

**INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE DAY
AND
MERIT AWARDS CEREMONY**

**Radisson Fort George Hotel & Marina
Friday, June 22, 2007**

Opening Remarks By Mrs. Myrtle Palacio

“Celebrating Excellence, Inspiring Unity and Fostering Professionalism”

The impact of globalization, advances in information technology and the increasing call for higher quality services by citizens, all demand that governments constantly improve their services, and review their processes. In particular, stakeholders increasingly have higher expectations of transparency and accountability and responsiveness to their needs. The Belize Public Service has to adapt to these changing and challenging environments.

“Putting People, the Human Capital, First”—enhancing the individual, the team, the institution for efficient and effective public services has been the focus of modernization and governance initiatives by the Office of Governance.

The “Human Capital” concept centers on viewing people as assets whose value to an organization can be enhanced through investing in their development. As with any investment, the goal is to increase organizational performance, while managing related costs and risks, and thus maximizing service to stakeholders. In light of the significant ongoing changes, the Government of Belize has recognized the need to prepare its people by investing in their development.

One year ago, I invited you on a journey of transformation, modernization, change to improve service delivery to our customers, who are the people of

Belize. Yes, it is a journey and not a destination—the ever changing global environment and economy, the new technology does not allow for a final destination as we knew service delivery to be. So, the Journey continues. . . .

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The past year, in focusing on in-house, competency-based or soft skills training and governance awareness, the Office of governance touched over 1500 persons; including the issuance of certificates to some 300 public officers through our capacity building project. Thanks to our partners, CARICAD, UNICEF and UNDP. People---Human Capital, is the next competitive advantage, **we---people**, are crucial to organizational success. To survive and thrive we must maximize talent and capability—and skills training must be continuous. While the OOG will ensure the expertise to facilitate such, the learners **and** their managers, in this here Belize Public Service,--CEOs, HODs, **must exhibit, show, express** accountability through the demonstration of the newly acquired competencies and aptitudes in their various organizations. **Change . . .**

Some 18 persons have been awarded international, short-term training with the support of other partners: Commonwealth Secretariat, The Peoples Republic of China, Taiwan, OAS, UNDESA, etc. Topics ranged from E-government, legal drafting, Monitoring and Evaluation, Policy Development, to Human Resource Management. These persons have travelled to Taipei, Singapore, Malta, and closer to home--Barbados, Grenada, Cayman, Guyana, and Tobago.

The Government of Belize comprises many agencies and as we focus on our customers, the many agencies must be seen as one government. Hence, the launch of the GOB Website Portal in November 2007, not only to provide easy access to accurate information, but to have one gateway for efficient access to information to

the Belizean Citizens, who are our Customers. Citizens have and are demanding the right to timely information, and each Ministry has the responsibility and is accountable for the uploading of valid information to a folder on the Website Portal.

ICT workshops and seminars were conducted with the assistance of our partners The Peoples Republic of China, Taiwan; and we continue this summer commencing June 11 to September 19. The e-government Policy for the Public Service is being implemented, a copy of which is available on the Website Portal www.governmentofbelize.gov.bz.

Next month, July and August, the Office of Governance will be in every District Town to bring awareness to the Regulations—PSR, SCR etc. Kindly look out for the schedule, come out and participate. We will be partnering with three departments in piloting Customer Charters, namely, Immigration, Customs, and General Sales Tax—this will be new but exciting waters for all of us.**Yes Change!!**

Today, June 22, 2007 is a special day. Why? It is the second time that Belize is joining other UN member states in publicly celebrating this day and making the Public Service visible countrywide. Last year, there was no budget, but there was no stopping us, as we harmonized efforts across the country, networking, building and strengthening partnerships, and beginning to break down the silos that we have built around our various organizations. This year there is a budget as we celebrate countrywide, from Corozal to Toledo.

We are again publicly recognizing and valuing our officers, our human capital—some 47 persons have given 25 years of service and we applaud them. Also, we

are launching the Strategic Direction of the Public Service. This was the contribution of those who participated in the last Strategic Planning Workshop, facilitated by CARICAD, after which the OOG consulted countrywide.

For the first time, in implementing our Merit Award Policy, the Belize Public Service is awarding excellence—The Public Officer of the Year and the Agency of the Year..... **I did say change!!**

I would like to recognize:

- some of the organizers of this years Public Service Day event; and their supporting organizations:

- ✓ Corozal - Mrs. Lorraine Zuniga, NDACC
- ✓ Orange Walk - Mrs. Eneida Vargas, Elections & Boundaries Department
- ✓ Belize - Dr. Carol Fonseca, Women’s Department
Mrs. Lisbeth Castillo, Income Tax Department
- ✓ Belmopan - Mr. Justin Palacio, Office of the Services Commission
Mr. Seth Hernandez, Press Office
Mr. Errol Gentle, Ministry of Home Affairs, Public Utilities and Housing
- ✓ Cayo - Mr. Hugo Miranda, Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries
Stann Creek - Mr. Oscar Reyes, District Education Centre
- ✓ Toledo - Ms. Elizabeth Enriquez, Southern Regional Hospital, Toledo
Mrs. Cordelia Palacio, Sub-Treasury, Toledo

- The Selection Committee for the Merit Awards—Members of the HRDC and two members of the CGM
- The Staff of the Office of governance—small in numbers, but large in commitment and dedication

The position of the Office of Governance is to continue to invest in people, develop a high performance skills based by enhancing the soft skills that employees need to work effectively---join us in the ongoing developmental training programmes.

Our Office welcomes new ideas and initiatives. **Come!** bring your initiatives, *mi casa es tu casa*, dream with us, for an improved Public Service.....

On behalf of the Staff of the Office of Governance, it is my honour to welcome you as partners of change to today's journey.

One Love -- Aban Isien!!

I thank you

Myrtle Palacio