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July 2, 2014

**Mr. Alfonso Cal
President
Toledo Alcaldes Association**

**Mr. Martin Chen
Chairman
Maya Leaders Alliance**

Messrs Cal and Chen,

I write in reference to your letter dated June 30th, 2014 in which you reaffirm your position that Belize be denied entry into the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility.

The REDD+ R-PP process in Belize has been an involved and inclusive national process. During the Early Dialogue phase in August and September 2013, we consulted with over 200 individuals, 70 organizations (including the TAA and the MLA) and 90 communities to draft the R-PP.

As the Minister with the portfolio of forests and sustainable development, I see REDD+ as a process and not an end nor the panacea to our forest management challenge. It is a tool which can assist us in moving towards our sustainable development goals and can also serve as a platform to open and strengthen the dialogue among stakeholders. It affords us planning at a national scale which requires cross and multi-sectoral collaboration. The early dialogue is only expected to be built up and intensified and to do that we need resources. You will agree that the non-carbon benefits of REDD+ such as improved dialogue and collaborative planning, social and environmental safeguards, improved land use, forest and land governance reforms are needed. This too requires investments in time, effort and financial resources.

My staffs at the Forest Department who have been coordinating the REDD+ Readiness process are constrained by time, resources and capacity to achieve full outreach to stakeholders. I assure you that it is not for a lack of willingness, nor lack of interest that the latest version of the RPP was not presented to you or other stakeholders. This speaks to the need for resources to strengthen the capacity of the REDD+ Coordinating Unit.

I also would like to make reference to the letter from the REDD+ Coordinator to the TAA dated July 1st, 2014, documenting where every effort has been made to incorporate issues and concerns brought up by the MLA and TAA in the past, into the latest version of the RPP.

When I took up the role of Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development, the portfolio also included Indigenous People as a Ministerial responsibility. As a result of objection by the MLA this portfolio was removed but I assure you that I remain committed to maintaining and strengthening the dialogue and finding solutions to forest loss and degradation that is in the best interest of both the indigenous peoples and the national government. Achieving this will no doubt require further dialogue and maintaining a commitment to sustainable development for all citizens.

In closing, while I respect your position objecting to Belize's entry into the FCPF, I would like to encourage you to consider the broader benefits that the REDD+ offers. With financing from the FCPF the Government would be in a better position to improve outreach and communication with you and other important stakeholders to jointly address our nation's forest management and land use challenges.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,



Lisel Alamilla
Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development

- cc. Ms. Ellysar Baroudy, Coordinator, FCPF
Mr. Onel Masardule, IP Focal Point, Central American Region
Ms. Antoinette Moore, MLA Legal Team
Mr. Nigel Hawke, Acting Solicitor General
Mrs. Tanya Santos Neal, Coordinator, REDD+ Coordination Unit