

## Belize to boost sugar exports to Caricom

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THE Belize government says it is strengthening efforts to boost sugar exports to markets in the Caribbean Community (Caricom) and that the Minister of State for Foreign Trade Dr Osmond Martinez has held a 'pivotal' meeting with stakeholders in the industry.

A statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade said that the meeting was also attended by officials from the Directorate General for Foreign Trade (DGFT) and the Belize Sugar Industries (BSI), where strategies for enhancing Belize's sugar exports to the Caricom market were discussed.

'The meeting focused on addressing the challenges and opportunities within the regional sugar trade framework. Key topics included optimising the Common External Tariff (CET) suspension regime, improving compliance with the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, and strengthening Belize's competitive position in the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME),' the statement said.

It quoted Dr Martinez as emphasising Belize's commitment to facilitating increasing sugar exports and ensuring adherence to regional trade rules and that the meeting marks a significant step towards bolstering the sugar industry's presence in the Caricom market.

'We are determined to work collaboratively with BSI and other stakeholders to capitalise on export opportunities and ensure that Belize remains a key player in the regional sugar trade,' Dr Martinez said.

The DGFT reiterated the importance of active participation in Caricom's Monitoring Mechanism for Sugar (MMS) and the Technical Working Group (TWG) for using technical standards and specifications in the Common External Tariff Suspension process.

'By enhancing the region's reporting and compliance mechanisms, Belize aims to foster a transparent and fair trade environment that benefits all Caricom member states,' the statement said, adding that the BSI representatives expressed their commitment to working closely with the government to address any challenges and leverage the opportunities presented by the Caricom market.

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