by: Joint SDG Fund (SIDS Call)
Total Budget: US \$990,400
Duration: Jan. 2022 – Mar. 2024

2.4 Results of the UN Working more and better together

In Belize, the "One UN System" approach harmonizes the efforts of all UN agencies, optimizing resources and expertise for a coordinated response to development challenges. This unified strategy accelerates progress towards the 2030 Agenda. The following section outlines the key outcomes achieved through this collaborative framework.

Under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, the United Nations continued to strengthen its partnerships with the Government of Belize, development partners, and the people of Belize to support delivery of programmes, technical support and strengthening of the policy environment.

The development of the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (MSDCF 2022 – 2026) reinforced the collaboration between Government of Belize and United Nations through an extensive consultative process which included joint identification of outputs aligned with the National Medium Term Development Strategy (MTDS 2022 – 2026).

UN CIP 2022 - 2023

The UN Country Implementation Plan (CIP) 2022 - 2023, endorsed and signed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, provided the framework for internal and external collaboration and resource mobilization for the UN in Belize. The CIP 2022 – 2023 is supported by a UN inter-agency *Programme Management Team (PMT)*, and *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Group*. Both mechanisms are established and functioning to strengthen the coordination through joint planning and M&E.

UN BOS 2021 - 2025

Through the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) 2021–2025, UN Belize achieved total cost avoidance of 432 thousand USD by the end of 2023 surpassing the target of 318 thousand USD by 35%.

As reported in the BOS Annual Report, 2023 also resulted in an increase by 121% in realized benefit compared to 2022. Through the *Operations Management Team (OMT)* with the support of the UNCT, the BOS is expected to continue enhancing the efficiencies and effectiveness of the UN in Belize.

UN PSEA Network

The Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Network, an internal UN inter-agency body, continued its efforts in 2023 to assess and enhance measures against sexual exploitation and abuse. UN Belize expanded training for Implementing Partners, improved guidance for accessing support institutions, and created a checklist for UN agencies. An all-staff training on PSEA was also conducted on in December 2023 by the UNCT to strengthen internal reporting and response mechanisms.

Joint Programming Support

The UNRCO supports joint programming by facilitating agencies through open calls for proposals, including collaborations with bilateral partners such as KOICA for a proposal titled "*The Enabling of Belize's Statistical System*" worth USD\$3.5 million. UNCT members in Belize also engage in joint thematic work, exemplified by the third Joint UN Work Plan signed between IOM, UNICEF, and UNHCR, focused on birth registration, statelessness, child protection, and integration support.



Increased Youth and Media Engagement



Establishment of Belize Development Partners Network (DPN)



Continued Strategic Engagement with Parliamentarians



Formalized Partnership with Higher Education Academia



Expansion of Partnership and Dialogue with Civil Society

**Unity in Action:
Working More and
Better Together on
Partnership Priorities
in 2024**



2.5 Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

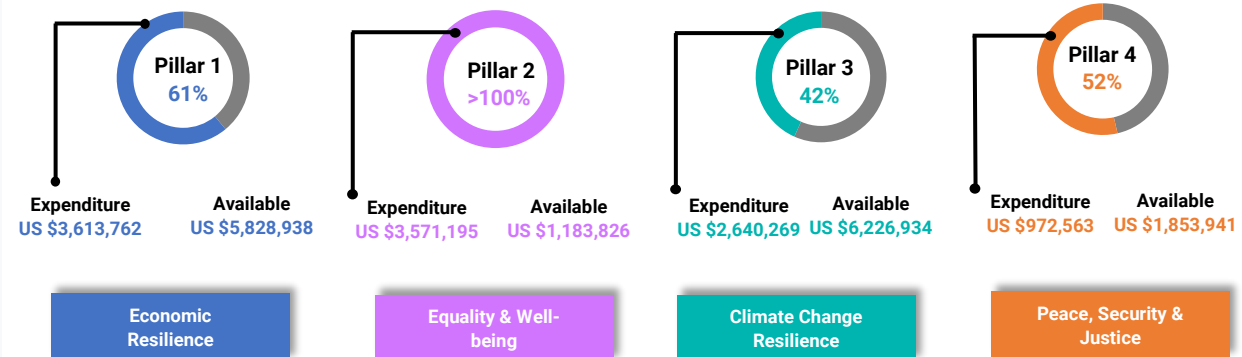
2023 CIP Budget Overview

Total Planned Budget **USD \$24,786,568** | Total Funded Budget **USD \$15,055,640** | To be mobilized **USD \$9,730,928**

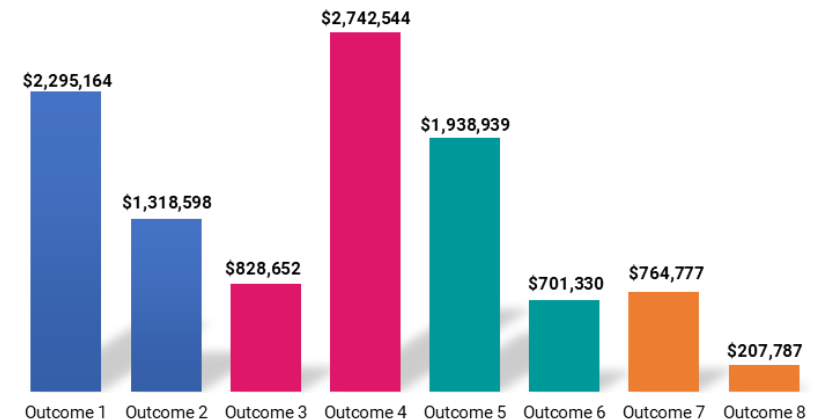
Agency	Planned Resources 2023 (USD)	Expenditure 2023 (USD)	Delivery Rate (%)
FAO	\$1,353,078.00	\$108,923	8%
IFAD	\$5,673,000.00	\$502,230	9%
ILO	\$235,414.00	\$180,000	76%
IOM	\$910,440.00	\$1,006,213	>100%
OHCHR	\$0.00	\$13,514	>100%
PAHO/WHO	\$0.00	\$939,705	>100%
UN WOMEN	\$0.00	\$0	0%
UNICEF	\$476,341.00	\$1,814,080	>100%
UNDP	\$4,992,982.00	\$3,650,588	73%
UNESCO	\$30,000.00	\$216,100	>100%
UNEP	\$0.00	\$77,975	>100%
UNFPA	\$379,268.00	\$376,557	99%
UNHCR	\$668,175.00	\$805,949	>100%
WFP	\$336,942.00	\$1,636,390	>100%
TOTAL	\$ 15,055,640	\$11,328,223	75%



Implementation Rate by MSDCF Priority Areas



The total expenditure across all four MSDCF pillars by all UN agencies, funds and programmes operating in Belize was estimated at **USD \$10.8 million**. However, it is worth noting that this figure does not fully capture the value and full footprint of the UN agencies in Belize. The full funding framework of the Country Implementation Plan (CIP) for 2023 also takes into account the technical and financial resources provided by sub-regional and regional UN offices. The results of the multi-country offices and regional interventions are monitored in the [UN INFO platform](#) and relevant country results are captured within this report.



Expenditure by MSDCF Outcome Area in 2023 (USD)

CHAPTER 3

The Road Ahead: UN Focus and Priorities for 2024



Chapter 3 – UN IN BELIZE KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR 2024

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Strategic Financing and Partnerships

Under the leadership of the RC, the UNCT will be formulating the new **Country Implementation Plan (CIP 2024 – 2025)** in an effort to enhance resources and funding opportunities and address key gaps and critical areas not addressed in previous iteration of the CIP.

As part of the financial landscape exercise, The UNCT will continue its dialogue with the government for the development of an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) to advance the SDGs and Agenda 2030.

Joint Coordination and Implementation

In 2024, the UNCT will seek to improve the implementation of its joint programmes through strengthened collaboration among UN agencies. The UNCT has identified areas for convergence and synergies with roll out of the KOICA Project titled “Enabling of Belize’s Statistical System” budgeted at USD \$3.4 USD. The project will be implemented from 2024 to 2027 and is a joint initiative involving six (6) Government ministries and five (5) United Nations (UN) agencies with coordination support from the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator.

MSDCF 2022 – 2026 Implementation

The development interventions to be implemented in 2024 will be outlined in the new CIP 2024–2025. The CIP for 2024 will be consulted with UN partners and updated to fully consider the changing socioeconomic context of Belize and to ensure coherence with the strategic objectives of the National MTDS. The UNCT in Belize will continue its support to GOB in 2024 through the implementation of the strategic priorities of the MSDCF including:

- Supporting the development of **Strategic Plan for the development of the Coconut Sector** with focus on production management capacity development and market opportunities.
- Enhancement of the **Belize Agriculture Information Management System** to provide to provide digital extension and price information services.
- **Digitization of the Vital Statistics Unit**
- Policy advocacy for **increased social spending to enhance service** delivery for children based on the Out-of-Pocket Expenditure Analysis.
- Launching of the **Digital Service Portfolio for Belize** offering planting calendar, weather and crop specific data through a digital platform.
- Support for development of the MTDS Monitoring and Evaluation framework

SOCIAL EQUALITY & WELL-BEING

- Finalization of the **National Social Protection Strategy** and technical assistance, partnerships and capacity building for its implementation
- Roll out and technical support for the completion of the **Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report and Multi-indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 7)**
- Technical assistance for the elaboration of the **2025-2035 Health Sector Strategic Plan**
- Development of the **2025 - 2030 Human Resources for Universal Health Strategy and Plan**
- Recovery of **post COVID-19 vaccination rates**.
- Capacity building of school cooks and school administrators to improve nutrition and monitoring outcomes in the **National School Feeding Program**.
- Support Belize’s adaptation of the model **Reproductive Health Commodity Security (RHCS) Strategy** in Belize
- Fully develop and roll-out **Decent Work Country Programme** for Belize.

CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE

- Support to the National Climate Change Office for updating of the **National Determined Contributions (NDCs)**
- Development of a **Carbon Policy** for Belize
- Development of an **Industrial Policy** for Belize
- Support to the NBIO Office for the review and update of the **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan**.
- **Enhance environmental data capacity and analysis** of Belize through active participation in the activities of the UNEP Caribbean Working Group.
- Streamline and institutionalize **key disaster risk management trainings** through curricula at the Higher-education level.
- Pipeline SDG Project: **Belize Inclusive Resilience in Safe and SMART Spaces**
- Strengthen the anticipatory action of NEMO through expansion of the **National Shelter Registration System**.
- Introduction of electric buses as a part of the **eMobility Pilot Project**

PEACE, JUSTICE & SECURITY

- Support vulnerable **asylum seekers with amnesty payment and legal assistance**.
- Offer Diploma Courses to Public Officers in **Migration Management and Labour Migration and Countertrafficking in Persons**.
- Capacity building of key stakeholders on **GBV in emergency, the Essential Service Package**, and the GBV multisectoral response protocol.
- Development of a **Court Administration Plan and Case Management Practices**
- **‘Migrant Children on the Move’ and Implementation of Joint UN Migration Plan**.



UNITED NATIONS
BELIZE

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UN Belize Annual Country Results Report 2023



DECADE
OF
ACTION

