UPR 45, 29 January 2024

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**BELIZE**

**Canada’s Intervention**

Thank you, Mister President.

Canada welcomes the positive steps taken by Belize to ensure the empowerment of women and girls, including through the elevation of the status of the National Women’s Commission to a statutory body in the Belizean Ministry. However, we remain concerned by persistent human rights challenges, including the high levels of sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls.

Canada recommends that Belize:

1. Strengthen legal frameworks for protecting human rights and allocate resources to institutions responsible for providing access to justice for marginalized communities, including by increasing funding and investigative capabilities to the Office of the Ombudsman.
2. Work to battle corruption in public institutions by strengthening anti-corruption agencies, enhancing anti-corruption penalties, and investigating all instances of corruption within public offices, while promoting transparency and accountability.
3. Address the use of excessive force by law enforcement, including through training, effective investigations and appropriate disciplinary actions in cases of police brutality.
4. Strengthen measures to combat human trafficking by investigating and prosecuting those responsible, as well as adopting an approach that respects the human rights of victims and survivors, and provide them with trauma-informed, gender-responsive, and disability-inclusive services and support.
5. Combat all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, including through the development and implementation of an effective National Gender Policy.

Canada commends Belize for the appointment of an Ombudsman in February 2023. However, we express our concerns with the position having remained vacant for over a year, as the previous Ombudsman resigned in 2021. It is important to recognize the valuable work done by the Office of the Ombudsman, including their efforts in advocating for marginalized communities and providing annual statistics of human rights violations in Belize.