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**PRESS RELEASE**

**BELIZE PARTICIPATES IN CVII ORDINARY MEETING OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNCIL OF TOURISM MINISTERS PROMOTING GROWTH OF INTRA-REGIONAL AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

BELIZE CITY, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 – Hon. Manuel Heredia Jr., Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, led an official delegation on April 27<sup>th</sup> to April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic to participate in the **CVII Ordinary Meeting of the Central American Council of Tourism Ministers (C.C.T., for its Spanish equivalent)**, as well as the **LI Ordinary Meeting of the Central American Tourism Promotion Agency (C.A.T.A., for its Spanish equivalent)**.

Main areas of focus was the further development and promotion of intra-regional and multi-destination tourism within the Central American region, as well as, alignment of the region’s tourism development agenda with the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Key recommendations coming out of the sessions were the facilitation of air connectivity with member countries of SICA, strengthening of tourism safety and security across the region, and promotion of tourism investment, with specific focus on Micro-, Small- and Medium Enterprises.

Hon. Manuel Heredia Jr., Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation expressed, *“Tourism remains a critical development vessel for all our Central American countries. While our region remains positive in its gains within the global travel and trade market, it is clear that further engagement at the regional level in product development, resource mobilization and promotion of our tourism offer still remains as a strategic opportunity. This was the main principle reiterated and placed into action in Santo Domingo.”*

Also joining the delegations were technical representatives from the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation and the Belize Tourism Board. The Private Sector was also represented by Mr. Raineldo Guerrero, President, and Mr. John Burgos, Executive Director, of the Belize Tourism Industry Association, respectively. As per the protocols of the Central American Integration System (SICA, *for its equivalent in Spanish*), Belize is scheduled to take on the Pro-Tempore Presidency of the CCT and CATA in July 2018 for a period of six months.

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