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Ministry of Labour, Local Government, Rural Development (MOL)

Ministry of Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (MOEYSC)

Ministry of Health (MOH)

Special Envoy for Women and Children

Department of Youth Services (DYS)

United Democratic Party (UDP)

People United Party (PUP)

Belize Progressive Party (BPP)

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Comprehensive Security and Prevention of Violence affecting children, adolescents, and youth in SICA Countries (Prejuve) Project

Civil Society Organizations

Primary and Secondary Schools

Children and Adolescents of Belize

# **FOREWARD**

To Our Children of Belize,

In April 2016, we committed to a bi partisan process to develop the Children's Agenda 2017-2030. We are pleased that the process has produced a results framework, which sets out the country's priorities over the next 14 years in relation to children and adolescents aged 0-19.

The children's agenda 2017-2030 is grounded in our determination to make Belize the best place in which to grow up as a child. It reflects our firm belief and commitment to the fact that there is no alternative but to invest in an enabling environment, which supports the fulfillment of children's rights.

For over three decades, successive government administrations have worked towards ensuring the well being of children in Belize. The first National Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents (NPA) 2004-2015, which also emanated from a bipartisan process, was a major milestone in ensuring a comprehensive, long term plan for children and adolescents that transcended partisan considerations. This children's agenda builds on the lessons from the NPA, adopting a Whole-of-Government approach. This Agenda is underpinned by government's international commitments to children and adolescents: inter alia the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is also grounded in national policies, strategies and actions such as Belize's Horizon 2030, Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS), the National Commitments on Early Childhood Development, the National Youth Policy and the National Parenting Framework, Curricula and Implementation Plan.

We wish to express our gratitude to all persons from the government and civil society organizations who contributed to the development of this agenda. We are especially thankful for the significant contributions and participation of all the children and adolescents who made their voices heard through the various participatory means. Special thanks to the representatives of our respective political parties for their hard work and dedication, to the National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC) for coordination and programmatic support, and to UNICEF and UNDP for technical and financial support to the process.

We recognize that this Children's Agenda will require a shift from solely government to a wider governance approach — coordinating and leveraging the technical and financial support from key actors from civil society, international partners, and the private sector to ensure efficient and effective implementation.

We therefore urge all sectors to embrace the Children's Agenda 2017-2030 and work with us in partnership as we endeavor to create a Belize worthy of its children.

Signed this 15th day of May 2017

Hon. D<del>ean Barrow</del>
Prime Minister of Belize

Leader of the Opposition

# INTRODUCTION

The Government of Belize in its continued commitment to improving the lives of children and adolescents has developed this Children's Agenda 2017–2030, which sets out the Government's agenda and priorities in relation to children and adolescents aged 0–19 over the next 14 years.

This Children's Agenda is underpinned by Government's international commitments to children and adolescents, inter alia the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG); and in national policies, strategies and actions plans such as Belize's Horizon 2030, Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS), ECD Policy, the National Youth Policy and the National Parenting Framework, Curricula and Implementation Plan.

The Agenda is also aligned to the Government's long-term development framework, Horizon 2030 and the Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) which combines the country's economic growth and poverty reduction strategies; and among other objectives, aims to promote the economic security of families through increasing the number of parents in employment.

The Agenda requires that the State and other duty bearers work together to support children and adolescents to reach their potential by ensuring that there is better coordination and collaboration, better supports for parents, that investment is made in quality early years care and education and that interventions are made at key times that support the building of resilience, supporting all children and adolescents in dealing well with what life brings them.

The Agenda adopts both a universal and a targeted approach. It focuses on the situation of all children and adolescents, while also identifying and giving priority to marginalised and disadvantaged groups. It recognises that to promote greater equality of outcomes for all, some children and adolescents will require additional support and particular inequalities or structural challenges will need to be tackled.

It also takes into consideration children's evolving capacity, how their rights are fulfilled and their needs met by exploring issues affecting a child or adolescent person at different stages of their lives.

# VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In setting the context in which the outcomes for children and adolescents will be improved, the Children's Agenda identifies the principles, approaches and priorities that will allow us to do this.

# VISION

The vision to be achieved by 2030 through the successful implementation of the Children's Agenda is that Belize will become the best country in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and adolescents are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realize their maximum potential.

# CHILD RIGHTS

Children are Active and Healthy in that they are physically healthy and make positive health choices; exhibit good mental health and enjoy psycho-social support; exhibit positive, respectful and responsible approaches to relationships; and enjoy play, recreation, sports, art, culture and nature.

# (A)

## FAMILY-CENTERED

The family is recognized as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and wellbeing of children; and while external interventions support and empower families within the community, children are only taken into care as a measure of last resort, to secure the child's safety and welfare;



# EVIDENCE INFORMED AND OUTCOMES FOCUSED

Policies and services must be evidence-informed and outcomes-focussed to be effective by placing the needs of children and adolescents at the centre of government decision-making;

# ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

Clear implementation, monitoring and accountability mechanisms and lines of responsibility for delivery are in place to drive timely and effective policy implementation;



# EQUALITY

As a means of improving outcomes and achieving greater social inclusion, the diversity of children's experiences, abilities and cultures is acknowledged and the Children Agenda promotes the reduction of inequalities across all sectors, including health, education, justice and social protection.

# **OUTCOMES AND AIMS**

In pursuing the Vision of the Children's Agenda, 2017 - 2030, five national outcomes have been identified, each with four aims which are mutually interconnected and reinforcing as summarized in the Figure below:

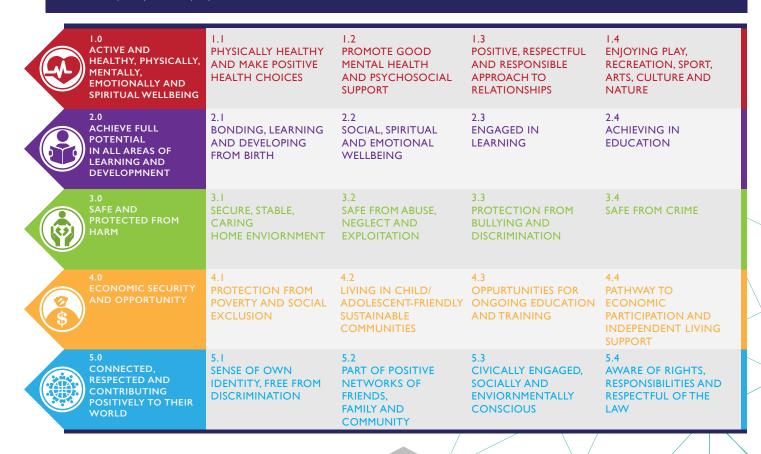
# VISION

Belize is the best nation in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and adolescents are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and they are supported to realise their maximum potential.

# **PRINCIPLES**

- 1. Children's Rights
- 2. Family-Centered
- 3. Equality and Equity

- 4. Accountability and Resource Efficiency
- 5. Evidence Informed and Outcomes Focused



# CROSS-CUTTING TRANSFORMATIONAL GOALS



COORDINATION





# NATIONAL OUTCOME I CHILDREN ARE ACTIVE AND HEALTHY

Children are Active and Healthy in that they are physically healthy and make positive health choices; exhibit good mental health and enjoy psycho-social support; exhibit positive, respectful and responsible approaches to relationships; and enjoy play, recreation, sports, art, culture and nature.

# **AIMS**

1.1

1.2

1.3

1.4

Physically Healthy and make positive health choices.

Promote good mental health and psychosocial support. Positive, respectful & responsible approach to relationships. Enjoying play, recreation, sports, arts, culture and nature.



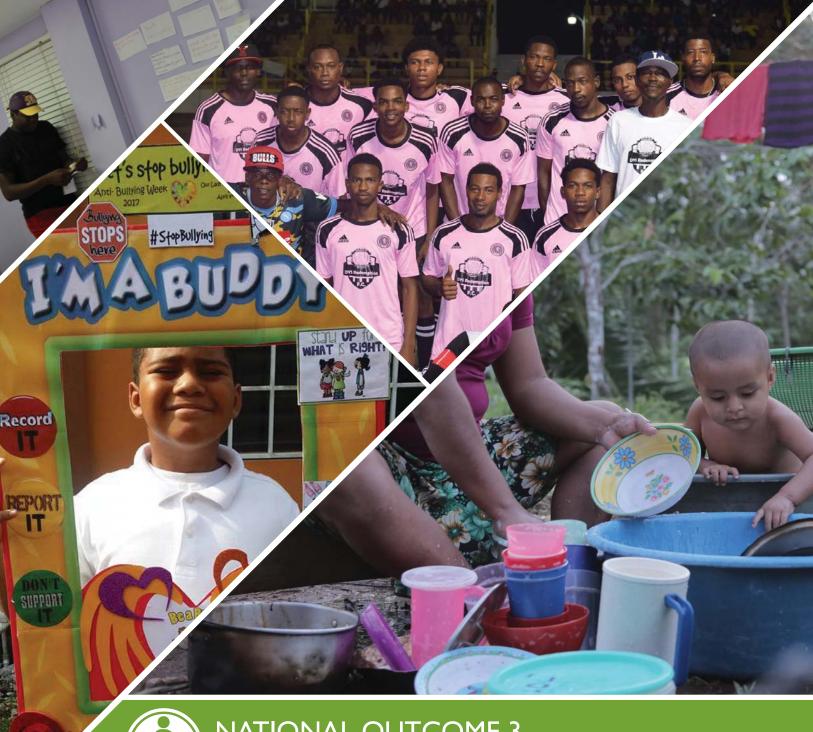


# NATIONAL OUTCOME 2 CHILDREN ARE ACHIEVING FULL POTENTIAL IN ALL AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Children are achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development in that they are bonding, learning and developing from birth; enjoying social, spiritual and emotional wellbeing; engaging in learning; and achieving in education.

# **AIMS**

2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4
Bonding, Learning and developing from birth.	Social, spiritual and emotional well-being.	Engaged in Learning.	Achieving in education.





# NATIONAL OUTCOME 3 CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND PROTECTED FROM HARM

Children are safe and protected from Harm in that they enjoy secure, stable, caring home environments; are safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation; are protected from bullying and discrimination; and are safe from crime.

# **AIMS**

3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4
Secure, stable, caring home environments.	Safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation	Protected from bullying and discrimination	Safe from Crime





# NATIONAL OUTCOME 4 ECONOMIC SECURITY AND OPPURTUNITY

Children enjoy economic security and have access to opportunities in that they are protected from poverty and social exclusion; are living in child/adolescent friendly sustainable communities; have opportunities for on-going education and training, and are supported to travel pathways to economic participation and independent living.

# **AIMS**

**4.** I

4.2

4.3

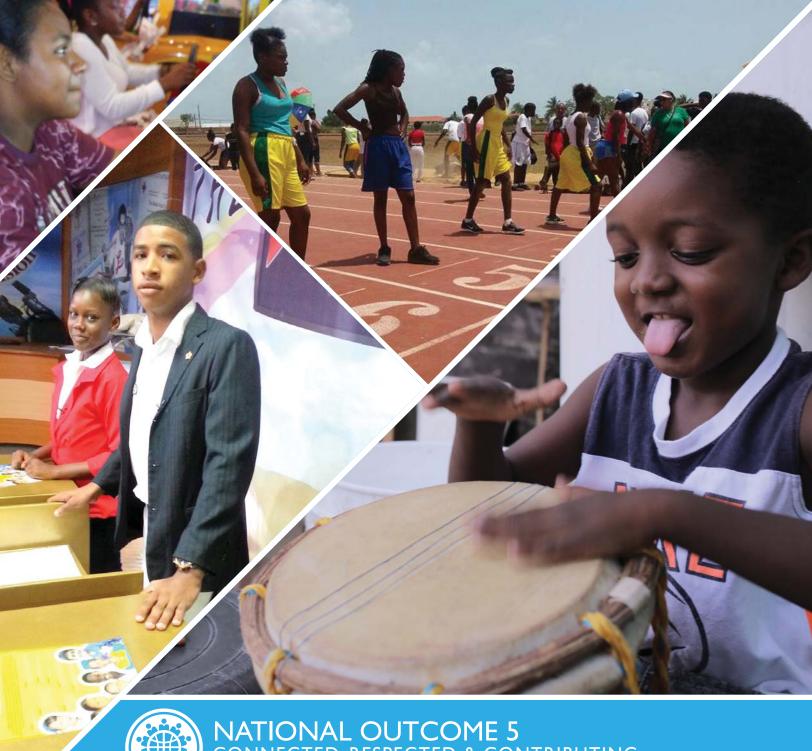
4.4

Protected from poverty and social exclusion

Living in child/ adolescentfriendly sustainable communities

opportunities for on-going education and training

Pathways to economic participation and independent living supported



NATIONAL OUTCOME 5
CONNECTED, RESPECTED & CONTRIBUTING POSITIVELY TO THEIR WORLD

Children are connected, respected and contributing to their world in that they have a sense of their own identity free from discrimination; they are part of positive networks of friends, family and community; they are civically engaged and are socially and environmentally conscious; and they are aware of rights, responsibilities and are respectful of the law.

# **AIMS**

**5.** I 5.2 5.3 5.4 Sense of own Part of positive Civically engaged, Aware of rights, identity, networks of socially and responsibilities free from environmentally and respectful of friends, family and discrimination community conscious law

# **SUPPORTIVE PARENTS**

The first transformational goal is supportive parents.

Government recognizes the duty placed on it by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to respect the rights and responsibilities of parents (Article 5)

and to support them with their child-rearing responsibilities (Article 18).

As a consequence, Government commits to ensuring parents are appropriately supported to care for their children and are able to parent confidently and positively.



# PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

The second transformational goal is prevention and early intervention.

Government recognizes the duty placed on it by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to work towards the prevention of discrimination (Article 2), child abuse (Article 19) and other forms of exploitation (e.g. Articles 33 and 34), and to develop preventive healthcare education and services (Article 24). This is necessary as early intervention is often a

determining factor in the realisation of children's rights. For example, a successful early intervention which keeps a child in school will help fulfil their right to education (Article 28) and may also protect them from drug misuse (Article 33) and entering the justice system (Article 40).

Consequently, Government commits inter alia to accelerate efforts towards rebalancing of resources to place a greater emphasis on prevention and earlier intervention.



# LISTEN TO AND INVOLVED CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

The third transformational goal is listening to and involving children and adolescents.

Government recognizes the general principle of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that the child's view must be considered and taken into account in all matters affecting

him or her, in accordance with their age and maturity (Article 12).

As a result, Government commits to listening to and involving children and adolescents in relation to decisions that affect them, in ensuring better outcomes for them.



# **ENSURE QUALITY SERVICE**

The fourth transformational goal is ensuring quality services.

A quality approach to supports and services must prevail in addressing the full range of children and adolescents needs and be provided in child- and adolescent-friendly settings and delivered in ways that are accessible

to all children and young people.

Government is committed to improving the quality and timeliness of services, ensuring that government funded programmes and services are outs-focussed and can demonstrate improved results over time.



# STRENGTHEN TRANSITION

The fifth transformational goal is to support effective transitions.

Government recognizes that children and adolescents experience a number of key transitions in their journey from childhood to adulthood – from home to early years setting, from pre-school to primary school, from primary school to post-primary school, leaving school, and from living within the family

home to living on their own or with others; and that these transitions are underpinned and potentially reinforced by developing their own identity and a positive sense of wellbeing.

As a result, Government commits inter alia to establish a stronger focus on effective transitions, particularly within education, health, and child welfare and youth justice services.



# STRENGTHEN CROSS-GOVERNMENT AND INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

Finally, the sixth transformational goal is to strengthen cross-government and inter-agency collaboration and coordination.

Government recognizes that a central enabler for implementation of the Children's Agenda is cross-Government and interagency collaboration and coordination.

Therefore, Government commits to transferring policy into practice and informing practice with the evidence of what works horizontally across people, infrastructure, evidence and data analysis, and funding and finance; as well as vertically, from the national to the sub-national level.



# IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Finally, the Children's Agenda outlines implementation arrangements for its successful execution. Progress towards achievement of the transformational goals will be tracked over time and improvements in the five national outcomes will also be monitored. A select number of key indicators have been identified, and insofar as was possible, international comparability was a consideration to allow for global benchmarking. Some indicators are measured annually; particularly those to be derived from administrative records, but many are only reported on every 3-4 years from nationally representative surveys. It is recognized that the indicators within the Outcome Indicator Framework do not provide an exhaustive picture of the lives of all children and adolescents 0 – 19 years. Rather, these key indicators will allow us to measure progress in some key areas across the outcomes over the 14 years of the Framework.

These indicators include early antenatal visitation rate; low birth weight; breastfeeding initiation rate; overweight or obese children; suicide and intentional self-harm death rate; reported incidents of STIs; alcohol consumption; cigarette use; cannabis use; ECD Index; participation in early childhood education; early school-leaving rate; primary level/secondary level school-leaving rate; academic performance; adolescents who report being bullied at school; adolescents involved in a physical fight at least once in the last academic year; children in care in full-time education; children's living arrangements; violent discipline; severe physical punishment; sex before age 15 among adolescents aged 15-19; marriage before age 18: child poverty: headcount(money metrics); child poverty: headcount(MDI); children living in jobless households; adolescents aged 15-19 not in education; employment or training; % of adolescents involved in youth groups/ clubs/community projects; number of adolescents in prison/detention; % of adolescents reporting an interest in political issues within their local community; etc.

The indicators identified, for the most part, are drawn from the MICS, LFS and existing administrative data sources. In a few instances, arrangements will be required to ensure that data for a few of the select measures be in place, as they are not currently being captured by the system.

It is further recommended that a more extensive set of indicators be developed under the leadership of the NCFC Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Committee, which will enable better tracking of progress in terms of improving outcomes for children and adolescents across the aims of each of the five national outcome areas to give a richer and more complete picture of children and adolescents' outcomes.

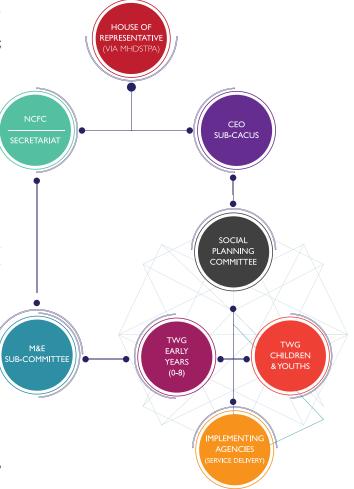
The indicators will be tracked annually, or as appropriate, and the results will form the basis of a biennial state of the

nation children's report to be prepared by the NCFC and submitted to the House of Representatives and disseminated more widely to stakeholders.

Furthermore, it is expected that a strengthened NCFC working closely alongside the CEO sub-caucus with direct reporting to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy will provide the necessary leadership for the effective implementation of the Children's Agenda. Effective implementation will also require significant collaboration and coordination across government and between departments, agencies and other bodies.

The Children's Agenda then outlines Government's commitments to effectively implement the Framework, detailing the entities responsible and the processes for achieving accountability with respect to: the time-frame; political, government departments and NGOs, children and adolescents, and financial and public accountability.

The Children's Agenda concludes by recommending the establishment and/or activation of clear and efficient structures for ensuring accountability, driving implementation and providing a forum for stakeholders continued engagement in successfully implementing the Framework.

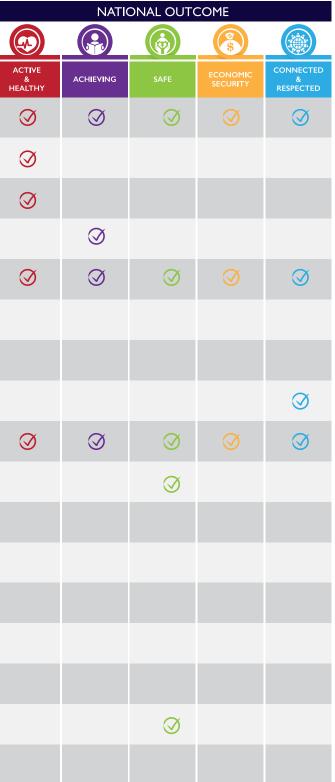


# MANUALLY REINFORCING: THE NATIONAL RESULT FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS, 2017-2030 AND THE 2030 GLOBAL GOALS

# NATIONAL RESULT

	TRANSFORMATIONAL GOALS					
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS	SUPPORT PARENTS	PREVENTION & EARLY INTERVENTION	CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION	QUALITY SERVICE	STRENGTHEN TRANSITIONS	PARTNERSHIP
End poverty in all forms everywhere	$\oslash$	$\otimes$			$\otimes$	$\otimes$
2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture						
3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages						
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning oppurtunities for all						
S Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	$\otimes$	$\otimes$	$\otimes$		$\otimes$	
6 Ensure availablity and sustainable managment of water and sanitation for all						
7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all						
Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all						
9 Build resilent infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialzation and foster innovation	$\otimes$	$\otimes$	$\bigcirc$		$\otimes$	$\otimes$
10 Reduce inequality within and among countries						
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable						
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns						
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact						
Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development						
Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystem, sustainably manage forests, combat desertifiction, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss						
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels						
Strengthen the means for implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development						$\otimes$

# FRAME WORK







#### **GSDS FRAMEWORK**

#### CSF 1: OPTIMUM NATIONAL INCOME & INVESTMENT

#### NC 1.6 ADEQUATE SKILLS AND CAPACITY TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT AND RESILIENCE

- Increase spaces at the pre-primary level
- Increase enrolment at the primary level (pursue universal primary education)
- Increase enrolment at the secondary level
- Reduce drop-out and repetition rates at the primary and secondary education level
- Improve efficency of service (education)
- Enhance targeting mechanisms for financial assistance
- Increase enrolment at ITVET
- Apply ICT in education service delivery
- Improve the effectiveness of teachers
- (A) Improve the effectiveness of school leaders
- Improve school governance

#### NC 1.6.1 ALIGN EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

- http://www.linkages.com/between.programs.offered.at.the.needs.of.the.economy
- Encourage Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation
- Rromote an entrepreneurial culture and inculcate desired social values

#### CSF 2: ENHANCE SOCIAL COHESION & RESILIENCE

#### NC 2.1 ADEQUATE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

- Study mechanisms for health care financing
- £ Educate and influence young people to change eating habiits for improved nutrition
- Strengthen services to deal with pathologies

#### NC 2.2 ADEQUATE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL (CROSS WITH NC 1.6)

## NC 2.3 OPTIMAL SOCIAL SECURITY/ INSUREANCE

A Investigate possibilities for extending the range and level of social security benefits that can be provided

#### NC 2.4 BETTER SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

- (A) M&E the effectiveness of recently launched social protection initiatives and the social assistance framework in general
- 🟡 Improve coordination among stakeholders with responsibility for managing social protection programs and social policy
- 23 Review the social protection framework

## NC 2.5 EFFECTIVE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMS

- **Evaluate livelihood programs**
- strengthen community-driven approaches for the implementation of livelihood programs
- Improve the coordination of livelihood programs
- Promote sustainable livelihood programs in ecologically sensitive areas

### NC 2.6 DECENT WAGES AND WORK CONDITIONS

- A Continue implementation of the DWCP
- 🟡 Develop strategies that could simultaneously promote greater labor productivity and better worker compensation

#### NC 2.7 STRONG NATIONAL IDENTITY AND FUTURE VISION

- 🔬 Strengthen the management of key organizations working towards the achievement of strong national identity
- 📆 Design strategies to change cultural attitudes that may diminish productivity or create barriers to matching available oppurtunities for work with those who need work

## NC 2.8 SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EQUITABLE GROWTH

- Embed a strong equity focus within line ministry programs, including a broad definition of social inclusion
- 🔬 Upgrade and sustain national programs aimed at child protection and the elimination of gender based violence

### CSF 3: SUSTAINED OR IMPROVED HEALTH OF NATURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS

# NC 3.2 URBAN AND RURAL PLANNING

- 20 Complete and implement the national land use policy and integrated planning framework
- 322 Continue implementation of the Belize City Master Plan

# CSF 4: ENHANCE GOVERNANCE AND CITIZEN SECURITY

## NC 4.1 BETTER TECHNICAL AND POLITICAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

Fully implement program budgeting and seek budget efficiencies and synergies

#### NC 4.2 AMELIORATION OF SOCIAL ISSUES THAT FUEL CRIME

- Improve coordination among stakeholder agencies and keep the RESTORE Belize program under evaluation
- Increase access to relevant education and training in high crime areas
- Identify sustainable gainful employment oppurtunities for at-risk youth
- 🔬 Review the potential for conscription as an alternative approach to address youth unemployment
- Repromote positive social values through social communication and education

