

Senior Courts of Belize  
Belize City  
Belize C.A.  
E-mail: [info@belizejudiciary.org](mailto:info@belizejudiciary.org)



Telephone No: +501 227-7377  
Fax No: +501 227-0181

5<sup>th</sup> December 2023

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Launch of the Criminal Justice Board December 5, 2023**

Belize City, December 5, 2023- The Honourable Chief Justice Madame Louise Esther Blenman chairs the Criminal Justice Board, and the inaugural virtual launch of the Board was held this morning. The Board is established to spearhead comprehensive reforms to operationalise the Caribbean Court of Justice Academy for Law Needham's Point Declaration on Criminal Justice Reform which aims to modernise the criminal justice system.

The Criminal Justice Board comprises an interdisciplinary and a multidisciplinary group of stakeholders dedicated to upholding justice, including representatives from the UNDP, the Attorney General, the Commissioner of Police, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Private Bar, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Department of Human Development, Belize Prisons, International agencies, Magistrates and Judicial Officers from the Senior Courts of Belize. The Board seeks to provide a holistic approach to addressing challenges within the criminal justice system to modernise the criminal justice system and reduce the backlogs.

The Needham's Point Declaration on Criminal Justice Reform serves as the guiding framework for the Board's operations and provides international best practices to the Belize criminal justice system. The Board aims to enhance the efficiency, transparency, and fairness of Belize's criminal justice processes and will seek to enhance the institutional capacity of lawyers, prosecutors, police, members of the public and private sectors and the Courts.

The launch of the Criminal Justice Board coincides with the EU and UNDP funded the PACE Justice Project which aims to lessen the backlogs and bottlenecks in the criminal justice system, through among other things, the use of information technology resources. By harnessing the expertise of its members, the Criminal Justice Board serves to improve Belize's criminal justice system to international standards. Through sustained education and dedication, the Board aims to ensure a legal environment that upholds the principles of justice, fairness, and human rights which provide efficient access to justice.

The Criminal Justice Board expects that most of Needham's standards will be implemented, and the criminal justice system will see an improvement within two years utilising the valued support of the UNDP and EU PACE Justice Project.