

Belize National Sports Policy

*Contributing to the realisation of National Development Goals
HORIZON 2030 through sports (2016 - 2025)*



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A. BACKGROUND

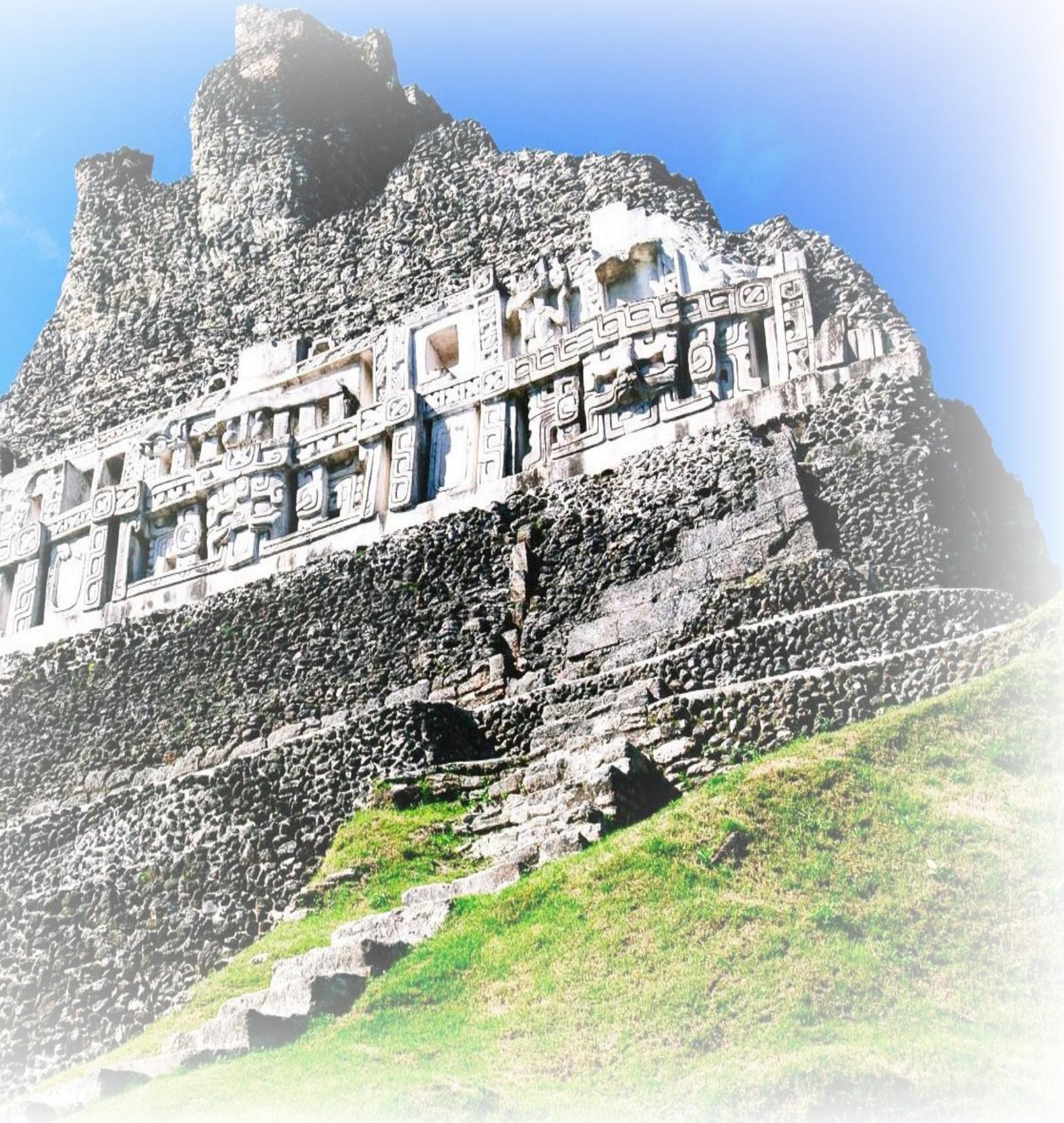
Bordered by Mexico to the north, Guatemala to the south and west, and the Caribbean Sea to the east, Belize is the epitome of natural beauty and raw potential. This Central American nation has a landmass of 8,867 square miles and is inhabited by a relatively small but growing population of just over 330,000. Belize is a diverse society with its people showing ethnic variations including Maya, Mestizo, Garifuna, Creole, East Indian, Chinese, Mennonite, and other groups smaller in number.

Belize has a rich history in sports at the national level and selected sports at the regional and international level. For instance, the Annual Holy Saturday Cross Country Cycling Classic was first held in 1928 when Elston Kerr won the inaugural event. Some eighty-seven years later, the Annual Holy Saturday Cross Country Cycling Classic remains the biggest one-day sporting spectacle in the country. Over the years, the event has seen many changes and many champions from across Belize's participation in regional and international competitions both at the singular and multi-sports games throughout the Americas. Belize's Women's Softball Team dominated the English speaking Caribbean since 1968 when it captured the now defunct Caribbean Amateur Softball Tournament (CAST) for the Hermon Spoerri Trophy and subsequently from 1974 when softball was played for the first time in the XII Central American and Caribbean Games in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

This history of Belize's national and regional accomplishments in the sports arena is indicative of Belize's great potential for the development of sports and also of the potential for sports to continue to contribute and to have an even greater impact on Belize's development as a nation. This Policy was, therefore, developed in recognition of national goals as expressed in Horizon 2030: Planning our future together, vision for Belize. That document clearly articulates the aspirations of Belizeans in the areas of Citizen's Security, Education, Health, Economic Growth, Governance, Environmental Sustainability, and other crosscutting themes such as gender and youth. During the development of this policy, stakeholders explored their vision for sports in Belize against the national development agenda as set forth by Horizon 2030. The stakeholders readily appreciated that sports had the power to impact each of the areas outlined in Horizon 2030 in positive and tangible ways.

The input of stakeholders was gathered through Town Hall meetings where community members were invited to share their views and perspectives of sports in Belize. Community members were guided through a participatory process that included identifying the resources that they had, the potential areas of development needed, and suggestions for achieving their milestones.

From the input of stakeholders, themes were identified as well as the areas in need of development. These became the basis of the policy; and in developing the policy, care was taken to ensure that the policy framework was aligned to the policy standards for sports. What helped this process was



a review of several key documents authored by world leaders in sports including models of best practice from Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States of America as well as success stories from Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

The National Sports Policy is therefore a result of robust consultations, intense research and a commitment to alignment with national development goals. It is guided by a philosophy and belief in the ability to achieve whatever is conceived through a commitment to process, monitoring, evaluating and adjusting along the way. It is imbued with the deep sense of pride in being Belizean and the potential of sports to contribute to and manifest Belize's presence on the world stage. Consequently, stakeholders are determined that the agreed "way forward" be given every opportunity to succeed through a spirit of collaboration and cooperation. Stakeholders also demonstrated an appreciation of the importance of providing critical feedback where necessary so that the development process is advanced in a manner that is positive and progressive. This policy, therefore, seeks to build on past successes and lead Belize toward a new and brighter path in sports. It also seeks to adopt a process approach to creating an enabling environment for the achievement of success by all, and at all levels of sports and recreational engagement.

B. VISION FOR BELIZE: HORIZON 2030 AND PHILOSOPHY OF SPORTS

Our vision for national development, Horizon 2030, sets out a very bold vision for Belize.

By the year 2030, Belize will be:

- an informed, highly educated, healthy and multi-cultural society;
- a place where citizens have a collective identity and are patriotic and proud to be Belizean;
- a place where children and adults value their multi-ethnic, multicultural identity and can showcase multiple cultural and sporting talents;
- technologically advanced with its people capable of using state of the art technology which will be incorporated into production;
- a competitive, debt free, full employment economy supportive of entrepreneurs, small farmers and private sector growth;
- a place where citizens and visitors feel safe and secure and have respect for the rule of law;
- respectful of people's human rights;
- highly democratic and people will participate in the development process;
- a place with modern infrastructure supportive of economic growth;
- a clean sustainably developed environment;
- a place with strong rural communities with a vibrant agricultural base;
- a place with women performing at the highest levels of political leadership;
- a place with a fair, transparent, and accountable governance system operating at all levels of development;

- a place with a strong public sector and civil society organisations that collaborate, are effective and efficient, and tailor their programmes to meet Belize's development goals and objectives, and
- a place with the capacity to strategically engage regional and international partners in development.

Our philosophy of sports that guides this policy is harmonious with the Vision for Belize articulated above. Our philosophy of sports is founded on the recognition of the vital role that sports can play in the holistic development of the individual, the community and the nation. Sports develops the individual physically and mentally, contributes to values and character development, brings people together at community and national levels, and contributes to the development of civic values and a sense of patriotism at the national level. It is for these reasons that sports is seen as an important sector for individual and collective development.

Sports and Physical, Mental and Social Well-being

Physical activity, including sports, can make individuals stronger and healthier. The World Health Organisation defines health as the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Physical activity, such as sports, at an early age stimulates growth, develops coordination, and promotes healthy minds and bodies. Participation in sports is a very good way for maintaining optimum health from childhood to adulthood, as habits learned in childhood are more likely to carry over to adulthood. Individuals who participate in sports, no matter their age, gain strength, endurance, agility, co-ordination and flexibility. Participation in sports is known to reduce the incidence of non-communicable diseases (such as obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure) and improves heart and lung function.

Participation in sports and other physical activities is known to improve cognitive functioning and overall sense of mental well-being. Such participation also reduces stress, including anxiety and depression, improves mood and contributes to a general sense of mental well-being in the youths and adults. It is not surprising that students who participate in sports tend to perform better academically and are less likely to drop out of school. Similarly, adults who participate in sports or physical activity have improved cognitive function.

Human beings are social beings. As human beings then, we have need for self-acceptance and self-respect, acceptance by others (belonging, affiliation and support), mutuality, recognition by peers/others and love. Participation in sports or exercise develops self-esteem and self-concept, friendship and camaraderie, cooperation and teamwork skills, leadership skills, appreciation of different abilities, sense of belonging,

social interaction skills, individual and team goal-setting, self-discipline, patience and persistence, and resilience through sharing of positive and negative experiences. All of these result in an overall sense of social well-being for the individual and the group.

Sports and Character and Moral Development (Spiritual Well-being)

Character and moral development is a subset of mental and social well-being already described that deserves special mention. Participation in sports and exercise contributes to character and moral development in that it teaches about respect, honesty and fair play. Learning to follow rules and respecting and accepting teammates, opponents and one's self are important lessons about learning to live together and with one's self. Competition in general can teach individuals about respecting self and others, confidence, and managing stress. Additionally, taking on the role of leader on a team can teach leadership while experiencing the role of a graceful winner or loser teaches about humility.

Sports and Community

Sports has the power to bring people together. It can therefore play a vital role in promoting community cohesion and community mindedness. In this regard, sports is an important vehicle to engage the energies of the youth positively and to provide a positive outlet for their expression of their talents and self-actualisation. Similarly, sports also serves as an important tool for the integration of senior citizens, the disadvantaged and the differently abled into the community life.

Sports and National Development

All of the above ways in which sports contribute to the complete physical, mental and social well-being of individuals and communities represent the contribution to national development. In addition, however, sports also contribute to national development in other ways. Sports is not merely a pastime but also a means for personal and professional advancement. For this reason, sports should be integrated into the national culture and lifestyle of all Belizeans regardless of age, gender, physical or mental ability, social status, ethnicity or political or religious convictions.

The development and promotion of sports represent a viable economic opportunity for investment. The sports business can generate income and employment from spending by nationals and tourists alike who enjoy active participation in sports and/or for entertainment.

Still, just as sports allows for individuals to gain recognition, nations derive recognition from their achievements and accomplishments. Participation in sports on the regional and/or international level provides opportunity for such recognition of individual nations among other nations. Free and open participation of nations on the basis of equal status in regional and/or international sports competitions helps to engender a sense of sovereignty. National accomplishments and achievements in such arenas contribute to national pride, cultural identity and promote civic values.



C. MAJOR THEMES

In examining the Belize sports context it is easy to see the philosophy espoused above exemplified to a significant degree. It is the intent of this policy to build on the assets that already exist in the Belize sports context.

In Belize, sports is played in communities across the country for leisure, recreational and competitive purposes. Throughout the country, tournaments and competitions in various disciplines - football, basketball, volleyball, cycling, just to name a few- are organised regularly with participation of both elite and non-elite athletes and the engagement of sports fans. In addition, there are basketball pick-up games on basketball courts at community level, weekend warrior cycling races, cricket in rural Belize District, and organised softball competitions at the rural level. This policy recognises the strong tradition of sports played for leisure and recreation and friendly competition at the community level across Belize and seeks to build on this asset for promoting lifelong participation in sports and active healthy lifestyles. At the same time, this policy seeks to capitalise on this asset to build harmonious, resilient communities founded on the values of discipline, fair play, respect for each other, teamwork, and perseverance and resilience.

Furthermore, achievement in sports in the regional and international arena has always contributed to Belizean national pride. The achievements of the National Women's Softball Team of 1974 are still celebrated today! In recent times, the participation of national teams in various sports in the regional arena stirs much patriotic support and pride among Belizeans. The Jaguars' (The National Football Team) performance as it moved through the qualification process for the World Cup quest as well as that of the National Basketball Team of Belize at the COCABA in the past, especially when

it recently captured a silver medal championship in Cancun, captivated the attention of the Belizean citizenry and fueled their patriotism. The same is true in every other discipline where Belize's athletes have represented us well. It is therefore recognised that sports is an effective tool for demonstrating individual and team excellence and building national pride and patriotism.

Within this context, and given the sports philosophy adopted in this policy, three major intersecting, integrated and mutually reinforcing themes emerge for sports development in Belize. These are: (1) **Sports for All**; (2) **Sports for Peace and Development**; and (3) **Sports Excellence**. The three thematic areas are elaborated below:

Sports for All:

Sports Development begins with sports for all - regardless of age, gender, physical or mental ability, social status, ethnicity and political or religious convictions. This thematic area focuses on the development of lifelong active, healthy, and happy citizens from early life to senior years. Moreover, it is based upon the recognition that physical activity contributes to complete physical, mental and social well-being and overall quality of life, which is the ultimate result envisioned in this area.

Sports for Development and Peace:

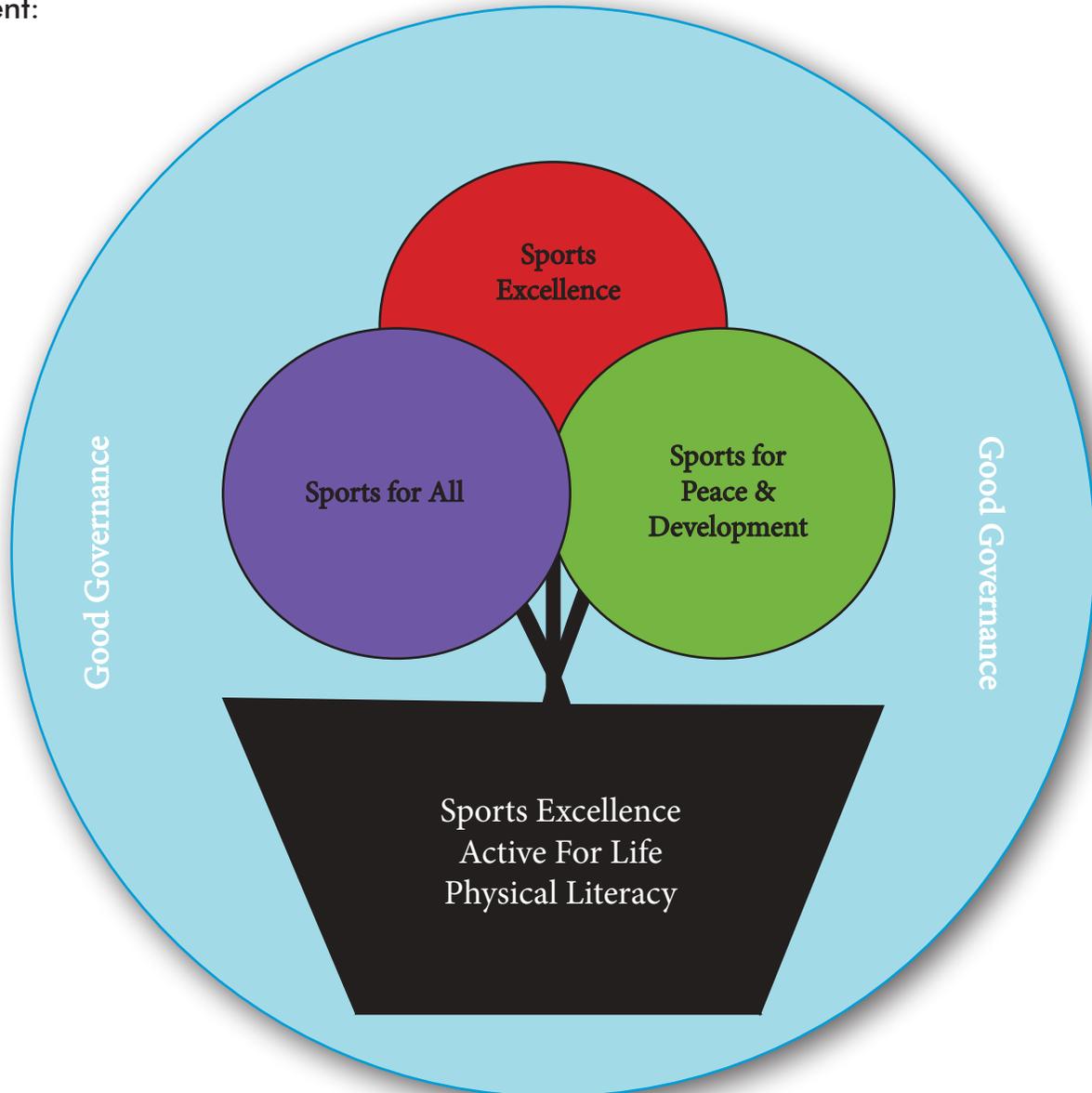
This area focuses on the use of sports to advance individual, community and national development. It builds on the first area of developing lifelong active, healthy and happy citizens. Furthermore, it harnesses the power of sports as a vehicle for bringing people together and for inculcating such values as discipline, fair play, respect for each other, friendly competition, teamwork, drive ('playing hard') and perseverance towards the achievement of objectives on personal, team, community and national levels. It also takes advantage of sports as a vehicle for building physical, mental, and social resilience. This area could also be described as *'a people that plays together, stays together, grows and develops together!'*

Sports Excellence:

The achievement of sports excellence is the dream and goal of every athlete and the joy of every citizen. However, excellence occurs when several factors come together and "where preparation and opportunity meet" (Unser, B. 1968). The Government of Belize is committed to the achievement of sports excellence by Belizean athletes and as such will work on several levels to contribute to this potential. On the one hand, sports excellence is exhibited through the attainment of consistent elite performances achieving individual or team best as a result of a coordinated and scientific approach to technical, physical and mental preparation. On the other hand, in the competitive arena, it is about winning - always bringing your best. Put simply, it is about consistently performing like champions. In international competition then it is about making *Belize A Winning Nation!*

Developments within these three thematic areas will flourish only in the context of an enabling environment. Such an environment entails two factors: (1) a strategic and effective model for developing lifelong active citizens and for developing high performance athletes and (2) good governance of the sports sector.

The following graph depicts the relationship between these thematic areas and the enabling environment:



**The Relationship Between Thematic Areas and
The Enabling Factors (Good Governance and Sports Development Approach)**

The relationship between the three thematic areas, the strategic approach to sports development and good governance of the sector can be metaphorically likened to that of a potted plant. The three branches of the plant bearing fruit are Sports for All, Sports for Peace and Development, and Sports Excellence. The soil in which the plant is rooted is the sports development model and the air surrounding the plant represents good governance of the sector. Together the 'soil' and the 'air' are what nurture the plant to bear fruit.

Through this policy, Belize adopts the Canadian Model for Long-Term Athlete Development for developing active citizens for life and high performance athletes. This approach could be considered the 'root' of the **Sports for All, Sports for Peace and Development and Sports Excellence** as already described. The following graphic represents this model:



Sports/Athlete Development Model

As shown in the graphic, the model begins with a good foundation in physical literacy and culminates in lifelong physical activity and/or high athletic performance. This is facilitated by a two-pronged approach to sports delivery. On the one hand, sports delivery is facilitated through Physical Education in schools while on the other hand it is also facilitated through community based sports (clubs) and National Sporting Organisations.

Complementing this model for sports development is good governance. This includes an effective regulatory and institutional framework that seeks to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number of citizens.



D. VISION AND GOALS

Based on the philosophy of sports espoused above and the thematic areas identified therefrom and from the practice of sports in the Belizean context and based on national consultations held, the vision for sports in Belize is:

“A healthy and happy Belize where sports contributes to National Pride and is interwoven into the fabric of society. A space where sports is effectively administered at all levels and all citizens are given the opportunity to participate to their ability in safe environments.”

Feedback from national consultations with National Sports Organisations, Belize Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association, the National Secondary School Sports Association, Sports Coordinators, Chamber of Commerce representatives, and members of communities throughout Belize have pointed to the need for:

- (i) increased and improved facilities and infrastructure;
- (ii) trained and professional sports delivery personnel;
- (iii) increased opportunities for sports participation and recreational physical activity;
- (iv) educational opportunities through sports; and
- (v) a relentless pursuit of excellence through sports.



These needs have been distilled into the following goals for sports in Belize in order to realise the vision set.

***B**uilding the capacity of sports practitioners to reflect knowledge, skills, and attitudes that lead to growth and development of Sports.*

***E**xcellence will be the hallmark and standard to which we aspire.*

***L**ifelong participation in sports will be encouraged.*

***I**nfrastructure development will be a key focus as we ensure that we create safe environments and suitable spaces.*

***Z**ero tolerance will be adopted towards issues such as doping, match fixing, and abuse of children in sports.*

***E**veryone's health and well-being is the ultimate goal of the Government of Belize.*

E. COMPONENTS OF THE POLICY

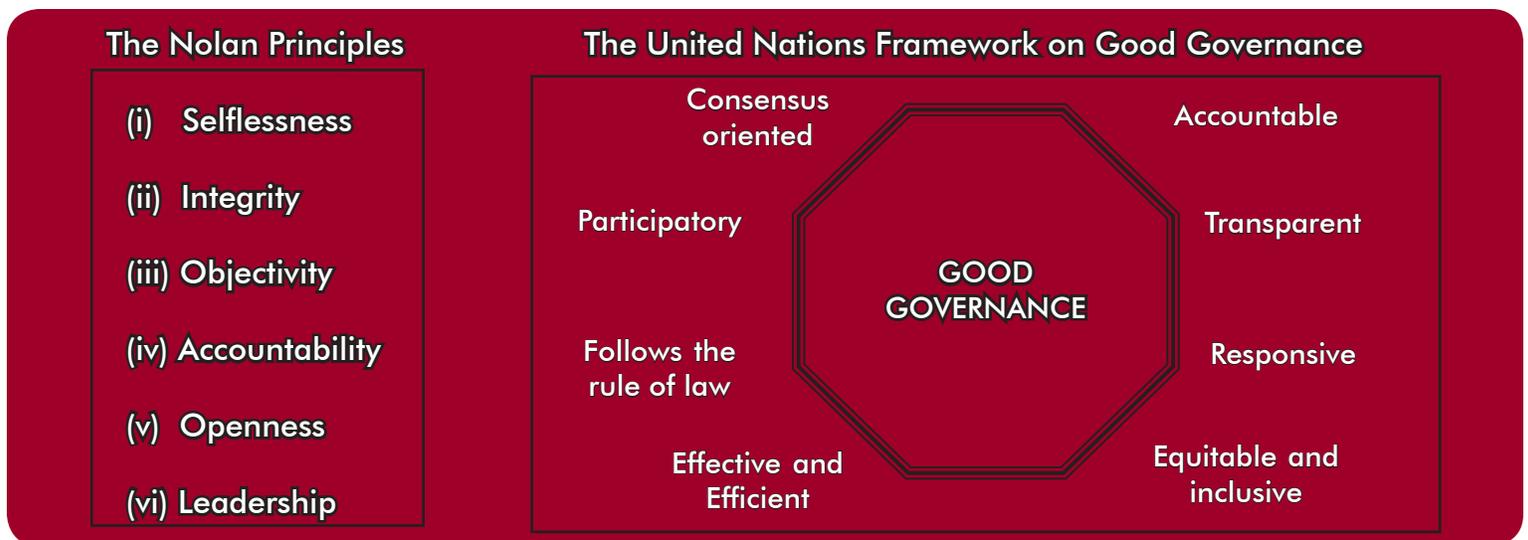
In light of the philosophy, major themes, the vision and the goals, the major components of this policy are elaborated below.

1. Governance, Administration and Management

Democracy, transparency and accountability are among the fundamental tenets of good governance in any given industry and therefore shall also be hallmarks of the sports sector. The effective organisation and development of sports requires effective governance systems and structures and effective and efficient management skills. While such a responsibility lies principally with national sporting organisations and affiliates, there is a need for a collective and coordinated effort among all stakeholders to achieve higher standards in the administration, management and overall governance of sports. Key recommendations of this policy in this regard are therefore:

(a) The adherence to Good Governance Principles

There shall be a culture of good governance in Belizean sports. This shall be done through the institutionalising of the principles of good governance. Among these principles shall be the *Nolan Principles* and the United Nations Framework that defines governance in terms of eight (8) characteristics each of which contribute to a notion of “good” when present.



(b) A strengthened Regulatory Framework for the Sports Sector

The practice of good governance in the Sports Sector shall be enabled by a strengthened regulatory framework (the proposed Belize Sports (Amendment) Act). The strengthened regulatory framework will provide regulations for:

- (i) The National Sports Council to act as the umbrella body with whom all National Sporting Organisations and affiliates shall be registered and to whom all such organisations shall be accountable, through appropriate systems of accountability, for the management of sports on behalf of Belizean citizens.

- (ii) Strengthening of transparency and accountability systems for National Sporting Organisations and affiliates including financial management and other systems for open and fair management of such bodies and sporting disciplines.
- (iii) Strengthening of the role of the National Sports Council in the support and monitoring of National Sporting Organisations towards building the administrative capacity of National Sporting Organisations and affiliates for effective day-to-day administration of sports.
- (iv) The establishment of systems for record keeping and data management by National Sporting Organisations and affiliates.
- (v) The establishment of a National Sports Disputes Tribunal to serve as the primary dispute resolution body for the Belizean sports sector and shall adopt, mutatis mutandis, the Code of Sports Related Arbitration and the Mediation Rules of the Court of Arbitration for Sports based in Lausanne, Switzerland.
- (vi) The establishment of the National Anti-Doping Organisation of Belize which shall operate in accordance with the current edition of the World Anti-Doping Code and any amended version of the Code. The Agency shall also comply with the 2005 UNESCO Convention against Doping in Sports, which was ratified by Belize in October 2011.

(c) Strengthened Sports Administration and Management

The principles of good governance will be backed up by the enabling regulatory framework as well as the strengthening of the capacity of the National Sports Council to administer and collaborate with other stakeholders to enhance the administrative capacity functioning of National Sporting Organisations and affiliates.

(d) Government As Lead Agency

The Government, through the Ministry responsible for Sports, shall be the primary facilitator of the practice of sports by participants at all levels, whether recreational, amateur, or professional. This facilitation process, as elaborated further under this section of the policy, shall include making available:

- (i) improved facilities
- (ii) increased number of facilities
- (iii) access to international competitions
- (iv) training and certification of coaches, physical education teachers and other support personnel

2. Finance and Sponsorship

As is the case in all sectors, finance and sponsorship are vital requirements. Availability of financial resources continues to be constraint for widespread participation in sports and for its development. Therefore, there is a need to mobilise financial resources in support of sports development. In this regard, the following are to be pursued:

- (a) The private sector and national sporting organisations must be encouraged to form mutually

beneficial and collaborative relationships that can help realise the viability of sports as well as the economic value in the sports sector;

- (b) The identification and development of sporting disciplines as viable economic opportunities;
- (c) National Sporting Organisations and affiliates shall develop and implement strategic plans that include the mobilisation and effective and efficient management of financial resources.
- (d) National Sporting Organisations and affiliates will undertake fundraising programmes which will contribute to the financing of their activities.
- (e) The encouragement of greater financial assistance for sports by the private sector through the provision of incentives;
- (f) The prioritisation of the allocation of resources to sports by the Government with a view to phased increase in the allocation to the Ministry with responsibility for Sports and National Sports Council.

3. Training and Development

The raising of national sports standards and the efficient and effective implementation of sports programmes requires that practitioners (athletes, trainers, officials, and other sports professionals) have opportunities for training and development. As such, focus must be placed on the development of human resources in the sports sector. The following are key policy directions in this regard:

(a) Physical Education and Sports

At the core of such training and development shall be the physical education and sports programmes in schools at various levels (further elaborated under the section Sports in Education).

(b) Talent Development and Identification through a League System and Emergent Talent Programme

In addition to physical education and sports in schools, the Ministry with responsibility for Sports, the National Sports Council and National Sporting Organisations shall collaborate to develop a parallel system of sports delivery and development through a league system of clubs at various levels, from fundamentals right up to high performance and professional levels in each discipline.

Embedded in this system shall be an Emergent Talent Programme (ETP). In order to develop Belizean athletes to attain the highest levels of their sport, there must be a system of talent identification. It is proposed that National Sporting Organisations will be invited to identify and recommend athletes who meet specified standards to access support under the ETP. In order to continue in this pool of government-supported programmes, athletes will be required to achieve and maintain defined standards. These programmes will be built and executed in accordance with the triarchic theory of achievement, which focuses on physical, technical and mental preparation. These programmes will focus on developing skills, attitudes and behaviours that will enable participants to develop in the

“training to train” phase.

(c) Technical Support

The Ministry with responsibility for Sports and the National Sports Council shall work collaboratively to establish a programme for the provision of technical support to approved National Sporting Organisations and affiliates based on an agreed criterion (where necessary and feasible, the assistance of regional and international partners shall be sought);

(d) Scholarships

Scholarship opportunities (whether through Government or other partners) for sports should be pursued to expose athletes to higher levels of performance and for professional development through education;

(e) Training

The Ministry with responsibility for Sports, the National Sports Council and National Sporting Organisations shall collaborate to:

- (i) provide training for officials to enhance their capacity to officiate and administer sporting activities;
- (ii) acquire and develop resource material such as manuals, coaching kits and electronic aids, that will assist in improving the technical knowledge and skills of athletes, officials, trainers and other sports professionals alike; and
- (iii) identify and develop programmes that would expose national sporting representatives to specialised personal development activities to assist with their overall development.

4. Programme Development

The effective implementation of this policy through relevant and effective programmes requires a focus on the development and implementation of strategic plans and work plans that reflect a balance of the needs of athletes, sporting bodies and the development plan of the Government of Belize. The following are therefore necessary pre-conditions for this:

(a) *Communication*

There is the need to ensure that there is more effective communication between all stakeholders particularly between the Ministry/National Sports Council and National Sporting Organisations and affiliates;

(b) *Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation*

There is a need for a National Sports Development Strategy and Action Plan that is informed by the philosophy, vision, principles and goals of this policy. Such plans should be developed in consultation with National Sports Organisations and affiliates and should be

achievable/realistic. Each National Sporting Organisation should develop similar strategic and action plans for their respective disciplines. These should be aligned to the national plan. Plans should include resource mobilisation as well as effective and efficient management of financial resources, and the development of human resources. Importantly, plans should establish clear and measurable objectives to be achieved so that these can be measured and evaluated through monitoring and evaluation;

(c) Ministry with responsibility for Sports and the National Sports Council

The Government will provide support for the strengthening of the Ministry with responsibility for Sports and the National Sports Council to effectively fulfill their roles in the development of sports;

(d) Inclusiveness/non-discriminatory practices

Sporting activities should be inclusive and non-discriminatory and allow for mass participation of the public.

5. Media and Promotion

The promotion of sports requires the effective dissemination of information. To do this requires both the collection and archiving of information as well as wider coverage and promotion of sporting activities. To effect this, the following shall be pursued:

- (i) The establishment of a unit or committee that will begin the process of capturing the sports history of Belize, including sports statistics and records and have the responsibility to manage and develop this information under the joint mandate of the Ministry responsible for Sports and the Ministry with responsibility for Culture and History.
- (ii) Increasing the publicity and exposure to sporting activities by Government and private media houses to promote the pursuits and achievement of our sports personalities and to foster public interest, support and participation.
- (iii) Use of public media to promote sports as a healthy lifestyle and encourage participation by all.
- (iv) Development and implementation of marketing and promotional activities by National Sporting Organisations and affiliates to increase and sustain spectator attendance at sporting events.
- (v) Use of public media to educate the public about rules and skills in different sports disciplines.

6. Sports in Education

Belize has adopted the Canadian Sports Development Mode. This begins with a solid foundation in Physical Education in schools where most children are likely to have their first encounter with and exposure to physical education and playing sports. This policy therefore adopts the CARICOM Framework for Physical Education and the International Charter of Physical Education and Sports (UNESCO 1978). The delivery of sports through education in the school system is therefore a major vehicle for developing lifelong active, healthy and happy citizens and for developing high

performance athletes. The delivery of sports through physical education in the education system is complemented by the delivery of sports through the proposed league system and Emergent Talent Programme. In advancing the delivery of sports through physical education in the school system, the following are key policy mandates:

- (a) Physical Education shall be an integral part of the school curriculum at all levels.
- (b) All Physical Education Teachers shall be trained in the delivery of Physical Education at their particular level.
- (c) Students are encouraged to actively participate in sports in school and league clubs at the appropriate level.
- (d) Promotion of sports as viable career opportunity, both in terms of becoming professional athletes as well as technical and professional sports personnel.
- (e) Incorporate sports disciplines in the secondary school curriculum and identify centers of excellence for the delivery of such disciplines and the development of emerging talent.



7. Infrastructure

In order to promote public participation in sports and the aspiration to and achievement of high performance standards, attention must be paid to sports infrastructure. In this regard, the Government of Belize, in collaboration with other stakeholders, will support the development of suitable sports infrastructure. These facilities will be developed in strict accordance with international standards for the activities for which they are created and follow international and national guidelines for tendering and award. Infrastructure will be developed in a strategic manner in close consultation with the relevant National Sporting Organisations and other national and international stakeholders. In keeping with this the following are key policy directions:

- (a) The establishment of more facilities of an acceptable standard to allow for the development of a broader range of sports disciplines.
- (b) The provision of adequate recreational spaces in schools, communities and housing developments.
- (c) The incentivising of private investment in sports infrastructure and management.
- (d) The establishment of a system for effective management and maintenance of sporting facilities including, in particular, public-private partnerships.

8. Rewards and Incentives

In addition to other factors, the success of sports teams and athletes (sports personalities) is very much dependent upon the support that they receive from sporting bodies, the private sector, the government and the general public/citizenry. It is therefore important to create an atmosphere in which athletes are supported and inspired to achieve excellence for self, for team and ultimately for country. The Policy therefore supports a system of recognition and reward in all aspects of sports including administration, coaching, and athletic performance in order to sustain and promote excellence. Therefore the following shall be policy imperatives:

(a) National Awards and Recognition

The National Sports Council is charged with developing and implementing a scheme of incentives and rewards based on agreed standards of achievement. The National Sports Council is charged with managing a process of acknowledging achievements through sports at a National Sporting event. Consideration shall be given to:

- (i) A National Sports Awards, including the development of discipline specific Halls of Fame, designed to give recognition to sports personalities and administrators by the government, National Sporting Organisations, the Private Sector and community.

(b) Support and Incentives for National Sports Representatives

National representatives and representative teams be given free access to all facilities to prepare for approved competitions. Furthermore, employers shall make provision for national representatives, including administrators and officials, to train and represent Belize without loss of earnings, status or benefits.

(c) Elite Assistance Programme (EAP)

Maintaining international standards and improving at the highest level requires total commitment and focus. The EAP will support athletes at the “training to compete” and “training to win” phases of athletic development. The pool of athletes supported at this level must achieve and maintain international standards of performance in order to join and remain in this pool. The National Sporting Organisations will be charged with developing these standards, including anti-doping standards, for their respective sport in collaboration with the National Sports Council.

9. Regional and International Cooperation

The Government of Belize shall work closely with its Caribbean neighbours in establishing and entering into bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements that will offer mutual benefit to the sports sectors of the various CARICOM and the Central American Integration System (SICA) member states.

As a signatory member of CARICOM, the Government of Belize shall also be an advocate on behalf of the Caribbean in pursuing the support of CARICOM in creating an appropriate regional framework for the Caribbean that facilitates:

- a. the resolution of sports-related disputes,
- b. the protection of sports-based intellectual property,
- c. the exchange of skilled labour and the freedom of movement of goods and services with the goal of bringing revenue to the sports sectors of CARICOM Member States.

In particular, Belize will solicit the support of CARICOM as a provider of regional strategic direction, policy frameworks, sports-related resources, including but not limited to, equipment, facilities, and skilled personnel.

10. The Business of Sports

The global sports industry has quickly become one of the world’s largest income generators, representing approximately three percent (3%) of the Gross Domestic Product of the European Union and employing millions on the continent of Europe alone. International Federations can potentially accrue significant income through the hosting of mega events, with the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup leading the way.

Global players have now accepted the reality of sports as a business and have sought creative ways to tap into this very lucrative industry, Belize shall seek to develop its sports business sector primarily through commercial rights exploitation and sports tourism. In this regard, the following initiatives are to be pursued:

(a) Exploitation of Commercial Rights

Commercial rights are valuable rights and they arise in various contexts within the sports sector. The main sources of revenue for sports rights holders are Broadcasting, Sponsorship, Ticket Sales and Merchandising. In this regard, the proposed Belize Sports (Amendment) Act will provide for the Ministry with responsibility for Sports, in consultation with The National Sports Council, to appoint a Special Committee to establish a plan that incorporates the following processes:

- (i) The creation of a database of sports rights holders in Belize. These rights shall include, but not be limited to, copyright, trademark rights, database rights, image rights and sponsorship rights.
- (ii) The systematic partnership between commercial partners and sports brands in Belize including, but not limited to, the country's elite-level athletes and most marketable sports teams.
- (iii) The strategic pursuit of broadcasting rights to cover the most pursued sports content in the Caribbean, Latin America and Central America.

(b) Sports Tourism

Revenue generation through sports tourism is connected to the Rights Exploitation Process. In order to maximize the potential to realise this, the following must be executed:

- (i) Compile all data from sports events in Belize and the revenue generated from them.
- (ii) Create an event bidding manual proposing future events to be hosted by Belize, the target audiences as well as the revenue targets from such hosting.

11. Doping in Sports

On August 26, 2004, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) acknowledged Belize as the 150th nation to sign the Copenhagen Declaration on anti-doping in sports. The signing of this declaration was Belize's affirmation that it will promote a level playing field for athletes and will contribute to the eradication of cheating in sports and also prevent the health risks to those who would engage in doping to gain an unfair advantage. The Government of Belize adopts the World Anti-Doping Agency's Code and its attendant, policies, guides, and standards, and all subsequent amended versions as the guide for all anti-doping activities that will be undertaken within Belize or upon Belizean athletes who compete in other jurisdictions. The continuance of the National Anti-Doping Organisation of Belize (NADO), as currently comprised, and its adoption of the WADO guidelines is therefore affirmed in this policy. During the lifespan of this Policy, the Government of Belize commits

to review and structure the National Anti-Doping Organisation in accordance with the World Anti-Doping Agency's guidelines as necessary. Additionally, the National Anti-Doping Organisation of Belize will be a member of the Central American Regional Anti-Doping Organisation and will work in close collaboration in the execution of its duties. As a member of the Regional Anti-Doping Organisation, the National Anti-Doping Organisation agrees to be guided by its statutes and to meet all financial and other obligations. Promoting drug-free sports and a healthy and fair environment for Belizeans - both within and outside of their borders - is imperative.

12. Child Protection and Safeguarding Sports

Playing sports is a great way for children and young people to have fun, develop friendship, learn new skills, and stay active and healthy. This policy recognises that every child and young person has the right to participate in an environment that is safe and free from harm whether participating in recreational or competitive sports at the school, community, club, national or international level. An ongoing research project being conducted by the Caribbean Sport and Development Agency reports that of over 200 respondents from seven Caribbean territories:

- Ninety-two percent (92%) of survey participants had observed or were aware of emotional abuse toward children in their sports environments;
- Seventy-two percent (72%) of survey participants had observed or were aware of incidences of physical abuse being perpetrated on children in the sports environment;
- Nineteen percent (19%) of survey participants had observed or were aware of incidences of sexual harm being perpetrated on children in the sports environment; and
- Thirty-six percent (36%) of perpetrators were reported to be teammates or peers while 29 percent (29%) were reported as being committed by coaches.

It is the aim of this policy that a safe, friendly and respectful environment will be provided for all children, young people and adults to come together to learn, have fun and participate in sports at school, in the community, in a sports club/league and at the national or international level.

The Ministry with responsibility for Sports and the National Sports Council shall collaborate with the Ministry of Human Development and all National Sports Organisations for them to develop policies and practices to Safeguard and Protect Children in Sports in accordance with the International Standards for Safeguarding and Protection of Children in Sports. The Government of Belize, through the National Sports Council, shall work with all stakeholders to become compliant through a systematic process.

Persons to whom the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy apply



F. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Stakeholders must conduct their duties in a coordinated and coherent manner if vision and goals of this policy are to be realised. The following is a list of the ten (10) major Governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies and organisations that will support the implementation of this Sports Policy, and a summary of their attendant Strategic Plans. This list is not exhaustive and the Ministry responsible for Sports through the National Sports Council welcomes the collaborative participation and support of, and reserves the right to collaborate with other sporting bodies that are willing to abide by the principles of and support the implementation of this policy.

1. The Government of Belize

The work of the Government in the sports sector is largely manifested through the work of the Ministry responsible for Sports and the National Sports Council. Therefore, the Government,

- (a) through the Ministry of Finance, shall allocate an annual subvention to the Ministry responsible for Sports and to the National Sports Council with a view to the phased increase in subvention;
- (b) through relevant Ministries and their programmes, shall encourage the total participation in sports;
- (c) through the Ministry of Education, the Ministry responsible for Sports and other relevant Government and Non-Government agencies, shall create an environment where physical education and sports are integral to and prominent in the educational experiences of our youth and in which youth are encouraged to excel in the sports arena as well as the academic arena;
- (d) shall individually or in conjunction with other relevant non-government bodies (including the private sector) establish and maintain recreation and sporting facilities;
- (e) through the Ministry responsible for Sports and the National Sports Council shall work collaboratively with non-governmental and other agencies and local, regional and international donors and partners to provide appropriate and feasible technical and financial assistance to all levels of organised sporting organisations.

2. The Ministry responsible for Sports

The work of the Ministry is to support and work collaboratively with the National Sports Council, other Government Ministries and agencies in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes relating to Sports and Recreation. In this regard, the Ministry with responsibility for Sports shall:

- (a) Support the National Sports Council;
- (b) Work with the National Sports Council, National Sporting Organisations and affiliates in mobilisation of resources including the setting up of a National Sports Fund guided by the highest fiduciary principles;

- (c) Work along with the National Sports Council, National Sporting Organisations and affiliates and the private sector to establish and maintain sports and recreational facilities;
- (d) Work with the National Sports Council and National Sporting Organisations and affiliates to establish financial, organisational and administrative criteria by which National Sporting Organisations and affiliates at all levels may apply to receive support;
- (e) Work with the National Sports Council and National Sporting Organisations to establish league systems of clubs, from fundamentals right up to high performance and professional levels in each discipline.

3. The National Sports Council

In carrying out its mandate, the National Sports Council shall work in partnership with the Ministry with responsibility for Sports, other government ministries and agencies and National Sports Organisations and affiliates for the development of sports in Belize in accordance with this Policy. In addition to its mandate as laid out in the Sports Act (CAP 46, Laws of Belize) and reproduced below from (a) to (j), the National Sports Council shall be specifically charged with responsibilities (k) to (n):

- (a) to promote, develop and improve the knowledge and practice of sports in the interest of the social well-being of and the enjoyment of leisure by Belizeans and for this purpose to appoint Commissioners for all or any sports;
- (b) to encourage, in co-operation with the sporting organisations, the attainment of high standards in sports;
- (c) to foster, support or undertake, in co-operation with the Ministry of Sports, the provision of facilities for sports;
- (d) to assist and where possible develop proper coaching schemes which shall include the training of suitable personnel for all branches of sports;
- (e) to carry out or to encourage and support research and studies into matters concerning sports and to disseminate knowledge and advise on these matters;
- (f) to encourage participation in sporting events abroad by individuals and teams from Belize;
- (g) to own, establish, develop, improve, manage, maintain and take proper control of sporting facilities granted to or secured by the Council and to supervise sporting events to which the public is admitted upon the payment of any direct or indirect fee;
- (h) subject to the approval of the Minister, to borrow funds for the purposes of the business of the Council and to make grants or loans upon and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by the Minister;
- (i) to carry on any sporting or sports related activity for the promotion of youth development; and
- (j) to advise the Minister on any matters concerned directly or indirectly with the foregoing.
- (k) to establish and maintain a management information system to collect data and

- generate statistics on sports in Belize;
- (l) in conjunction with National Sporting Organisations and affiliates and the Ministry responsible for Culture and History, to establish and maintain a system for documenting Belize's Sports History, archiving of sports memorabilia and media;
 - (m) in conjunction with National Sporting Organisations and affiliates and the Ministry responsible for Culture and History, to establish and maintain a system for the establishment of a National Sports Hall of Fame;
 - (n) in conjunction with the Ministry with responsibility for Sports, monitor the sports sector and ensure compliance by National Sporting Organisations and affiliates with applicable laws, rules, regulations and standards.

4. The Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all Belizeans are given an opportunity to acquire those knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for their own personal development and for full and active participation in the development of the nation. Given the contribution of sports to individual, community and national development, the Ministry of Education shall:

- (a) ensure that Health Education, Physical Education and Sports form a part of the curriculum in schools, and in particular that sports disciplines be incorporated into the curriculum of secondary schools and that centres of excellence for the delivery of such disciplines be identified for the development of emerging talent;
- (b) ensure inclusiveness in the participation of sports regardless of age, gender, physical or mental ability, social status, ethnicity or political or religious convictions;
- (c) ensure, in collaboration with the National Sports Council, that Teacher Education Institutions prepare teachers to deliver Health Education, Physical Education and Sports in our schools through development of appropriate certificate, diploma or other programmes; and
- (d) collaborate with the National Sports Council, representatives from National Sporting Organisations, duly constituted elementary and secondary school sports organisations in the implementation of sports programmes and competitions for schools.

5. The Ministry of Finance

The role of the Ministry of Finance is to work with the Ministry with responsibility for Sports in the allocation of appropriate budgetary resources, including the development of a plan for the phased increase in the budgetary allocation to the Ministry with responsibility for Sports and the National Sports Council, for the implementation of programmes in keeping with this policy and the National Sports Strategic Plan.

6. The Ministry of Health

One of the main goals of this Policy is to promote an active, healthy and happy citizenry through sports and physical activity. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry with responsibility for Sports shall work together on matters relating to the promotion of an active society and the use of sports and physical activity to address the scourge of chronic non-communicable diseases.

7. Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of Tourism

The Ministry of Trade and Industry shall collaborate with the Ministry with responsibility for Sports and the National Sports Council towards the development of the economic potential of the sports sector in Belize through the exploitation of commercial rights and the identification of potential investors in the sports sector whether in ownership of teams, construction and operation of facilities and/or the management of existing facilities through public/private partnerships. The Ministry responsible for Sports shall work with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Trade and Industry to develop and implement appropriate incentives for the private sector to encourage financial support for and investment in sports.

Belize, with its favourable climate and diverse topography, provides a unique opportunity to use sports to generate income through sports tourism. The country can achieve this by attracting regional and international competitions; by promoting Belize as a training destination, and by wooing the adventure sports tourists, through water sports, nature trails, and visits to natural sites and indigenous events. The Ministry responsible for Sports, through the National Sports Council, will collaborate with the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Trade and Industry to develop strategic and action plans through which the economic benefits of sports tourism can be realised.

8. The Belize Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association

The Belize Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (BOCGA) shall be recognised as the administrative body for all Olympic Sports and the sporting disciplines included in the schedule of the Commonwealth Games. The BOCGA shall operate in accordance with the Olympic Charter 2013 and subsequent adaptations in compliance with its constitution and sanctioned versions. This administrative body shall have the right to approve the selection of national teams to represent Belize at games sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee and the Commonwealth Games Federation, in conjunction with respective National Federation in accordance with agreed policies, selection criteria and processes in a transparent manner.

9. National Sporting Organisations

There shall be one recognised National Sporting Organisation for each sporting discipline. Collectively, these Organisations shall be the official bodies to administer their respective sport, based on the financial, administrative and organisational standards established by the Ministry

responsible for Sports in consultation with the National Sports Council and in accordance with established policies, laws, regulations, rules and procedures. This Policy recognises the critical role of National Sporting Organisations in the administration of sports in Belize and acknowledges that National Sporting Organisations shall:

- be autonomous bodies in matters relating to the administration of their sports;
- comply with all relevant policies, laws, regulations, rules and procedures, not withstanding their autonomy;
- shall, in accordance with transparent policies, processes and criteria, have the sole right to select national teams to represent Belize at Tournaments and Championships conducted under the jurisdiction of their respective International Federations;
- collaborate with the Ministry responsible for Sports through the National Sports Council for the advancement of their respective sport in alignment with national priorities;
- maintain management informations systems with respect to their discipline and submit data to the National Sports Council for the compilation and analysis of the sports sector for diagnosis, planning and monitoring and evaluation purposes;
- uphold the highest fiduciary standards in providing annual reports, annual externally audited financial reports and any other required documentation to the National Sports Council of other agencies as part of their reporting responsibility (there shall be appropriate disincentives and consequences for non-compliance with reporting requirements);
- work to establish standards and operate in accordance with best practice in administration, coach development, athlete development and officiating;
- establish and administer sports deveopment programmes for communities across Belize;
- develop and implement talent identification and development strategies and programmes;
- work to mobilise resources by accessing grants, hosting events, and securing sponsorships and other financial and technical resources;
- work collaboratively with the National Anti-Doping Organisation of Belize to manage a registered testing pool, testing and results;
- adopt a 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Sports Policy' and develop approaches in collaboration with the National Sports Council and the Ministry of Human Development to meet compliance with the International Standards for Safeguarding and Protection of Children in Sports.

10. Community Sporting Organisations/Non-Governmental Organisations

Community Sporting Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations desirous of accessing support from the National Sports Council must be registered with the National Sports Council and be in compliance with all relevant policies, laws, regulations, rules and guidelines. These organisations have a crucial role to play in encouraging and sustaining sports participation at both the community and national levels. The roles of the organisations contribute significantly to the national agenda and as such they must work toward internationally accepted best practice in delivering sports and recreational experiences to nationals of Belize.

Private Sector Organisations

The Sports Sector provides a great opportunity for private investment in the development of national talent to achieve national excellence whether done as part of corporate social responsibility or for profit. The following roles are envisioned for the private sector in this regard:

- (a) Investment in the construction and management of sporting facilities;
- (b) Management of public sporting facilities through public-private partnership;
- (c) Adoption of sporting facilities;
- (d) Ownership of Sports Team and Clubs;
- (e) Assistance in the funding of athletes and teams to prepare for and participate in competitions;
and
- (f) Assistance to community groups, sporting clubs, and National Sporting Organisations in the funding of various sports programmes and initiatives.

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