



HUMANA
PEOPLE TO PEOPLE **BELIZE**



PRESS RELEASE

Official launch of the Civil Society Organizations participation in the Belize Sustainable Energy Roadmap

Through the Energy Unit in the Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics and e-Governance, the Government of Belize and the European Union (EU) have granted two projects in southern Belize to fulfil the Participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the Belize Sustainable Energy Roadmap. Humana People to People-Belize and Ya'axché Conservation Trust have partnered for the joint launch of their two separate 24-months projects, starting in February of this year.

The official launch took place on Tuesday, February 22, 2022, at Kiki Witz Resort on Mile 46, George Price Highway, Belmopan, Cayo District. The launch was executed in adherence to COVID protocols and with formal endorsement by the Ministry of Health. Invited guests included the project team from the implementing CSOs, representatives from the Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, and E-governance, Ministry of Rural Transformation, and the EU Delegation team.



Figure 1: Left: Christina Garcia, Executive Director of Ya'Axche Conservation Trust; CEO Valentino Shal of Ministry of Rural Transformation
- Right: EU Ambassador Marianne Van Steen; Ishelly Williams Public Relations & Proposal Writer for Humana People to People



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The speakers at the launch included European Union Ambassador, Marianne Van Steen, Ministry of Rural Transformation Community Development, Labour and Local Government CEO Valentino Shal, the Executive Director of Ya'axché, Ms. Christina Garcia and Public Relations / Proposal Writer of Humana People to People Belize, Ishelly Williams – Parchue.

The EU Ambassador Marianne Van Steen: “Sustainable energy is one of the European Union’s key priorities. Guaranteeing universal access to sustainable energy services is fundamental for socioeconomic development and inclusive growth. The productive and domestic use of energy and clean technologies will set the course for developing rural businesses, diversifying income sources for rural families and promote women empowerment.”

Ya'axché Conservation Trust is a grassroots CSO with a vision to promote harmony between nature and human development for the benefit of both. From its inception in 1998, the work of the CSO has been in community outreach and livelihoods in southern Belize, in the area now regarded as the Maya Golden Landscape (MGL). Ya'axché's project *“Reliable and Sustainable Solar Energy Access for the Indigenous Communities of Golden Stream and San Jose, Toledo District, Belize”* main objective is to provide opportunities for improved education and livelihoods while reducing local community environmental impacts within Belize's Maya Golden Landscape (MGL) through renewable and reliable solar-based energy access.

Humana People to People Belize (HPPBZ) is a non-governmental organization registered and operating in Belize, since 2007. The purpose of HPPBZ is to empower and mobilize individuals, families, and communities to reduce poverty and vulnerability through local actions and capacity building. HPPBZ focuses on the implementation of grassroots community development projects with a focus in social and economic inclusion, healthy lifestyles, sustainable agriculture and environment, disaster risk reduction and disaster management, and social entrepreneurship. HPPBZ's project *“Strengthening rural community Organization and Livelihood to Advance Resilience in Southern Belize – SOLAR Southern Belize”* main objective is to increase access and use of renewable energy for rural households, community buildings, and schools in three communities in the Toledo District. This will be done through the provision and installation of solar energy units, the development of community-based businesses, and public awareness.

Over the next two years , the CSOs will be working closely with their beneficiary communities and the GoB stakeholders contributing to the transition into solar-powered technologies investments with the energy sector of Belize. The two CSO projects will be supported with technical assistance from the Energy Unit and experts in the LAIT UP BELIZE! project that is also funded by the European Union to provide technical assistance for capacity building in the energy sector in Belize.

For further information on the respective CSO projects, please contact Ms. Christina Garcia at christina.garcia@yaaxche.org or Ms. Susanne Jensen at susanne.j@humana-belize.org or Mr Ryan Cobb at energy@energy.gov.bz.