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Press Release

NASA and Belize Partner to Bring STEM-Based Program to Belizean Schools

Belize City – U.S. Embassy Chargé d’Affaires, a.i. Leyla Moses-Ones, on behalf of the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and Minister of Belize’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, and Technology Hon. Francis Fonseca signed an agreement to implement a Belize-based program that supports educational activities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) Program is an international science and education program that provides students and the public worldwide with the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to our understanding of the Earth system and global environment.

As a science and education program for both primary and secondary schools and the general public around the world, GLOBE brings the scientific method to the classroom and to people of all ages. Student participants are guided by their teachers -- and sometimes by research scientists – to use protocols defined by GLOBE to make local measurements of weather, water quality, soil, and other aspects of Earth science. They upload their data to a global database – which can be found on www.globe.gov or via a smartphone app called “GLOBE Observer” – that can be freely accessed by students, researchers, and the public, which in turn supports Earth science research relevant to NASA.

Dr. Tony Murphy, Director of the GLOBE Implementation Office (GIO) in Boulder, Colorado, U.S.A. stated, “I am sure that participation in The GLOBE Program will bring added value to STEM education in the country of Belize -- engaging students and teachers in learning about the environment and involving citizen scientists too in the collection, analysis, and use of Earth-science data. We are extremely excited to welcome Belize as our 127th GLOBE country.”

Chargé d’Affaires, a.i. Leyla Moses-Ones emphasized, “This agreement is yet another shining example of the strong relationship between the United States and Belize, particularly as we continue expanding cooperation in the area of education exchange. Understanding the complex systems that make up the forest, rivers, and oceans of Belize is critical to insulating the Jewel from climate change and other environmental threats. This program is also a powerful tool for the Ministry of Education as it works to expand STEM opportunities and prepare the children of Belize for the workplaces of the future.”

Hon. Francis Fonseca, Minister of Education, Culture, Science and Technology added, “Today is an exciting day for education. We wish to place on record our deep gratitude to all those partners who have made this possible: the Embassy of the United States of America here in Belize, of course GLOBE and NASA. The GLOBE Program’s and vision fully aligns with the Ministry of Education’s strategic plan to develop science and technology education in Belize. Our Belize Education Strategy Plan states that science and technology resources will be widely available and effectively used to facilitate and improve the quality of teaching, learning, and decision-making.”

Minister Fonseca added, “Through this exciting and innovative program, Belize will be connected to a network of students, teachers, researchers, and scientists from around the world to better understand, sustain and improve our environment. We have therefore an obligation and a duty to educate our people and our students about the tremendous benefits of protecting and preserving our environment for generations to come.”

Dr. Allison Leidner, GLOBE Program Manager at NASA Headquarters in Washington D.C., U.S.A., concluded, “NASA is honored to sponsor The GLOBE Program and pleased to welcome Belize. We look forward to working with Belizean students as they learn about their environment and contribute that knowledge to the worldwide GLOBE community.”

The GLOBE Program is sponsored by NASA and is supported by the United States Department of State, the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Belize joins over 125 countries that have participated in The GLOBE Program since it launched on Earth Day in 1995.

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