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SIB CONCLUDES STATISTICS WEEK 2026 WITH A CALL FOR STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS BELIZE'S NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

Belmopan City, October 16, 2026 – The Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) today concluded Statistics Week 2026, bringing together data producers, data users, development partners, academia, students, and the media to mark Caribbean Statistics Day, observed regionally on October 15 under the theme “Harmonizing Data, Strengthening Resilience.” The week’s activities highlighted the importance of collaboration, data sharing, and coordinated efforts in strengthening Belize’s National Statistical System (NSS).

SIB has commemorated Caribbean Statistics Day since 2013 and expanded the observance into a full Statistics Week in 2023. This year’s activities emphasized the importance of collaboration, data sharing, and communication across the NSS in supporting evidence-based decision-making. Discussions also highlighted the role of official statistics in advancing national priorities, including the Medium-Term Development Strategy, the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), the Sustainable Development Goals, and climate resilience.

This year’s Statistics Week activities began on October 13 with a public exhibition at the University of Belize gymnasium. Agencies responsible for producing and using official statistics presented interactive booths, data visualisations and statistical games, and demonstrated their surveys and data products. The event drew students from all educational levels, as well as educators, researchers, and members of the public.

The main event, the Data Users Conference, took place on Caribbean Statistics Day, October 15, at the Best Western Belize Biltmore Plaza in Belize City. Mrs. Miriam Willoughby, Deputy Director General of SIB, opened the conference. Mr. Moon Jong Hyun, Country Director of KOICA El Salvador Office, delivered the keynote address. Additional remarks were provided by Mr. Victor Alegria, Director of the Sustainable Development Unit, and Ms. Karina Cazarez, Data Policy Advisor at PARIS21.

SIB presented an update on progress since the endorsement of the NSDS, highlighting improvements in NSS coordination, quality assurance, metadata development, and survey coordination. Ms. Cazarez discussed the evolution of national statistical systems toward integrated data ecosystems, while Mr. Wonjun Bae of UNDP addressed the importance of data partnerships for sustainable development.

The programme featured two panel discussions exploring the coordination of data producers and the information needs of data users. The first panel, “From Data Producers to Data Partners: Building a Coordinated Statistical System,” moderated by Chad Bowman of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), brought together Victor Alegria, Tanya Santos, and Daniel Mendez to discuss

strengthening institutional collaboration, harmonizing indicator frameworks, and integrating data from different sources to support national planning and decision-making.

The second panel, “Are We Producing the Data Belize Needs?”, moderated by Gabrielle Hulse, featured Jody Williams, Devon Paulino, and Hipolito Novelo. The discussion explored whether current data production adequately responds to the needs of businesses, researchers, policymakers, and the wider public, with particular attention to data accessibility, relevance, and communication.

Participants also viewed presentations on the BNSS Portal, GeoBelize, and the Community Profile Information System, showcasing different approaches to making information more accessible and useful. Interactive sessions demonstrated how answering national questions often requires information from multiple agencies, while a live digital poll invited participants to identify the statistics most relevant to their work.

The conference concluded with the presentation of five awards recognising contributions to Belize’s National Statistical System and the Statistics Week Public Exhibition. The NSS awards recognised excellence in data sharing, statistical innovation and development, coordination, and evidence-based decision-making. The Students’ Choice Award for Most Engaging Booth was presented to the Belize Bureau of Standards in recognition of its positive engagement with student visitors during the public exhibition. Mr. Michael Lund, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, delivered the closing remarks.

SIB extends its sincere thanks to its partners, presenters, moderators, panellists, exhibitors, and participants for their contributions to Statistics Week 2026. The event provided an opportunity to recognise the progress made across Belize’s NSS while reaffirming the importance of continued collaboration and coordination in building a stronger, more responsive statistical system.

Publications, data and updates are available at www.sib.org.bz.

MEDIA CONTACT

Javier Romero

Communications and Marketing Officer

Statistical Institute of Belize

jromero@mail.sib.org.bz

+501 822 2207 ext. 209

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