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1 December 2022

## Press Release

### **UNICEF, UNHCR, and IOM welcome the Government of Belize's extension of the Amnesty exercise**

**Belize City, Belize.** The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) welcome the decision of the Government of Belize to extend the Amnesty application period for another three months. At the end of 2021, the Government announced and launched in August 2022, the Amnesty Program 2022 which aims at granting permanent residency to migrants as well as a complementary protection pathway to refugees and asylum seekers who qualify and have been living in Belize for many years.

Since the start of the Amnesty exercise, the UN agencies supported 6,668 applicants, over half of all total applicants, to successfully prepare the requirements for their Amnesty applications. To reach as many vulnerable people as possible, including those living in remote communities, the UN agencies set up mobile clinics to ensure services were available to those in remote areas.

To support the Government's Amnesty exercise, IOM and UNICEF assisted migrants, including children, in covering the costs for translations of foreign documents, photographs, medical services, and police records needed for their Amnesty applications. UNHCR assisted refugees and asylum seekers in applying for Amnesty and will follow up by covering the cost of permanent residency for the most vulnerable who are granted that pathway by the Government of Belize. In addition to providing direct support to the Amnesty registry, UNICEF and UNHCR will support refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and host communities to improve their access to social services, including water and sanitation (WASH), education, and child protection to foster social cohesion and integration.

UNICEF, UNHCR, and IOM look forward to continuing dialogue and collaborating with the Government's Amnesty Team to ensure this pathway to legal status is accessible to eligible refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants.

**END**

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