



DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION PRESS RELEASE

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EU funds new bus terminal and market in Independence with over BZD \$1.3 Million

The European Union has funded the construction of a new bus terminal that will be opened in Independence. The George Murray Bus Terminal will serve as a hub for the surrounding villages in the banana belt and will provide convenience and comfort to commuters and enhance vehicular safety in the community. The project received **BZD\$650,000** in funding from the EU and is one of several financed under the EU's Banana Support Programme.

This Grand Opening Ceremony for the Terminal also served to launch the works for the Independence Market, likewise funded by the European Union, with **BZD\$ 650,000.00** under its Belize Rural Development Project.

The ceremony held this afternoon (December 16th) at the new facility was attended by Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Belize Ambassador Paola Amadei, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Hon. Santiago Castillo, senior officials of the Ministries of Works; and Rural Development, and other dignitaries.

The George Murray Bus Terminal will feature bays for 4 busses to dock at any one time. The building has bathroom facilities, office accommodation for the Transport Department, a ticket booth as well as a cafeteria to sell food and refreshments. The market plan consists of 2 main buildings each having four (4) permanent and secured stalls each available for rent on a long term basis.

Ambassador Amadei said that the two programmes which funded the works *"are part of the holistic and integral approach of Belize and the European Union to Rural Development and the support to small holder farmers....In total the two programs amount to over BZD 168 million and are implemented in close cooperation with the Government of Belize"*

The EU supports the Banana Sector since 1999 with some **BZD\$ 129.6 Million (€ 47.3 million)** under various programmes promoting broad-based rural development as well as improving efficiency and competitiveness of the banana industry. This has contributed effectively to economic growth and reducing poverty in the banana-producing areas of Belize.

The Belize Rural Development Project which since inception has received funding of **BZD 38.4 Million (€ 14 Million)** is implemented by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. This project also aims to promote economic growth and reduce the incidence of poverty in the rural communities throughout Belize.

While in Belize, Ambassador Amadei's activities will include a second Market Opening Ceremony in Benque Viejo Del Carmen on December 17th, as well as consultations for the definition of the cooperation programme for the period 2014 -20.
