



National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan (NPESAP) 2009-2013

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BCCI	Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry
BELTRAIDE	Belize Trade and Investment Development Enterprise
BHIS	Belize Health Information System
CARD	Community Initiated Agriculture and Rural Development (Project)
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CBB	Central Bank of Belize
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CDI	Commonwealth Debt Initiative
CMR	Child Mortality Rate
CPA	Country Poverty Assessment
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DFC	Development Finance Corporation
DFID	Department for International Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOB	Government of Belize
HCI	Head Count Index
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
ITVET	Institute for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Survey
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MED	Ministry of Economic Development
MHD	Ministry of Human Development (and Social Transformation)
MICS	Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey
MNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health

MOSC	Management and Oversight Sub-Committee
MOW	Ministry of Works
NAC	National AIDS Commission
NACP	Needs Assessment and Cost Prognosis
NAVCO	National Association of Village Councils
NDACC	National Drug Abuse Control Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHDAC	National Human Development Advisory Committee
NPESAP	National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
S & P	Standard and Poors
SIB	Statistical Institute of Belize
SIF	Social Investment Fund
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States

Executive Summary

This National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan (NPESAP) represents the measures to be undertaken toward eliminating poverty during the 2009 to 2013 period. It builds on the findings of various consultations and studies undertaken during the period 2005 to 2007, on the strategies and policies endorsed through the results of the 2008 general elections, and on stakeholder consultations undertaken during its preparation in early 2009.

The NPESAP is organized along five strategic thrusts, and every attempt is made to incorporate the elements of a comprehensive development plan. To achieve this end, the NPESAP is guided by the analytical frame recommended through the World Bank publication '*A Sourcebook on Poverty Reduction Strategies*'. The NPESAP therefore sets out issues and measures in the macro-structural, human development and infrastructure areas, and simultaneously targets urban and rural poverty and the cross cutting issues of governance, gender and environment. The structure of the monitoring and evaluation framework designed to support effective implementation of the NPESAP reinforces another important cross-cutting issue, that of participation.

The series of preparatory initiatives from which the NPESAP draws in part includes an evaluation of outcomes of poverty reduction strategies up to 2006, an identification of potential investment sectors that would lead to poverty reduction, and a poverty mapping exercise. A final preparatory initiative undertaken was a series of public consultations aimed at stakeholder identification of issues and circumstances that affected their socioeconomic conditions which were documented in the publication *Public Consultations* (NHDAC, 2006b). The outputs of these studies, combined with documentation of current priorities such as the United Democratic Party (UDP) manifesto and the results of a recent round of institutional stakeholder consultations inform the content and direction of this NPESAP.

In the articulation of the strategies and activities for the achievement of the NPESAP account was taken of a number of ongoing poverty assessment and national planning activities. These include a country poverty assessment exercise that will update poverty estimates for Belize and an MDG needs assessment and costing prognosis exercise that will generate, inter-alia, a scorecard of progress in MDG achievement and an assessment of measures and related cost for achievement. It is anticipated that the outputs of these initiatives will further inform and update the poverty elimination strategy herein and serve to refine the integrated action plan.

The NPESAP also takes account of Belize's macroeconomic environment, especially in terms of the importance of the natural resource base to economic activities and to the livelihoods of a significant proportion of the persons assessed as poor who either live near areas of significant biodiversity or areas where the resource have been somewhat depleted. In addition, it seeks to address various aspects of poverty highlighted by the 2002 CPA such as the higher level of rural (than urban) poverty and the variation in the incidence of poverty across districts and ethnic groups. Activities are articulated to support measures for reducing poverty amongst the elderly, the working poor, children and youth.

A number of key issues and approaches that would lend to effective poverty reduction have been identified through the preparation of this document and attempts were made to incorporate these. They include the need to carefully plan and target interventions. In addition to focusing on communities identified as the most disadvantaged by the poverty map, targeting can be achieved through focus on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Attempts are made to support this by identifying the specific MDGs and, where applicable, the related targets that are affected by pursuit of each of the NPESAP strategic thrusts.

The five NPESAP strategic thrusts each target a specific set of national priorities. The first thrust—Economic Policies for Enabled Growth—seeks to address the need for a stable macroeconomic and fiscal environment to ensure that resources for social programmes are not diverted toward monetary and fiscal imbalances. Activities under this thrust constitute macroeconomic policy and public sector expenditure measures that aim to buffer the national economy against external shocks, and support the maintenance of manageable levels of fiscal deficits and public sector external debt.

The second NPESAP strategic thrust—2.Effective Planning and Transparent and Accountable Governance for Growth—is closely related to and reinforces the first insofar as it provides in part for a stable and predictable socioeconomic environment. The area of priority addressed through this strategic thrust—governance—is cross-cutting and as fundamental as that addressed by Strategic Thrust 1. The key priorities targeted through this Strategic Thrust include improved accountability, transparency and public service delivery. Activities under this thrust include measures to improve national and local decision making through improved consultation mechanisms and improvement in fiscal planning and in land and other natural resource management frameworks.

The third thrust on which the NPESAP is built—Investing in Human Capital Development—addresses human capabilities and human development needs so that fundamental solutions to poverty can be realized. This thrust provides for expanded education and health opportunities for the poor and disadvantaged. It incorporates measures to improve education financing, to increase emphasis on technical and vocational education and to improve the efficiency of the education system. It also provides for health-related measures such as continued improvement in maternal health and infant mortality, access to prevention, care, treatment, and support for HIV/AIDS, and prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

Strategic Thrust 4—Infrastructure for Economic Growth—incorporates priorities in the areas of private enterprise, infrastructure and trade. The activities under this strategic thrust include measures to improve communication and transportation linkages between poor communities and larger population centers and to enable rural communities to access potable water and sanitation. Allowance is made also for better housing and education facilities, information and communication technologies and alternative energy in rural communities.

The final strategic thrust—Strategic Support for Equity and Development—provides for specific interventions to improve the conditions of residents in key geographic areas, such as Belize City Southside and the Toledo District, as well as vulnerable groups. The activities under this thrust include community development planning, improved disaster

risk management, support to gender initiatives and enhancements or development of programmes geared at legal, economic and social protection of vulnerable groups. These measures in particular are aimed at the root causes of poverty and are intended to support of the commitment of the Government of Belize to the progressive realization of human rights for all the people of Belize.

Information on the state of implementation of the NPESAP and thus the achievement of targets and objectives is critical to its successful implementation. To this end this NPESAP publication includes a monitoring and evaluation framework which outlines required activities. These include an early initiative to establish baselines and refine targets, then periodic data mining and data and information analysis and reporting. It is important to note that the M&E activities can only bear fruit also if there is a commitment to making adjustments where necessary to better enable the achievement of poverty elimination objectives. These adjustments should include, where necessary, interventions to remove bottlenecks in the implementation of initiatives. The signaling of the need for adjustment and/or intervention should be undertaken by the Ministry of Economic Development.

1.0. Applied Approach

This document represents the National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan (NPESAP) for the period 2009-2013. It builds on and replaces the National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan (NPESAP) 2007-2011. The changes made reflect and incorporate the priorities and programmes endorsed in the National Polls in February 2008 and complementary information gathered through consultation with key sectors. It is also influenced by recent socio-economic developments such as the restructuring of Belize's external debt portfolio completed in 2007, the recent oil price fluctuations and the still unfolding world-wide economic downturn precipitated by the recent global financial crisis. The update was done within the context of an ongoing living standards measurement survey, a country poverty assessment (CPA), an MDG needs assessment and costing exercise and the planning process for a long term planning initiative. Once completed, the CPA and MDG needs assessment initiatives will provide updated information on the extent of poverty in Belize which can further inform poverty reduction efforts. Both initiatives are expected to run through 2009.

1.1. Causes of Poverty and Rationale for NPESAP Structure

The Economic, Social and Cultural Committee of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) cites the evolution of our understanding of poverty from a level of income that is not enough to purchase “a minimum basket of goods and services (ECOSOC, 2001)” to one that recognizes the broader features of poverty as being hunger, poor education, discrimination, vulnerability and social exclusion (ibid).” The Committee further linked this broader understanding of poverty to basic human rights, and asserted that-

"In light of the International Bill of Rights, poverty may be defined as a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights (Ibid)."

This definition reflects the capability approach which draws on Amartya Sen's premise, expressed by Clark, that human well being and deprivation are hinged on “human function(ing)s and the capability to achieve valuable function(ing)s (n.d.). Clark goes on to reiterate Sen's definitions of functioning and capability (see Box 1).

The capability concept is also central to the Human Rights Based Approach and the Human Development Paradigm. The latter stresses the need to enlarge people's choices by ensuring long, healthy lives, knowledge and access to resources, while the former highlights not only efforts to help those who carry a public mandate (state and non-state agencies, institutions, and organizations) fulfill their obligations, but also to those who hold rights (“the people”) to claim their rights. These include the right to health, education, decent work, participation, non-discrimination, and information. This in effect means that it is important for human beings' to function effectively. It further suggests that the root causes of poverty include barriers to human beings' access to resources, capabilities, choices, security, and power. As Stanton (2007), indicates, these approach

emphasize the importance of ends (such as a decent standard of living) over means (such as level of income; p.3).

The strategic thrusts of the NPESAP are informed by these concepts and incorporate short, medium and long term measures. The short term measures mainly target the narrow or immediate causes of poverty (the means) such as income, whereas the medium and long term ones seek to address the underlying and root causes of poverty. These latter measures seek to remove barriers to the fulfillment of human functioning (the ends), such as inequalities in the distribution of, and access to, resources and services, and policies and societal structures that negatively influence attitudes and behaviours at various levels and foster unequal power relationships in families, communities or the larger society.

The formulation of the strategic thrusts is further informed by the World Bank publication *A User's Guide to Poverty and Social Impact* (2003). The Guide emphasizes, inter-alia, the importance of five main transmission channels for realizing the anticipated impact of policy changes on the welfare of target beneficiaries--*employment, prices (production, consumption and wages) access to goods and services, assets and transfers and taxes* (p. 12).

Whilst the content of the NPESAP is informed by the concepts cited above, the structure is guided by the approach espoused in the World Bank publication "A *Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies*." The *Sourcebook* sets out a comprehensive approach to the measurement and analysis of poverty and to the formulation of poverty reduction strategies.¹ It provides for poverty reduction through improvement in economic opportunities, (human) capabilities, security, and empowerment. Areas of guidance provided in the *Sourcebook* include the following-

Box 1: Clark's Articulation of Sen's Functioning and Capability Concepts

Functioning: A functioning is an achievement of a person: what she or he manages to do or be. It reflects, as it were, a part of the state of that person. (Sen, 1985, p.10). Achieving a functioning (e.g. being adequately nourished) with a given bundle of commodities (e.g. bread or rice) depends on a range of personal and social factors (e.g. metabolic rates, body size, age, gender, activity levels, health, access to medical services, nutritional knowledge and education, climatic conditions, etc). A functioning therefore refers to the *use* a person makes of the commodities at his or her command.

Capability: A capability reflects a person's *ability* to achieve a given functioning (.doing. or being.) (Saith, 2001, p.8). For example, a person may have the ability to avoid hunger, but may choose to fast or go on hunger strike instead.

Clarke, D.A., n.d. p.4

¹<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTPRS/0,,contentMDK:20175742~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:384201,00.html?>

- Core measurement and analysis techniques. These include poverty measurement and analysis and monitoring and evaluation methods;
- Cross cutting issues such as participation, gender, governance and environment;
- Macro-structural and trade policy issues;
- Human development measures, including social protection, health, nutrition, and education; and
- Private sector investments/operations and infrastructure such as transportation, information and communication technology, energy, water, and sanitation.

The reformulated strategy and action plan herein draws on the *Sourcebook* concepts and approach to restate available poverty assessment information and to incorporate new developments, priorities and directions. This approach is taken to provide a cohesive, reliable and current tool on which to base development actions whilst the more complex and relatively lengthy processes relevant to poverty reduction strategy formulation are ongoing. These processes, particularly the Country Poverty Assessment and the MDG Needs Assessment, will update information on the extent of poverty the population and geographic regions affected and the measures and related costs of responses. Key outputs of these processes, which are described briefly in the next section, are expected no earlier than late 2009 and early 2010.

1.2. Expected Links with Related Ongoing Initiatives

1.2.1. Country Poverty Assessment, 2009

The Country Poverty Assessment (CPA) 2009 aims to assess the current conditions affecting citizen's welfare and to identify policies, strategies, action programmes and projects that would reduce the extent and severity of poverty in Belize. The CPA 2009 will also evaluate the effectiveness of current policies and programmes and their impact on the poor and the vulnerable. It will also make recommendations for future policies and programmes that contribute to the reduction of poverty. Finally, it will improve the capacity of Government of Belize (GOB) to undertake CPAs in the future. The CPA is expected to be completed in December 2009.

The CPA 2009 adopts a similar methodology to that used for the 2002 CPA. There are three principal components: (i) A Living Standard Measurement Survey (LSMS) designed to provide quantitative information; (ii) A series of Participatory Poverty Assessments which will provide qualitative information; and (iii) An Institutional Analysis to identify existing government and non-government programs related directly to poverty reduction. Together these will be used to formulate a Programme of Action containing recommendations for policy interventions covering all aspects of poverty reduction. These will then be used to refine the strategy and action plan contained herein so as to ensure improved targeting and effectiveness. This adjustment will extend also to the NPESAP monitoring and evaluation plan.

1.2.2. The MDG Needs Assessment and Cost Prognosis

The MDG Needs Assessment and Cost Prognosis (MDG NACP) project phase II builds on scoping and preliminary activities undertaken in 2008 that helped to articulate a needs assessment methodology for Belize. It is intended to assess Belize's progress toward achieving the eight MDGs, and to identify and cost a set of initiatives that will contribute toward the attainment of MDGs 3, 4 and 7. The initiative will run through to the first quarter of 2010, and its key outputs will include a Scorecard and Outlook Report in mid-2009, a Needs Assessment Report at end 2009 and a portfolio/basket funding project document in early 2010. This will therefore be used in conjunction with and to further adjust this NPESAP and its monitoring and evaluation plan.

1.2.3. Horizon 2030

The objective of the Horizon 2030 Framework is to clearly establish a set of long-term development goals, targets, and indicators that will guide concerted action by all stakeholders involved in the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of both long-term and intermediate sector development programs and Government's long- and medium-term development strategies, in the framework of the progressive realization of human rights for all the people of Belize.

The main deliverable of the consultancy is the final document - National Development Framework - Horizon 2030. It is a comprehensive text that will have clearly established goals, performance targets, and measurable indicators which support monitoring and evaluation over the medium and long term. The Horizon 2030 is expected to be completed in February 2010.

1.3. Treatment of Poverty Costing Requirement

A critical component of a poverty reduction or elimination strategy is the costing of interventions required to achieve the ultimate objective. Given the time and resource constraints under which this revised NPESAP is being formulated, and consistent with the Terms of Reference, which had been limited to updating the previous NPESAP, no attempt is made to cost the interventions contained herein. An additional and very important consideration also is that two activities being undertaken, the MDG Needs Assessment and Costing Prognosis Phase II and the Country Poverty Assessment, both underway and described above, will yield more specific information on targets to be met for the reduction and/or elimination of poverty and the resources required for achieving these targets and their related costs. It is important to note here that the identification of targeted population(s) for each area to be covered under an intervention programme is an essential component.

1.4. Organization of Document

Since poverty reduction strategies are bounded by the macro-economic situation facing a country, the second chapter of this document provides an overview of the macro-socioeconomic context and main poverty indicators. Chapter 3 sets out the key issues and priorities to be addressed through an NPESAP, whilst the responding strategic thrusts

and action plan are detailed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 outlines a number of issues and constraints that must be confronted and addressed during NPESAP implementation, and Chapter 6 contains the basic monitoring and evaluation frame.

2.0. Background and Overview of Poverty

2.1. Macroeconomic Background

Whilst Belize's annual GDP increases over the 2000 to 2007 period averaged 5.9%, they exhibited significant volatility, as seen in Annex 1. This reflects the effects of external shocks, shifts in world market conditions, and changes in Government tax and expenditure policies. In particular, Belize's economy was significantly impacted over the period by mounting debt service levels, and macroeconomic policy between 2005 and 2007 period was dominated by debt restructuring efforts, a home-styled stabilization initiative, and major national and international developments. These included the discovery of oil in Belize in 2005, and the still-unfolding world financial crisis and resulting global productivity decline.

Belize's location in the Caribbean Basin makes it prone to tropical cyclones. Indicators drawn from the *Abstract of Statistics* (CSO, 2007a) show that approximately 52% of its population live in the nine urban centers, seven of which are located along the coast. There is also a significant proportion of the population living along river banks and near flood plains. Many of these communities (especially so in Belize City) have a high number of low income families in poorly constructed homes located in swamps and low-lying areas. This lends to a high level of physical vulnerability. The country is also economically vulnerable because of its smallness combined with its openness to trade and high reliance on exports of commodities and tourism. Belize's external trade to GDP ratio measured an annual average of 119.0% over the 2001 to 2007 period. Trade vulnerability is somewhat mitigated by preferential access to the US and European markets mainly for sugar and bananas. In 2007, these two commodities accounted for 29.9% of total goods exported and 5.0% of GDP. This relatively stable market access is countered by the volatility inherent in tourism, which dominates the service sector. The importance of tourism is further highlighted by the fact that improvement in the Balance of Payments services account mirrors increases in net tourism inflows, the latter arising mainly from cruise tourism receipts.

2.2. Incidence and Distribution of Poverty

Belize has conducted two Country Poverty Assessments (CPAs): the first in 1995 and a second in 2002. The methodology applied to the calculation of the poverty and indigent lines are set out in Annex 1 of this document ***The methodology utilized in the 1995 CPA was significantly different from that in 2002, so that the results of the two exercises cannot be readily compared.*** This strategy and action plan is informed by and responds to the results of the 2002 CPA, which provides comprehensive data on the incidence of poverty and its distribution, and the divergence between the lives of the better off and least fortunate Belizeans. This CPA shows a substantial number of Belizeans, especially in the Toledo District, being peripheral to the mainstream of economic and social life.

Table 1: Belize Poverty Estimates per 2002 Living Standards Measurement Survey

Population Group	By District						By Sector		Total
	Corozal	Orange Walk	Belize	Cayo	Stann Creek	Toledo	Urban	Rural	
Indigent Population	6.2	7.1	4.9	4.8	5.6	56.1	4.8	17.4	10.8
Poor Population	26.1	34.9	28.4	27.4	34.8	79.0	23.7	44.2	33.5
Poor Males									33.9
Poor Females									33.2
Poor Children	29.9	40.7	28.0	32.0	38.4	84.5	26.6	51.0	39.0
Poor Youth	25.7	38.2	23.4	29.1	36.3	79.3	25.5	44.2	33.9
Poor Elderly	23.4	23.1	19.8	24.6	40.1	64.8	19.9	33.5	26.5
Working Poor									29.8
Indigent Households	5.0	4.3	3.7	3.1	4.9	45.0	3.3	12.7	7.5
Poor Households	19.9	23.3	18.4	20.5	25.9	67.3	17.2	33.7	24.5
Female-heads									21.8
Male-heads									25.5

Source: Government of Belize, National Poverty Assessment Report 2002

The poverty gap, severity of poverty and consumption Gini coefficients generated from the 2002 CPA are set out in Annex 2. The overall results of the CPA in terms of the range of poverty and indigence among demographic groups and across districts are shown in Table 1 above. The data indicates that poverty affects males and females equally; interestingly, the number of poor households headed by females is less than those headed by males. Detailed analysis by the CPA revealed, however, that more female-headed households had financial difficulty in meeting basic expenses such as utility bills and school fees than male-headed households.

The Table also shows that the incidence of poverty in rural areas is about double that in urban settlements. There are also sharp regional differences in the distribution of poor households across Districts, with the highest incidence of poverty in Toledo and the lowest incidence in Belize. The Cayo District, with its diversified agriculture, growing tourism and cross-border trading economy, shows the lowest level of both indigent persons and households. On the other hand, the number of indigent persons was highest in the Orange Walk and Corozal Districts, where tourism and small-scale agriculture is lowest and where the traditional sugar agro-industry is dominant. The income distribution in these Districts may have been directly related to external shocks such as falling sugar prices and crop losses, the latter due in part to flooding in the wake of Hurricane Keith in 2001.

The results of the 2002 Country Poverty assessment are complemented by later surveys, studies and reports that provide reliable and updated information on the conditions of the poor in Belize. This is especially so in the areas of health, education and vulnerability. This body of work includes a 2004 report on social protection in the Caribbean, a 2006 Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey for Belize and the 2007 World Human Development Report.

2.3. Identifying the Poor

The CPA 2002 recognized the multi-faceted nature of poverty and identified a range of factors that limit the lives of poor people. These included insecure livelihoods and lack of access to education and training and to adequate health care and appropriate shelter. The CPA recorded higher levels of poverty in the rural areas and a concentration of the rural poor in agriculture and natural resource related activities (GOB, 2002, Table 2-12). For rural inhabitants, low incomes from livelihoods that fail to support household well-being are a significant factor determining poverty. This arises especially from impediments in accessing land (particularly in Toledo), credit, agricultural extension services, resource inputs and basic services. Lack of access to these means constrains productivity among small farmers and those living in the rural sectors and/or engaged in livelihoods activities. Effective poverty strategies must therefore address these impediments.

Another important segment of population to be targeted in a poverty strategy is the working poor, i.e. those in full-time occupations earning income that is lower than the value of the poverty line. The 2002 CPA results showed that overall this category comprised 30.0% of the labour force. Among these, those in elementary agricultural occupations were most vulnerable since estimates showed 47.0% of agricultural jobs yielding earnings below the poverty line. This demonstrates that poverty is essentially a product of the value that market systems place on demand for human capabilities. In this regard, the CPA report identifies a need for measures that support human capital development and raise productivity levels (GOB NHDAC, 2002. p. 113).

Belize's urban population amounts to just under half of the total population. Per the 2002 CPA, a recorded 23.7% of urban dwellers was estimated to be living below the poverty line. Rapid expansion in urban centres over the past two to three decades has placed increasing pressure on physical infrastructure and human services. In Belize City, where this is especially true, this trend has led to housing shortages, overcrowding, and growing informal settlements (squatters) which often have no public utility infrastructure. In addition, urban dwellers are more dependent on paid employment so that its scarcity is a major source of urban poverty. Urban neighbourhoods in extensive reaches of Belize City, such as the Southside, are vulnerable to unemployment, low wage occupations, casual labour, challenges of self-employment in the 'informal sector' and rising insecurity stemming from increasing levels of crime and violence. All these factors have contributed to a progressive decline in the quality of the urban environment. Whilst several initiatives have been implemented to address urban poverty, there is demonstrable need for comprehensive policies and strategies that further a sustainable quality of urban living.

The 2002 CPA also identifies a range of social groups vulnerable to poverty, including children, youth, the elderly and the disabled. Foremost among these are children aged 0-17 years who comprise 40% of the poor and experience a higher rate of poverty than any other age group. In rural areas the recorded rate is 51% and in Toledo, with its heavy concentration of indigenous Maya, the highest rate at 84.5%. The rates recorded for the age groups from adolescence to youth show a slight improvement, as the poverty rate amongst youths aged 14-24 was 33.9%, approximating the incidence of poverty in the

general population. The impact of poverty on young males and females is not greatly different, whereas poverty among youths in rural areas at 44.2% is significantly higher than the urban rate of 25.5%. The poverty rate among older youths in the age group 18 to 24 years is a full 5 percentage points lower than that among younger youths 14 to 17 years.

Aging citizens become marginal to the economic activities and are therefore vulnerable to poverty. Their gradual elimination from the labour force increases their dependency on family and the State and can present an enduring source of poverty. SIB population estimates for 2007 indicate a total of 9.0% of the population at or above the retirement age of 55 years. The 2002 poverty assessment shows 26.5% of older persons as poor (GOB NHDAC, 2002, p. xii). Of this group, 27.8% continue to work (ibid, p.33). It is of note that social protection for the aged is rudimentary. The Ministry of Human Development and the Social Security Board jointly finance a public welfare scheme that provides BZ\$40/month for people over 60 years with no source of income. About 10% of the aged are reported to benefit from this scheme.

In 2002 GOB adopted a Policy for Older Persons, under the auspices of the National Council on Ageing. The policy seeks to ‘guarantee proper resource allocation for the social and economic welfare of older persons, while appropriately respecting their rights, responsibilities and roles’.

All ethnic groups in Belize experience poverty in varying degrees. As seen in Table 2, however, the highest levels are recorded amongst the indigenous Maya and the second highest amongst the Mestizos. The 2000 Census indicated that these two groups reside predominantly in the Corozal, Orange Walk and Toledo Districts. An important factor to be considered in targeting poverty is the coincidence between this rate and the fact that, as indicated in the Poverty Report (ibid, p.15), significantly higher proportions of these two ethnicities and of Central American migrants reside in the rural sectors.

In sum, the 2002 CPA offers reliable indications of the causes, extent and distribution of poverty in Belize. It confirms that low incomes, insecure livelihoods and unemployment are major causes of poverty. Additionally, it identifies the poor as more likely to lack higher education and to have substantially more dependents than the non-poor. With respect to ethnic groups, the Indigenous Maya appear to be more vulnerable to poverty than any of the others. Furthermore poverty is most extensive in rural areas with the poor being concentrated in elementary occupations in the agriculture and natural resource sectors and rural incomes deriving mainly from the sale of labour, goods and services in the cash economy. Greatest vulnerability is experienced by rural households dependent on subsistence and citrus farming (GOB NHDAC, 2002, p. 35). In urban areas poverty is more likely to result from unemployment and deficiencies in the capabilities of the poor to respond to new

Table 2: Poverty by Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Poor	Indigent
Creole	26.5	5.1
Garifuna	24.3	2.2
Maya	77.0	54.8
Mestizo	30.1	6.2
Other	27.8	8.4

Source: GOB NHDAC 2002

or available economic opportunities. These deficiencies may arise mainly from inadequate levels of education, insufficient skill sets and/or poor health conditions.

2.4. Geographic Incidence of Poverty

The CPAs quantify poverty and indicate its depth, extent and severity at the District level only. As part of the NPESAP preparation process, poverty maps that complement the CPAs, drawing on broader Census and Labour Force survey data, have been prepared. The maps identify virtually every community in Belize (some 240 villages) by degree of poverty.²

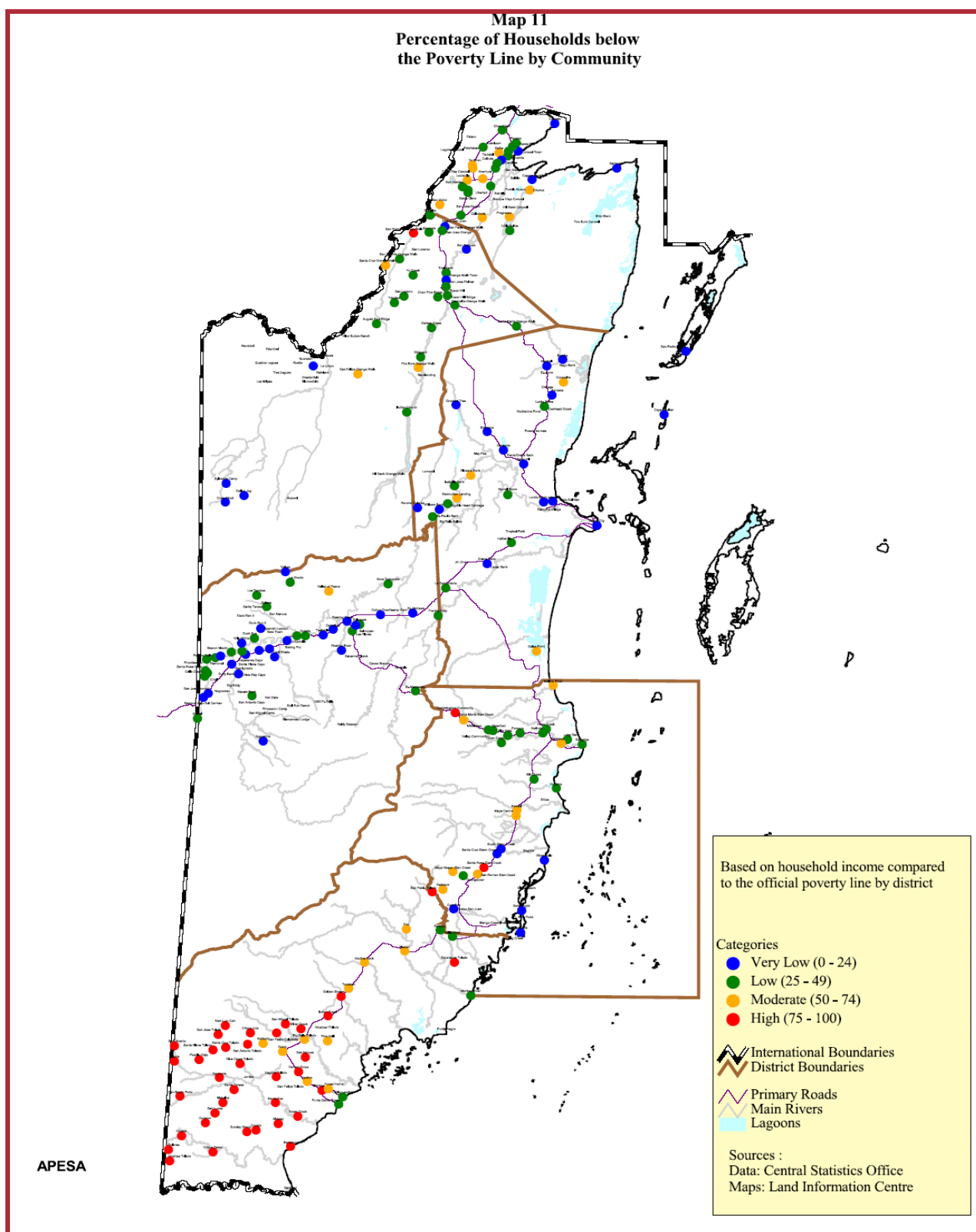
The Poverty Map incorporates measures such as income levels, housing standards, access to utilities (water, sanitation and electricity) and geographical remoteness that impede markets and livelihood security. A Quality of Life Index was developed from the mapping exercise, which is based on an income variable (percentage of non poor population) and eight thematic variables. The latter represent infrastructure (housing, water and electricity), access to health services, and environmental standards. These variables were all measured at the village level. The index shows that of the 241 villages in Belize, 77 (32 percent) can be categorized as poor.

Mapping was also conducted for several neighbourhoods in Belize City where the quality of life has palpably declined in recent years as a result of migration, overcrowded settlement, squatting, unemployment, crime and the deterioration of public services. In general, the Poverty Map confirms the predominance of poverty in the Toledo District and provides greater precision on the distribution and condition of poor people throughout Belize.

Whilst the mapping exercise outputs included several maps, only the total poverty map which incorporates the eight criteria applied is included at Figure 1 overleaf. The total poverty map represents an important tool for identifying the most vulnerable communities, providing focus for the design of pro-poor policies, and targeting interventions.

² See *Poverty Map for Belize*, APESA, September 2005.

Figure 1 – Total Poverty Map



3.0. Key Issues and Priorities

3.1. Planning, Targeting and the MDGs

Given the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, its elimination/reduction is especially challenging, so that effective targeting is critical. Such targeting must take account of communities, groups and segments of the population that must be reached and of the macro level indicators that would demonstrate success. Recognizing the challenges and inadequate pace at which progress was being made, countries committed in 2000 to a set of goals and related targets to support the effective planning and implementation of poverty elimination measures. These goals and their respective targets are collectively the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As with most other countries, Belize has committed to the MDGs, and considers the inclusion not only of the universal targets, but of additional targets generated for the Caribbean, and those promoted and endorsed by agencies such as the UNIFEM, as part of its arsenal for poverty planning and targeting.

Jeffrey Sachs (2005, p. 273) describes a true MDG-based poverty reduction strategy as having the following five parts:-

- A differential diagnosis through which the policies and investments that a country needs to achieve the MDGs are identified.
- An investment plan consisting of the size, timing and costs of the investments needed.
- A financial plan to facilitate the investment plan. This should include the calculated financing gap that donors would need to fill in order for the investment plan to be realized and the goals achieved.
- A donor plan that provides the multiyear donor commitments to filling the country's MDGs financing gap.
- A public management plan that sets out the governance and public administration mechanisms that will facilitate the implementation of the expanded public investment strategy.

Whilst this NPESAP does not meet all of the five criteria for an MDG based plan as described by Sachs, it highlights the importance of the MDGs. In particular, the issues and priorities identified in this segment incorporate the related global MDG commitment wherever possible, as well as a general assessment of the status of developments in the respective areas, and the implications for poverty reduction targeting. Furthermore, the relevant MDG targets are incorporated in the strategic frame set out in the later chapters.

3.2. Macroeconomic Policy and Public Sector Expenditure

Fiscal and macro-economic reality determines the parameters in which poverty reduction objectives are set. Excessive levels of public debt are a major threat to national development and severely confine resources available for the delivery of public services and for poverty reduction. At the end of 2005 public sector and publicly guaranteed debt stood at \$2.1 billion. This represented a debt to GDP ratio of almost 90%. More

importantly, interest payments absorbed some 27% of fiscal revenue, so that resource availability for social investment was significantly constrained. In efforts to improve the fiscal position, a debt restructuring exercise was undertaken and a self-imposed fiscal stabilization initiative was designed. These efforts yielded a reduction in the debt/GDP ratio and some relief in the level of debt servicing. The implementation of a poverty reduction strategy will be tempered by the fact that the debt service payments will increase sharply as of 2019. This marks the end of the period during which interest only is paid on the Super Bond.

3.3. Human Capabilities and Human Development

The focus of **MDG 1** is the reduction of extreme poverty by one-half by 2015. In determining the measures required to achieve this goal, it is important to note that economic growth, whilst essential for poverty reduction, cannot be assumed to translate automatically into improved standards of living. Table 3 below underscores this point in that consistent GDP growth in real GDP and increasing per capita income for Belize over the 2000 to 2007 period are accompanied by fluctuations in the country's HDI. Whilst account must be taken of the effect of changes in the method of calculating the education index of the HDI composite, there is still a suggested intractability of living conditions of the poor. This is reinforced by annual average unemployment rates in excess of 10% for the period³

Table 3: Key Economic Indicators

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Real GDP Growth ¹	13.0	5.0	5.1	9.3	4.6	3.0	5.3	1.6
Unemployment ¹	11.1	9.1	10.0	12.9	11.6	11.0	9.4	8.5
Per Capita GDP ¹	6,659.3	6,826.1	7,096.7	7,285.9	7,507.2	7,691.6	8,097.3	8,180.5
Human Development Index ²	0.795	0.776	0.737	0.753	0.751	0.778	0.771	0.772
<i>Life Expectancy Index</i>	0.82	0.78	0.78	0.75	0.78	0.849	0.851	0.851
<i>Education Index</i>	0.86	0.88	0.75	0.77	0.77	0.773	0.762	0.762
<i>GDP Index</i>	0.67	0.67	0.69	0.71	0.70	0.712	0.701	0.703

Sources

1: Central Bank of Belize Annual Report 2008

2: Human Development Reports 2002 - 2009

³ The HDI is a composite of indices for Life Expectancy, Education and GDP. Each of the three indices are weighted 33.3% of the HDI Index. For details on the construction of the HDI, see *The Human Development Index: A History* by E. A. Stanton at

<http://www.peri.umass.edu/Publication.236+M52d58c45817.0.html>

3.3.1. Primary and Secondary Education

The human development paradigm is built on the concept of the importance of measures to provide for expansion in human capabilities and so assure long, healthy and fulfilling lives. Key elements in the human development paradigm include education and health.

Research establishes a clear link between levels of educational attainment and poverty. Increasing access to adequate education is, therefore, a priority for poverty reduction. A key aspect of **MDG 2** is the consistent achievement of **universal primary education** by all girls and boys by 2005.. This goal is critical for instilling the basic intellectual capabilities on which children's future prospects and opportunities are founded. For the 2006/07 school year, Belize's statistics show a ratio slightly more than 100 boys to every 100 girls enrolled in primary schools and a rate of transition to secondary schools of just over 85%.

Given the narrowed definition of primary education as ending at Grade 5, Belize appears poised to achieve have achieved the by 2005 target. On the other hand the country is undergoing a phenomenon prevalent in many Caribbean societies today—high dropout rates of boys in secondary school and their low rates of transition to the tertiary level. The ratio of males to 100 females in secondary school ranged from 91 to 95 over the 2002/03 to 2006/07 school year, and in some districts was recorded as low as 81. Derived from the number of students enrolled at the tertiary level in 2006/07, the situation worsens considerably to 62 males per 100 females.

Belize has consistently pursued the 20/20 target so that more than 20% of recurrent fiscal expenditure is allocated to education⁴. Almost 60% of this allocation is dedicated to primary education. Donor-funded facilities such as the Social Investment Fund (SIF) and the Commonwealth Debt Initiative (CDI) have supplemented local capital investment to facilitate numerous measures that support educational advancement and increase access to schooling. Nevertheless, challenges remain. These include high supplementary costs associated with educational materials at primary and secondary levels that discourage the inclusion of poor families and the need for improved educational performance by boys. There are also issues of quality as illustrated by the persistently low levels of trained teachers and by the poor performance, especially of rural schools, in the Primary School Examination in mathematics and science and the average performance in the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Examinations. CSEC general proficiency passes of grades 1 to 3 have remained below 75 percent for Belize over the 2003 to 2006 period (CSO 2007, pp. 151–154). Questions arise also regarding the relevance of education, and the need to apply indicators other than the CSEC to adequately capture facets that meet both students' and national development needs.

⁴ The 20/20 target here refers to an international commitment by developed and developing countries at the World Summit for Social Development in March 1995 to ensure that no less than 20% of developing countries' national budgets and of international aid received is spent on social development. This measure includes funding channeled through NGOs.

3.3.2. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Post-Secondary Education

While the MDG 2 target for universal primary education addresses fundamental educational provision, additional reforms are needed for the development of a well trained and responsive work force. This quality is essential in the workforce for the pursuit of economic growth that supports social development and poverty reduction. For Belize, reforms are required in secondary, technical, tertiary and adult education levels that form the nexus between life-chances, livelihoods and social mobility. To this end, another element of the Education Programme, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) aims to provide young people with marketable technical skills. This effort was supported initially by a Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) project that established new technical vocational institutes in four Districts and rehabilitated three (3) existing centres. The new centres provide for better access to education in rural areas where poverty is most severe and where many young people have been excluded from knowledge of alternative opportunities. This programme has significant poverty reduction potential in the medium term. It must be noted, however, that vocational training can only generate economic opportunity if it is correlated with robust policies for growth.

Tertiary education and adult and continuing education (ACE) have also been expanded. The tertiary education sector comprises the University of Belize and Galen University, along with a number of sixth forms. The universities are both established and together provide a growing range of degree courses in the sciences, social sciences, education, health, and business that prepare individuals for careers in the professions and in technical occupations that attract investment essential to national development.

ACE should be an important element of poverty reduction. In formal and informal ways, public and civil society institutions work with communities and their organizations to deliver programmes that increase knowledge essential to improving capabilities, livelihoods and living standards. There is a plethora of such programmes, sponsored by GOB, NGOs, business institutions, aid donors and development projects, and directed usually at specific needs and problems. The Education Strategy for 2005/10 envisages greater support and consolidation approach to literacy and ACE that targets the needs of the poorest people.

Increasingly, Belizeans take advantage of educational opportunities to achieve the goal of enhanced living standards. To reverse the association of poor educational capacity with poverty, the education system must be seen to provide the stepping stones to social mobility. In recognition of this, the NPESAP promotes the extension of educational advancement to poor households through greater inclusion and targeted economic support for schooling. One key element in this regard would be a conditional cash transfer scheme, which is still in the design phase.

3.3.3. Health

MDG 4 and 5 target the reduction of **child mortality** and improvement in **maternal health** and MDG 6 addresses HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases. These constitute critical health priorities. Whilst important as indicators of well-being, the three MDGs

Table 4: Child and Infant Mortality Rates and Immunization Statistics

Indicator	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Under-five mortality rate	19.8	23.5	24.8	20.5	18.2
Infant mortality rate	14.7	18.4	19.7	17.2	13.2
Proportion of 1 year old children immunised against measles	97	95	100	96	95

Source: Ministry of Health

reflect narrower health concerns than expressed by stakeholders during the 2007 NPESAP Public Consultation processes phase and those identified in the Ministry of Health's strategic plan for the 2009-2011 period. These concerns included issues of access to, and quality of, health services, as well as the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Child Mortality

MDG 4 targets the reduction of mortality of children under five or **Child Mortality Rate** (CMR) by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. The Belize 2005 MDG Report shows this as a decline from 19.4/1,000 live births in 1990 to 5.5/1,000 live births (NHDAC, 2005, p. 17). The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), which to a significant extent influences the CMR, is targeted to reduce to 3.5/1,000 live births over the same period.

Table 4 shows the CME and IMR rates for the 2004 to 2008 period. Though there was some year to year fluctuation, the CMR has declined steadily from a peak in 1980 of 62/1,000. Significant contributors to this achievement include investments made in the 1980s in Maternal and Child Health, especially in rural areas, which increased the number of clinics, rural health nurses, and midwives and intensified immunization against major childhood diseases. As seen in the Table, no less than 95% of children under a year old have been immunized each year since 2004.

Further reductions in child mortality are feasible, even in economically austere times, providing current levels of child and maternal health care can be sustained. The IMR and CMR compare favourably with other middle income CARICOM countries. *The projections for 2015, however, require Belize to reduce existing rates to below levels current in developed nations with highly sophisticated health provision.* It may therefore be more efficient to focus at the local levels and so target impoverished districts such as Toledo to substantively reduce their levels of infant and child mortality. These are typically higher than the national averages by a substantial margin. Measures can include lowering the costs of health care, improving conditions for health personnel, enhancing mobile services, and strengthening health education programmes.

Table 5: Maternal Mortality Indicators

Indicator	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Maternal mortality ratio	63.86	134.1	69.7	85.3	55.6

Source: Ministry of Health

Maternal Health

Progress toward achievement of **MDG 5**, reduced **Maternal Mortality** has been marked by significant reduction in the indicator level (expressed as number of deaths per 100,000 births). The measure of this indicator in 2008, as seen in Table 5, showed a marked decline from 300 in 1990 as indicated in the 2005 MDG report. This is also much lower than the Latin America and Caribbean regional average rate of 190 and compares favourably with the global average of 40. Much of the decline is attributable to a 30.0% increase in the number of births attended by skilled medical personnel and to 85.0% of women receiving pre-natal care during pregnancy. This latter is effective even though only 14.0% access services in the first trimester. Since Belize has a small population, a rate of 40/100,000 equates to only three deaths per year. Reducing the average by two-thirds is therefore a challenging target.

As with the CMR and IMR, maternal mortality averages mask disparities between districts. In 2005, for instance, the MMR for the Stann Creek District was 32.8 whereas that for the Corozal District was 11.1 (SIB, 2008, p. 81). If Belize is to arrest the maternal mortality rate among the poorest families then improvements in pre- and antenatal care and access to sexual and reproductive health services are essential, especially in rural communities in areas with deficient health services. The inception of the National Health Insurance scheme (as in the Toledo pilot project) and the continuing reform of the health services were projected to bring these services within the reach of poor families and communities. In this regard, public/private partnerships with NGOs like the Belize Family Life Association would profit both government and health service consumers.

HIV/AIDS and Other Diseases

MDG 6 aims at combating **HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases**. It is important to note here that Belize is undergoing an epidemiological transition, with Non-Communicable Diseases and 'life-style' conditions being the most common causes of illness and death. This is demonstrated by Table 6 which shows conditions such as diabetes, cerebro-vascular and coronary episodes, road traffic injuries and homicide to be among the ten leading causes of death over the 2005 to 2007 period. Addressing these conditions requires measures such as curricula and non-curricula educational programs that will influence lifestyle choices, such as dietary and coping habits.

Table 6: Leading Causes of Death

Causes of Death	2005	2006	2007
Diabetes Mellitus	94 (1)	131 (1)	107 (1)
Pulmonary circulation and other heart diseases	55 (9)	79 (3)	89 (2)
Ischaemic heart diseases	81 (3)	65 (6)	80 (3)
HIV AIDS	76 (5)	75 (4)	79 (4)
Accidental or purposely inflicted injury	57 (8)	50 (9)	76 (5)
Cerebrovascular	61 (7)	69 (5)	74 (6)
Hypertensive Disease	94 (1)	84 (2)	66 (7)
Transport Accidents	78 (4)	68 (6)	64 (8)
Acute Respiratory Infections	65 (6)	63 (7)	56 (9)
Other Chronic Pulmonary Diseases;	--	--	34 (10)
Total Cases	1,369	1,396	1,389
Source: Abstract of Statistics 2008			

This increasing impact of NCDs is noted at a regional and the 2007 CARICOM Heads of Government Declaration of Port of Spain entitled *Uniting to Stop the Epidemic of Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases* calls on member states to, inter-alia, establish “National NCD Commissions or analogous bodies to plan and coordinate the comprehensive prevention and control of chronic NCDs” (http://www.caricom.org/jsp/communications/meetings_statements/declaration_port_of_spain_chronic_ncds.jsp, accessed 29 August 2009). This might be a useful strategy for Belize.

UNAIDS reported an estimated 2.1% HIV/AIDS adult prevalence for Belize as of 2007 (http://data.unaids.org/pub/GlobalReport/2008/GR08_2007_HIVPrevWallMap_GR08_en.jpg, downloaded May 11, 2009). Rearranging the UNAIDS grouping of countries to include Belize, Guyana and Suriname (all members of CARICOM) in the Caribbean rather than in Latin America, this is the fifth highest prevalence of ten Caribbean countries reported on. Interestingly, prevalence levels of the Caribbean countries (as reorganized) and Latin America are markedly different. The second lowest level reported for the Caribbean (after Cuba with 0.1%) was 1.1% whereas that for Latin America was 0.2%. The highest level recorded for Latin America (excluding the three CARICOM countries) was 0.8%.⁵

In 2007, 5.7% of all deaths in the age range 15-49 years were attributable to AIDS. Moreover, the male to female ratio of HIV cases in 2003 was 1.16:1 and with patterns of infection strongest among 15-29 year old females and among males 30-49 years. In 2002, AIDS was the leading cause of death among women of child-bearing age (15-45 years). Clearly both HIV/AIDS and NCDs are prevalent enough in Belize to pose public health hazards and erode the productive capacity of households. These factors make them major contributors to families’ impoverishment and a threat to development.

⁵ Based on the countries listed, the Latin America group refers to Meso (Mexico and Central America) and South America.

Reaching **MDG 6** calls for robust responses from GOB, the Ministry of Health, the National AIDS Commission (NAC) and NGOs involved in health and welfare. Responses required include the mounting of targeted campaigns and educational programmes directed to changing peoples' lifestyles, attitudes, and behaviour towards physical activity, diet, tobacco and alcohol use, as well as sexual activities and HIV/AIDS. Particular issues needing to be addressed are translating knowledge into modified behaviours, especially among the most vulnerable groups such as young women where HIV infection rates are rising, and women in general, where obesity, a risk factor for diabetes and hypertension, is prevalent. Combating the stigma of HIV/AIDS, which prevents vulnerable people seeking professional help and treatment, will also need to be given priority. Practical steps like the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) program and the screening of pregnant mothers, which have proved valuable, will also need continuing support as an integral part of the MOH strategy for HIV/AIDS prevention. MOH and the NAC will also need to advocate for increasing the pool of specialists essential to the counselling and treatment of HIV/AIDS patients and their families. Strengthening NCD prevention and control measures at the primary health care (PHC) level and the integration of prevention, care, treatment, and support services for HIV/AIDS into PHC will be critical strategies.

The establishment of the NAC in 2000 has given focus to the national response to HIV/AIDS and the initiation of HIV/AIDS Committees throughout the country provides structure for the implementation of programmes. HIV/AIDS activities in Belize benefit from access to UN funding and technical assistance, and the country has accessed resources from the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Even so, human and financial resources are constrained, and greater focus on prevention and strengthening of the supporting health system is needed.

Where communicable diseases are concerned, some of the traditional immuno-preventable ones such as measles, cholera and poliomyelitis are addressed through well-established public health programs, so that no cases have been reported in several years. Other infections such as malaria and dengue fever persist, with spasmodic outbreaks. Communicable diseases remain a health priority and in 2003 accounted for 16% of all adult deaths.

3.4. Private Enterprise, Infrastructure and Trade

Despite capital expenditure reductions due to fiscal constraints, the development of infrastructure remains central to GOB's strategy for equitable development. Moreover, the provision of economic and social infrastructure is salient to a number of poverty reduction initiatives. Road maintenance and construction are recurrent demands on capital expenditure and contribute critically to economic development, especially in terms of agricultural access, the transfer of goods and the provision of services. In remote districts like Toledo, with heavy rainfall, road maintenance places inordinate demands on limited resources, but is essential to the productive activities and good governance of Belize's poorest District. Accordingly, the Ministry of Works (MOW) allots priority to Toledo for the maintenance of its expanding farm and rural access road network. Similarly, MOW has given priority to the Blue Creek to Orange Walk roads,

which will have direct impact on access, productivity and livelihoods in rural communities.

Whilst the road infrastructure above is intended to support primary activities, other projects like the Southside Project in Belize City, funded under an OPEC agreement, are designed to address multi-faceted problems through infrastructure development. Thus the Southside Project will be the source not only of physical improvement and urban rehabilitation but also of employment and the expansion of opportunities, especially for urban youth. Similarly, the CDB-funded TVET project, the 'flagship' employment training initiative, is dependent on appropriate development of physical facilities and infrastructure. Also accorded priority is the completion of the Southern Highway to remove the final hindrance to access to Toledo. The Placencia road will also be funded by the CDB and will advance both tourism development and aqua culture production.

Adequate access to potable water is also an infrastructure priority and figures in the MDG 7 targets nationally and internationally. Over the past decade significant progress towards this goal has been made, especially in improving supplies in poor rural communities. In 2003 80.8% of population had access to improved water sources. The donor funded Social Investment and Basic Needs Trust Funds (now combined) and the CDI have been an important in channelling financial resources into rural water supply. Access to secure water supplies to poor and/or remote communities remains a priority under the NPESAP.

Over the past decade considerable investment has been made in the housing sector, including low-income housing. This has included a shelter programme for home construction and improvement funded by CDB and significant investment by GOB utilizing external loans. Innovation such as the Habitat for Humanity approach identified in the public consultation phase could be encouraged under this type of arrangement. Affordable housing policy remains a priority, with budgetary allocations set aside for low income housing.

3.5. Social Protection and Other Cross Cutting Issues

3.5.1. Risk and Vulnerability

Belize's Human Development Index ranking ranged from 67 to 99 over the 2002 to 2009 period. This places it in the medium human development category (UNDP 2002 - 2008). Notwithstanding, the Belize Country Report for the comparative study of Social Protection and Poverty Reduction in the Caribbean (CDB 2004) specifies a range of threats affecting the lives of the poorest and incipiently vulnerable population sectors, and the responses required to redress them. The Report is broad in scope and corresponds with many of the issues identified in the foregoing sections. It stresses four key risks that influence vulnerability to poverty: *economic, life cycle, employment and environmental*. Economic risk is considered the major threat to livelihoods and standards of living because of Belize's 'openness' and its vulnerability to globalisation.

Where employment and life-cycle risks are concerned, the Social Security system offers basic benefits to the employed population and investment from SSB funds contribute to

wider forms of social protection such as pensions for the uninsured. A nascent National Health Insurance scheme is poised to increase health coverage. These programmes are supplemented by social assistance programmes that provide small cash transfers to the neediest individuals and families. The gradual growth of health and education provision since the country achieved independence contributes to the inclusion of vulnerable populations in development, especially in remote regions. The initiation of a national TVET programme focuses educational investment on training to optimize economic opportunity and livelihood development. Improvements in the areas of micro-credit through partnerships with the credit union movement promises to stimulate the growth of micro-enterprise as a means of preventing poverty.

Vulnerability to natural disasters is unavoidable in Belize and the poor are most at risk. Disaster mitigation and the strengthening of the National Emergency Management Organization in recent years have focused on risk reduction, rapid response, and the protection of the most vulnerable areas. Civil society's role in mitigating social vulnerability is widely recognized and encouraged in Belize and at the official level, their participation is supported through partnerships and subventions. The scope of civil society initiatives is broad. It includes not only social welfare functions but also support for economic and environmental objectives that reduce poverty. Often NGOs extend their reach to the most remote communities, providing services that government alone would find difficult to sustain. Some NGOs such as those caring for the blind, hearing impaired and physically disabled are the sole providers of services to specific vulnerable groups. This long tradition of voluntary service is an indispensable social protection mechanism that the Government will continue to foster through policy debate and economic resources.

The Social Protection Report identifies major deficiencies in social protection which includes the working poor, abused or abandoned children, child labour, abused women, older persons, and disaffected or excluded youth. While policies to respond to nearly all these issues have been developed, resource constraints hinder enforcement. As with the NPESAP, the Social Protection Report considers adequate social protection to depend not so much on orthodox welfare measures as on the degree to which Belize is able to reorganize its economy in ways that include the poor and vulnerable in broader economic and social opportunities. There is recognition that, in the short-term, resource constraints will limit the degree to which social protection measures can be expanded. Therefore, institutional re-engineering and increased efficiency, rather than substantially increased expenditure, are proposed as the means of widening the safety-net. To this end, priority is accorded to the following functions:

- Community-focused responses and interventions
- Agency coordination and collaboration
- Equity and transparency in interventions
- Protection against the impact of economic transition
- Public education to adapt attitudes to economic change

Each of these priorities for reducing poverty resonates with NPESAP priorities and is incorporated into the implementation frameworks.

3.5.2. Environmental Management

Environmental management in Belize is provided for through legislation that helps to address current and emerging challenges. A signatory to the Kyoto Treaty, Belize's national legislation for land administration and for environmental conservation protection is extensive: Provisions include the National Lands Act (1992), the Environmental Protection Act (1992), the Housing and Town Planning Act (1990), the Forest Act (1990), the Wild Life Protection Act (1990), and the National Parks Systems Act (1990). Some 44% of land in Belize is subject to various forms of biodiversity protection. This includes terrestrial areas and large expanses of coastline and the barrier reef safeguarded under the Marine Protected Areas legislation. Management of protected areas is supported by a significant number of innovative co-management agreements between the government and environmental NGOs and communities that increase local level participation in the regulation and decision-making.

The poorest people and communities in Belize are predominantly rural and their livelihoods depend largely on access to land and natural resources. Tension exists often between poor communities and natural resource management when poor people, as part of their struggle to cope with their poverty, encroach on forest reserves and national lands for housing materials, cultivable land, and food supplements. This highlights the resource competition between poor and non-poor and enforcement challenges for which relatively new provisions, such as the National Protected Areas Policy, seeks equitable balance.

MDG 7 aims at achieving environmental sustainability, an objective which, as with MDG 3, is cross cutting. Major priorities consistent with this goal include maintaining biodiversity and guarding the environment against further degradation that threatens economic sustainability. Issues of access to natural resources, such as access to land and competing land use (for example between tourism and agriculture), food security and safe drinking water are critical foci in this area. An important element of these issues is that of land use practices which contribute to degradation. These can include hillside farming without adequate provisions such as terracing, heavy use of fertilizers and milpa farming.

3.5.3. Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management

The economic vulnerability of persons living below the poverty translates to exposure to the impacts of natural disaster which is greater than the general population. Poor persons are more likely to be

“The expected impacts of climate change pose a range of risks to human beings, including water stress, loss of important ecosystems, changes in agricultural productivity ...increased burdens from malnutrition and infectious diseases, and increased mortality and morbidity from heat stress, flooding and drought.”

Belize and Climate Change: The Costs of Inaction, UNDP Human Development Issues Paper, 2009. p. 7

housed in physical structures that are not adequate to withstand high winds or earthquakes. Furthermore, a high proportion of the urban poor live in areas that are low lying and prone to floods. There is also a significant exposure to flooding experienced by those persons who live along the riverbanks in rural areas. Another area of vulnerability experienced by the poor or working poor is that of loss of livelihoods as a due to loss of habitat resulting from a natural disaster. Recent notable examples of this was the loss of fruit crop in the Orange Walk and Corozal Districts and the loss of traps experienced by fishermen as a result of Hurricane Dean (ECLAC, 2008. p. 12).

The vulnerabilities of those living in conditions of risk can be exacerbated by the effects of climate change. In addition to the increasing frequency of natural cyclones, loss of income and livelihoods can arise from resource decline due to such phenomena as coral bleaching (which depletes habitat and food for fish stock) and drought (which contributes to land degradation). These issues point to a need for adequate mitigation and adaptation measures such as rehabilitation of land and marine systems and shifts toward sustainable land, water and other natural resource use practices. The latter would include changes in farming and water extraction practices, and continued focus on improving ecosystems through biodiversity protection.

3.5.4. Gender

Gender dimensions of the 2002 poverty assessment provide mixed indicators of the impact of gender roles on the economic lives of individual and families. The National Gender Policy (2002) noted that despite educational advances, equal economic opportunity continues to elude women, as disparities persist in the areas of employment, recruitment, salary, promotion, benefits, and access to credit (Government of Belize, 2002, p.42,). Whilst the labour force participation rates for men consistently exceeded 75.0% over the 2003-2007 period, the comparable rate for women did not surpass 45.0% for the same period. Moreover, the unemployment rate amongst women in the same time-frame fell no lower than 13.1%, whilst that for males was recorded as low as 5.8%. Power and decision-making remains dominated by men in all sectors, and particularly in parliament where, as of 2008, there are no elected female area representatives. A study commissioned by the NHDAC for the NPESAP 2006-10 suggested that economic disparity, coupled with women's lack of political power, adversely affects their ability to access good health care and renders poor women more vulnerable to domestic violence, abuse, and HIV/AIDS. In low income households, advancement is much less apparent and additional burdens are borne by women as a result of traditional domestic roles and responsibility for dependents.

MDG 3 promotes gender equality and is a cross-cutting goal. The National Gender Policy (2002) indicates that there is little gender disparity in levels of poverty with both females and males representing about one third of poor people. In education, progress towards gender equality as measured by the ratio of boys and girls in primary school appears to have been achieved⁶. There is a widely recognized issue, however, of girls significantly outperforming boys in national primary school (completion) examinations

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and in secondary and tertiary schooling. There is also a dichotomy in that women's increased educational achievements have not translated into equal participation in politics or in private sector careers. This notwithstanding the assimilation of women into higher level positions in the public service.

GOB continues to support gender equality and the empowerment of women as a principle of good governance. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was ratified in 1990. Government is also a signatory to several ILO conventions advocating equal economic opportunities, remuneration, and employment benefits that, vigorously enforced, would address issues critical to the advancement of women. The National Gender Policy comprehensively elaborates the gender situation in Belize and proposes priorities for reform and greater gender equity. The five areas of greatest concern for improvement are identified as: health and access to health care; wealth and employment generation; the reduction of abuse and violence (especially against women and children); education and skills training; and greater participation in power and decision-making. Targeted advances in each of these spheres are critical to poverty reduction among poor households.

3.5.5. Governance

As with gender and the environment, governance is a cross-cutting issue. Economic development and improved income distribution is contingent on stable political and legal architecture. Sound fiscal policies, greater accountability, transparency, and service delivery, and effective formulation and administration of policy are all key governance priorities.

3.5.6. Participation and Local Government

Reduction and elimination of poverty requires the full engagement of all of society's stakeholders in both the planning and implementation stages. A poverty strategy and action plan, once agreed to, must become a cohesive aspect of a country's overall comprehensive development plan, so that synergies and effective targeting can be achieved in implementation. The Country Poverty Assessment, MDG Needs Assessment and Horizon 2030 initiative together provide a unique opportunity for the NPESAP planning and implementation processes to contribute to, and benefit from, citizens' engagement.

Local government in Belize was gradually consolidated in the post-Independence era as a basis for democratic participation in decision-making at community level. It is now widespread, comprising elected representation in city councils in Belmopan and Belize City, seven town councils and some 184 village councils. Recent reforms have devolved additional authority for urban services and governance to city and town councils. Village councils, representing mainly rural communities, many of which are remote and poor, remain relatively fragile. Steps are now being taken through the National Association of Village Councils (NAVCO) to strengthen these village authorities to increase their capacity for participation and rural service provision. A key element of this will be cooperation between BRDP and NAVCO for the implementation of community development projects in rural areas. GOB is committed to strengthening local

government as mechanism for participation and increased self-reliance in local decision-making.

Commitment to improving governance, making services responsive to people's development needs, and building strong and prosperous communities where people are secure in their livelihoods, their homes, and their neighbourhoods, remains at the forefront of GOB's priorities for reducing poverty.

4.0. Strategy and Action

4.1. The Strategic Thrusts

In order to sharpen the focus, The NPESAP will be structured around the following five mutually sustaining strategic thrusts which enshrine the issues and priorities identified above.

- 1. Economic Policies for Enable Growth**
- 2. Effective Planning and Transparent and Accountable Governance for Growth**
- 3. Investment for Human Capital Development**
- 4. Infrastructure for Economic Growth**
- 5. Strategic Support for Equity and Development**

The interaction between these strategic thrusts is the key to Action Plan implementation and to the effectiveness of the package of measures proposed for reducing poverty. Furthermore, the thrusts incorporate both the objectives of the national MDGs and the priorities identified by participants in the public consultation phase. Each strategic thrust is elaborated separately in the following sections of the NPESAP.

4.1.1. Economic Policies for Enabled Growth

The first strategic thrust of the NPESAP is the promotion of monetary and fiscal policies that provide for economic stability and promote growth. This thrust is important as it provides for the enabling environment for the implementation of specific and targeted poverty measures. Of particular importance is the need to ensure that domestic and external debt resulting from persistent deficit financing does not crowd out resources required for social programmes. In addition, realizing operating surpluses can lend to better resources for allocation to these programmes, for leveraging external finances, and for complementing non-government and private sector social sector initiatives.

4.1.2. Transparency and Accountability for Good Governance

The strategic thrust is aimed at ensuring the establishment or maintenance of conditions that are critical to ensuring that there are no impediments to vulnerable individuals and groups. To meet that objective, it is geared toward ensuring that issues which would impede the effective functioning of the key governance bodies—the Ombudsman, Contractor General and Auditor General—are addressed.

4.1.3. Investment for Human Capital Development

This strategic thrust directly targets the root causes of poverty by providing for training and development of the citizenry and improved health services. These are premised on the human development paradigm which promotes improved capacity and conditions to ensure citizens can enjoy long, healthy and active lives. The main objective of the

strategic thrust, therefore, is to engender entrepreneurship, improved income generation, and an engaged, educated, and healthy populace.

4.1.4. Infrastructure for Growth and Sustainability

This strategic thrust is especially geared to providing for improved economic activity through the provision of physical assets, as well as improved quality of life through measures that would ensure a healthy environment. Provisions such as clean water and environmental health are incorporated here.

4.1.5. Strategic Support for Equity and Social Development

This thrust aims to ensure that support is provided for immediate alleviation of conditions of the poor and for support to those who are most vulnerable.

Strategic Geographic Interventions

Prevailing fiscal constraints raise doubts regarding the availability of additional internal or external resources for the implementation of the Action Plan. It is imperative therefore, that poverty reduction targets the poorest people and communities. About one third of Belizeans experience poverty, with 11% being vulnerable to extreme deprivation. The distribution of poverty is not uniform. Some districts and urban neighbourhoods experience more severe poverty than others. It is GOB policy to address poverty in all its manifestations while recognizing that the poorest people and their communities will need priority attention to redress economic and social inequality.

Overall, basic human needs are managed through a range of services provided by a network of public institutions and civil society organizations including; education, health, and other human resource programmes. Some programmes with poverty reduction dimensions such as Social Security, the TVET, the health reform initiative and the Belize Rural Development Programme are designed to widely impact Belizean life and improve the life chances and living standards of significant numbers of people, not all of whom will be poor. Yet other programmes, such as those to address HIV/AIDS, social assistance, and child protection, are designed to meet the needs of groups with specific vulnerabilities. A third approach seeks to directly target poor geographical areas, communities and urban neighbourhoods and make strategic interventions that redress persistent poverty through comprehensive development programmes.

The NPESAP proposes three targets for strategic and comprehensive intervention. These are rural communities identified by the Poverty Map as having high rates of extreme poverty; the Toledo District as a whole; and the Southside of Belize City, each of which has been targeted as a result of poverty research. Funding for these targeted areas is either already available, being sought externally, or could be provided from reallocations within existing expenditure plans. Also, targeting the poorest does not mean the exclusion of other priority areas that may arise

The Poorest Communities: The Poverty Map has identified some 43 communities in Belize where half or more of the households are classified as indigent.⁷ Community development activities have become a popular approach to address many of the immediate needs of these poor communities, and account for many of the operations financed by the Social Investment Fund. Typically, projects involve small-scale infrastructure like school rehabilitation and extension, water systems and sanitary facilities. Activities in health, skills training and social services are also undertaken. Due to resource limitations and a policy to spread the benefits as widely as possible, SIF projects are often piecemeal and entail ‘trade-offs’ between competing needs. This effect may be improved by the more recent efforts at targeting BRDP resources to agriculture and livelihoods which can complement the SIF programme objectives.

Belize City – Southside: The Southside of Belize City comprises three political divisions - Lake Independence, Collet and Port Loyola – a combined area of about 15 square kilometres with about 5,300 households. It is an older, less developed area adjacent to wetlands with poor drainage, inferior infrastructure, and inadequate public services. Land is not clearly demarcated and the area has witnessed a surge of lower income settlers. Residential structures tend to be randomly located and poorly constructed and many lack basic sanitary services. Unemployment is high, estimated at twice the national average of 12 percent, and crime in the area is a growing concern. There is general agreement that urgent action is needed to improve the living conditions of most of the estimated 24,000 persons living there.

The Ministry of Economic Development has prepared a Southside Poverty Alleviation Project and funding is being negotiated with the OPEC Fund. The project emphasizes drainage and transport infrastructure with lesser allocations for economic opportunities (training and small enterprise credit). The project is expected to cost Bze\$47m over four years. Action is now underway to address the Southside poverty issue through measures that seek to arrest urban decline and the inclusion of local people in economic benefits. Such targeted, co-ordinated and complementary poverty reduction measures are expected to produce rapid improvement in the quality of life of Southside residents.

Toledo District: Toledo District, with 79% of its population below the poverty line remains the poorest District in Belize. It has long been recognized as the severest poverty reduction challenge confronting GOB. The predominantly Maya inhabitants observe mostly traditional patterns of production and culture. A large proportion of communities identified by the Poverty Map as extremely poor are located in Toledo. Despite numerous economic and social investment initiatives over a period of three decades, sustained improvement in living conditions in Toledo has proved elusive.

⁷ Many of these communities are in the Toledo District and would benefit from resources allocated to the Toledo Action Plan

Table 6: Updated NPESAP Priorities

Poverty Reduction Measure	New and Emerging Initiatives	Relevant MDG
Strategic Thrust 1: Economic Policies for Enabled Growth		
<p><i>Measures endorsed by 2008 General Poll</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a new Development Finance Institution to provide micro-financing for small businesses, students, farmers and homeowners Reduce fuel costs by replacing the RRD with a lower flat tax Promote greater participation of communities in owning and managing tourism businesses Include communities and small operators in marketing training and product development to assist them in providing a high quality visitor experience. Develop and promote cultural attractions that are indigenous to specific local areas Sponsor market distribution channels to benefit smaller and grass roots tourism operators and afford international market access and exposure to all stakeholders Make affordable credit available to producers and marketers to support local production and export development Offer tax development incentives to farmers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Tourism Banana Support Belize Rural Development Programme Accompanying Measures for Sugar Fiscal Social Policy Based Loan Line of Credit for SME, Education and Housing Agricultural Service Programme Infrastructure Rehabilitation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency rehabilitation and mitigation Western Highway Rehabilitation 	<p>MDG 1: Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty by 2015.</p> <p>MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debt sustainability Market access Work access for youth

Poverty Reduction Measure	New and Emerging Initiatives	Relevant MDG
Strategic Thrust 2: Effective Planning and Transparent and Accountable Governance for Growth		
<p>Measures endorsed by 2008 General Poll</p> <p>i. Give immediate title to house lots and small agricultural plots to first time landowners.</p> <p>Other Measures</p> <p>i. Improve fiscal planning and management</p>	<p>1. Financial Planning and Programme Budgeting</p> <p>2. ProDev</p> <p>3. Audit Strengthening</p>	<p>This strategic thrust would directly impact Belize's ability to achieve all of the MDGs. In particular, it provides for a key requirement, which is adequate fiscal allocations for programmes that would contribute to the MDGs. This is a particular challenge for the two cross cutting areas—gender (MDG 3) and Environment (MDG7).</p>
Strategic Thrust 3: Investment for Human Capital Development		
<p>Measures endorsed by 2008 General Poll</p> <p>i. Expand mandatory education with the introduction of 10 years of compulsory education for all</p> <p>ii. Provide basic literacy, numeracy and continuing education opportunities for both adults and youths who have left the formal system</p> <p>iii. Expand courses at vocational and technical institutions in partnership with the private sector, to develop a skilled labour force to meet the changing needs of new industries.</p> <p>iv. Upgrade KMHM to a full-service, first rate health care facility, and upgrade facilities at all regional hospitals to provide all basic testing and care services</p> <p>v. Partner with business community to design an ongoing adult education programme for that will equip primary and</p>	<p>1. Social Policy Based Loan</p>	<p>MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education.</p> <p>MDG 4: Reduce child mortality.</p> <p>MDG5: Improve maternal health.</p> <p>MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.</p>

Poverty Reduction Measure	New and Emerging Initiatives	Relevant MDG
high school dropouts with life skills and jobs training to make them employable.		
Strategic Thrust 4: Infrastructure for Growth and Sustainability		
<p>Measures endorsed by 2008 General Poll</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Eliminate unsanitary sewerage disposal systems in rural areas with properly designed sewerage systems to improve safety and sanitation ii. Ensure that infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, water supply and drainage in rural and urban areas are properly designed and in place making existing and new areas ready for home construction iii. Refurbish all sugar roads. iv. Secure financing for another Belize City and countrywide district infrastructure project v. Identify National Infrastructure Development priorities in consultation with all major sectors of society, with an emphasis on areas that will result in the fastest economic growth and long term job creation opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Solid Waste Management 2. Integrated Municipal Policy 3. Kendall and Mullins River Bridges 4. Rural Financial Programme 	<p>MDG 7: Access to sustainable drinking water</p> <p>Significant progress in improving the social conditions of slum dwellers.</p> <p>MDG 8: Market access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to new technologies.
Strategic Thrust 5: Strategic Support for Equity and Social Development		
<p>Measures endorsed by 2008 General Poll</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Endow a new government housing programme and build 1,000 quality and affordable houses annually countrywide ii. Introduce a National School Feeding program at the primary school level in partnership with the private and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Country Poverty Assessment 2. South-side Alleviation 3. Housing Initiative 4. Land Management Programme III 	<p>MDG 1: Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty by 2015</p> <p>Relates broadly to the multi-faceted impact of poverty amongst the most vulnerability citizens and communities. Initiatives under this</p>

Poverty Reduction Measure	New and Emerging Initiatives	Relevant MDG
<p>social sector.</p> <p>iii. Charter a new programme of skills training, access to capital and social assistance for single mothers.</p> <p>iv. Create a robust and efficient national employment agency and small business development programme to assist job-seekers as well as employers seeking workers</p> <p>v. Provide direct annual subsidy of \$300 to qualifying 1st and 2nd year high school students.</p> <p>vi. Promote parenting education to improve child rearing skills and provide an understanding of the current risks and threats facing youths.</p> <p>vii. Include a counseling programme within the formal education system whereby each school would offer a support programme for children at risk.</p>	<p>(under negotiation)</p> <p>5. Conditional Cash Transfer (under review)</p>	<p>strategic thrust can help to ensure effective poverty targeting.</p>

4.2. The Action Plan

The Plan incorporates activities under the five strategic thrusts set out above. It indicates the expected outcomes of effective implementation and incorporates specific targets to support the achievement of NPESAP objectives through to 2013, along with the means of verification. The Plan is presented in Action Plan Frames 1 and 2 at the end of this document, which show expected outcomes, main actors, activities and targets for each of the strategic thrusts. *The activities and expected outcomes and targets* included are consistent with the comprehensive nature of the Strategy, and *are therefore interwoven and mutually reinforcing*.

4.2.1. Targets and The Millennium Development Goals

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is increasingly regarded in Belize (as well as globally) as the overriding objective of development plans and strategies. The relevant Goals are identified for each of the activities in Action Plan Frame 1. Action Plan objectives can contribute most to achievement of MDG 1 (Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger); MDG 3 (Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment); MDG 4 (Reducing child mortality); MDG 5 (Improving maternal health); MDG 6 (Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases); and MDG 8 (Developing a global partnership). MDG 7 (Ensuring environmental sustainability), is encapsulated in the land and natural resource management related strategies included in Governance, whilst MDG 2 (Achieving universal primary education), is replaced within the Action Plan by higher education objectives. This is aimed particularly at the secondary school level where Belize is experiencing greater challenges with respect to the education of males.

It must be noted here that successful pursuit of the Action Plan alone cannot result in full achievement of the MDGs. *Rather, the full achievement of the MDGs is contingent on coordinated implementation of all plans and strategies.* The NPESAP should be implemented in concert with an articulated long term vision and supporting medium term development strategy. *These in turn should be developed using an MDG-based planning approach.* Sectoral plans and strategies, which continue to be the most effective portfolio implementation tools, should emanate from or be based on the national long term plan and medium term strategy. It is hoped that the results of an ongoing MDG NACP II initiative to assess progress toward the MDGs and to determine the additional interventions needed for their achievement will contribute significantly to and better enable MDG-based planning.

4.2.2. Implementation and Coordination Issues

Achieving and Maintaining Political Support and Fiscal Discipline

The importance of political commitment and the negative effect of diversion from planned strategies and objectives are two of a number of recurring themes at public consultations on the NPESAP, as identified in the NHDAC Public Consultation Report (IDEAS, 2005). The concerns of participants from across Belize's geographic and economic spectrum on the role of politics and the directorate are reflected in the first point on bottlenecks described in Box 3 at Section 4.2.3. This encapsulates the issue of unplanned project activities and deviations from project objectives that often result in lower than anticipated benefits accruing to the target population. This concern was expressed as recently as the January 26, 2007 consultation on the NPES.

An effective Action Plan therefore requires that every effort be made to ensure that objectives pursued in project implementation are consistent with those articulated in the relevant plans and that the benefits accrue to the intended recipients. This is especially necessary to re-instill confidence in the general populace, and more particularly in those most in need. In addition to the deployment of efficient and effective teams, then, the NPESAP and related activities require the firm support of the political directorate, and input and guidance of beneficiaries that would provide a balance of local and national perspectives.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the NPESAP, a particularly important implementation issue is the need for consistent political commitment through the plan period to the macro-economic goals. The benefit of the re-profiled debt and of the improving fiscal position can only be fully realized with consistent fiscal discipline. The very inclusion of these activities within the Action Plan frame is based on the recognition that achieving the objectives of poverty elimination would be completely undermined by an unstable macro-economic environment. Moreover, given the low level of access of the poor and marginalized compared to the rest of the society, they stand to bear a more than proportionate share of the negative impacts of macro-economic imbalance.

Engaging Appropriate of Implementation Actors

In recognition of the importance of an enabling political and economic environment to the achievement of the NPESAP objectives, distinction is made between activities at the macro and programme levels. Macro-level activities are those which must be lead or undertaken and/or be committed to by actors and agents at the highest political and administrative level. Furthermore, these commitments and actions must be consistently adhered to throughout the strategic plan period to avoid derailment of the NPESAP. Macro-level interventions require commitment and active support and implementation from every segment of society, and must either be led or coordinated from the level of the National Assembly and the Ministry of Finance or Ministry of Economic Development.

In light of the high levels of fiscal deficits and external debt experienced in the recent past, measures to maintain manageable levels of these indicators constitute key macro-level interventions. A further example is promoting fiscal, monetary, and trade policy measures that would lead to raising the international reserves level and thereby improving

Belize's buffer against macroeconomic vulnerability. *Notably, most of the macro-level interventions require significant budgetary allocations/and or legislation changes or enactment.*

In contrast to macro-level interventions, programme level activities are those for which planning, resource mobilization, and implementation must be led or coordinated and/or strongly supported by line ministries, institutions or organizations. The distinction between these activities and those at the macro-level is that their success depends on the endorsement and support of a more cohesive group of actors. This is because they consist mainly of the direct beneficiaries or those who work closest with that group, and who have established relationships with the focal ministries or agencies.

Consistent with the distinction in implementation levels, NPESAP actors are identified at any one or combination of three levels—macro, core programme and auxiliary programme. Actors at the macro level are those with the mandate and responsibility to lead and sustain action on a national scope. These include the National Assembly, Cabinet, and umbrella organizations, as listed at point 1 of Box 2: The second set of actors listed at point 2 of Box 2 function at the programme level and are in effect the initiators and stewards of specific interventions. The most important role for these actors is that of enabling cross sector collaboration for intervention planning and implementation, and supporting resource mobilization. This latter involves adequate planning and budgeting of public sector initiatives as well as endorsing and lending support to efforts led by the private sector and non-government actors.

As part of their coordination role, the Core Programme Actors constitute an important link between the private and non-government sectors and the auxiliary programme actors. This latter group is made up of private sector and quasi-public agencies with responsibility for lifeline services such as utilities and statutory corporations with policy roles which are responsible for coordinating key social and economic sectors. In terms of behaviour and relationships, issues include high competition and low coordination amongst project implementers and lack of enforcement of legislation and standards. Effectively addressing these constraints requires Actors' commitment; mutual regard for the individual contributions and roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders; and earnest efforts at coordination on all fronts.

Box 2: Indicative National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan Actors

1. Macro Level (Planning, Policy and Resource Mobilization Support)
 - a. National Assembly
 - b. Cabinet
 - c. Ministry responsible for Finance
 - d. Ministry responsible for National Development
 - e. Belize Chamber of Commerce
 - f. Belize Business Bureau
 - g. Umbrella Non-Government Agencies
2. Core Programme Level (Resource Mobilization and Implementation)
 - a. Ministry responsible for Human Development
 - b. Ministry responsible for Education
 - c. Ministry responsible for Civil Works
 - d. Ministry responsible for Natural Resource Management
 - e. Ministry responsible for Health
 - f. National AIDS Commission
 - g. Ministry responsible for Agriculture and Fisheries
 - h. Social Investment Fund
 - i. Ministry responsible for Energy and Communication
 - j. Local Governments (City, Town and Village Councils)
3. Auxiliary Programme Level (Implementation Support)
 - a. UNDP
 - b. UNFPA
 - c. UNICEF
 - d. PAHO
 - e. Belize Tourism Board
 - f. Belize Tourism Industry Association
 - g. Utility Companies
 - h. Inter-American Development Bank
 - i. Community Members and NGOs

4.2.3. Addressing Identified Inhibiting Factors

The results of a study to evaluate existing poverty elimination initiatives completed in June 2005, as well as participants' views expressed at focus group and public consultations on the 2007-2011 NPESAP, emphasize a number of constraints to achieving poverty elimination. Measures to address these constraints, described in the extract of the Evaluation Study set out at Box 3 overleaf, permeate the Action Plan. One of the most notable instances of this is the proposed monitoring and evaluation framework, which seeks to address the non-application of information-based design, planning, implementation, and adjustment, and measurement of impact identified in the Study. Another constraint indicated—that of inadequate levels of improvement in grassroots productivity, life skills and entrepreneurship—is addressed through provisions such as those at Strategy 5.3 and 5.4.

The activities at Strategy 5.3 and 5.4 are complemented by initiatives under Activity iii of Strategy 5.2 which provide for improvement in gender equity. A particular initiative recommended for replication here is the “*Safe Schools Programme*” that provides life skills and gender role training to youths. The programme is implemented jointly by the Department of Human Development and NGO partners, and targets upper class primary school students. Notably, these strategies and activities demonstrate the interdependent role of the various actors involved in the Action Plan since the ongoing and suggested initiatives have private-public participation or are led by the private sector.

Another constraint noted in the Poverty Elimination Assessment Study—that of land tenure insecurity—is addressed through the land management related activities suggested for Strategy 2.5 of the Action Plan. The first seeks to directly address the legal framework for land management by modernizing the legislation for both land and forest management. The second and third activities are aimed at supporting improved land management by incorporating the best practices of communal land systems. These activities speak particularly to the issue of communal lands and traditional land use systems. Constraints on access to opportunities for those most in need are to be addressed in the Action Plan through the provision of strategic support for equity and social development. This is encapsulated in Strategic Thrust 5 which provides for strategic interventions targeting vulnerable groups and geographic areas.

The constraints in Box 3 were highlighted in the *Outcome Evaluation of Existing Poverty Measures* (NHDAC, 2005a). They pose the greatest challenge to effective NPESAP implementation as they are mainly systemic and cannot be overcome without changes in attitudes and behaviour. In this regard, one of the main systemic issues cited by the Study is funder bottlenecks caused by processing complexities and consequent late arrival of funds from donor agencies (p. 24). The Study noted that the effect of this constraint can be further exacerbated by political interventions (p. 56; this diverts the use of project funds away from the target areas of greatest need).

Box 3: Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of Poverty Measures Under Implementation as of June 2005

Bottlenecks (fiscal constraints) continue to slow the rate at which some assessments and activities can be carried out within implementing agencies and with target populations. Political interference can distort the use of project funds;

Access to opportunities by members of the target populations is not yet showing signs of equalization, neither by gender, age, group, locality (urban/rural; District) nor ethnicity;

Land tenure obstacles (certainly in Toledo) are not being overcome so that the target population increases its ability to generate wealth. An exception to this obstacle is the progress made in establishing a relevant and efficient cadastral system, although more rational land use cannot yet be said to be evident;

Competition remains high and lateral coordination remains low both across service delivery organizations and across the members of the target population. Project implementers have informally pursued coordination measures and some may exist at community level as well. However, deliberate and rational systems intent on achieving measurable initiatives cannot be said to be underway. There are instances where the action of some implementers undermines the impact of others. Deliberate measures to intensify the impact of individual action through concerted action of members of the target population cannot yet be said to be in progress. Indeed, there are many examples of the damage done to community members through the action of other community members;

Information-based project design and strategic planning, implementation, tracking, mid-course correction and impact measurement of actions carried out by implementers in conjunction with members of target populations cannot be said to be underway;

Enforcement of legislation and standards which depends on approvals and on sustainable enforcement financing cannot yet be said to be on-stream in most cases;

Relevant and effective gender-based initiatives have yet to make a measurable impact on the target population, the political system and the economy;

Grassroots productivity, life skills and entrepreneurship have not been measurably improved;

Grassroots advocacy based on increased control of the equity of Belize which are directed towards political and financial processes and directed at environmental and cultural enhancement are not yet detectable.

From *Report Outcome Evaluation of Existing Measures of Existing Poverty Reduction Measures (NHDAC, 2005b)*

4.2.4. The Psycho-Social and Cultural Aspects of Poverty

A series of public consultations on the NPESAP 2007-2011 highlighted a number of issues related to poverty, including the social, psychological and cultural aspects of the condition. In this regard, at least two areas of critical importance are explored in the NHDAC Assessment Report (2005a) prepared by M. Rosberg. The first is a dependency syndrome in the form of “clientelism” which slows project implementation, and more importantly, keeps the target population locked into the poverty cycle. Rosberg found that attempts by project implementers to address this issue by having beneficiaries participate in planning and implementation for improved ownership and independence are sometimes undermined by another of the constraints—inter-agency competition (p. 42). This is illustrated in the document through the Community Initiated Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) Project experience, where the methods applied by other funders require little or no effort on the part of the very beneficiaries that CARD tries to encourage input and ownership from.

Addressing the psychosocial and cultural aspects of poverty requires careful attention especially to the manner of delivery of the various initiatives, and as seen from the CARD example, consensus on the issues and coordinated implementation. This issue and a number of other concerns raised at the consultations point to the need for a social development plan that will complement this Action Plan and for coordinated planning and implementation across sectors.

Another issue identified by Rosberg as affecting or perpetuating the poverty cycle is that of the socio-economic and sexual dependence of women on men. This results in a “lock-in” to the poverty cycle and may be a major contributor to the feminization of poverty noted by one participant in the public consultation on the Action Plan, as well as to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

4.2.5. Special Focus Areas

Special attempts have been made in formulating the Action Plan to identify and include innovative initiatives that, if successfully implemented, could have a more than proportionate impact in terms of reversing poverty. Inclusion of these initiatives take account of the most pressing concerns expressed during public consultations and of the intervention and funding gaps evident after assessing the baseline. The strategic initiatives proposed and incorporated in the Action Plan along with the related identified issue to be addressed are described below.

Youth unemployment

Interventions in this regard aim at addressing the *high youth unemployment and low secondary level survival rates*. Whilst these two issues are dealt with separately within the Action Plan, they are closely linked. It must be acknowledged that

“Incentives to encourage greater participation of males in higher education and in citizenship, is essential to social cohesion, gender relationships, and economic development.”

From Toward a Model of Performance Measures and Accountability in Belizean Higher Education. (Gillette, p. 6, unpublished manuscript)

failure to complete secondary school is one of the significant factors affecting the capacity levels of those between the ages of 14 and 24. However, based on previous studies and reports, income earning may be one of the key elements impacting the high drop-out rates for boys (NHDAC, n.d., p. 29). This group has the highest recorded rate of unemployment, almost double the national rate. It is of further note that the survival rate at the secondary level and beyond is lower for males than it is for females. Addressing this issue is also an essential input for gender-related objectives.

The intervention proposed for addressing the low labour force participation and school secondary school survival rate is to provide a subsidy to low-income families living at or below the poverty line with children that are both school age and working age. To be effective, this provision must cover the cost of fees and books, of transportation to and from school and of the income foregone—set at minimum wage levels—by each school age/working age child. Such a facility requires the establishment of a fund with measures to avoid “double-dipping”.

Poverty and the Natural Resource Base

Land use assessments show biodiversity levels to be the lowest in the North and East of Belize and highest in the South and West. At the same time, poverty and indigence levels by district as indicated in the Poverty Assessment Report are highest in areas where biodiversity levels are either highest or lowest. These reflect two separate issues each with arguably the same end result. The first is the lack of access to land and the land tenure insecurity noted and considered in the Department for International Development (DFID, 2001) study on rural livelihoods in Belize to be a significant contributor to poverty. This condition is most prevalent in the Toledo District, where poverty and indigence are highest. On the other hand, almost all of the forested lands in the Corozal and Orange Walk Districts have been converted over the last century to agricultural land. Yet the second highest incidences of poverty and indigence were recorded in the Orange Walk District. The Action Plan seeks to address these two natural resource related issues through Strategy 2.5, aimed at supporting improvement in the land management framework and in natural resource management practices.

Another factor of critical importance to the living conditions of the poor and linked to the natural resource base is that of the availability of sustained levels of fresh water. This is important in view of the commitment to extend potable water to all communities, and relates directly to Strategy 4.2. Measures to ensure in particular that water resources are protected in the context of rapid development are crucial to ensuring achievement of objectives under this strategy.

Poverty and Ageing

Many of the issues that affect groups vulnerable to poverty are of even greater significance to older persons (60 years and above) since their ability to successfully address them decreases rapidly as they age. The lack of adequate health care and housing, income security, family care and support, as well as little or no awareness of their rights, all contribute to the marginalization of older persons. The current National

Box 4: Poverty-Related Activities within the Strategy of the National Council on Ageing

- Institutional strengthening with regard to the planning and coordinating capacity of the National Council on Ageing to be able to implement, monitor and evaluate policies and action plans, as well as provision of oversight of agencies involved in the sector.
- Development of intergenerational education programmes and activities aimed at teachers, the media, youth, etc. which focus on the importance of addressing the concerns of ageing early on.
- Development of education programmes that provide basic health literacy skills and health education for older persons.
- Improvement of the community health infrastructure to allow better access to “ageing friendly” primary health care; will involve provision of health care personnel trained in geriatrics.
- Development of a programme/fund that seeks to provide medication and medical supplies for older persons.
- Review of the economic impact of HIV/AIDS on older persons, especially in their role as caregivers to infected persons.
- Development of a comprehensive data base on the location and needs of older persons to assist in adequate coverage with relevant services and information on relevant agencies.
- Development of an environment which allows older persons to work for as long as they want to or engage in independent employment; will involve revisions to legislation for the adjustment of the retirement age and elimination of age discrimination with regard to the rights of older persons.
- Development of programmes of continuous education and skills training for older persons.
- Development of training programmes for family care givers.
- Encouragement of companies, e.g. those in transportation, to provide accessible services to older persons.

Plan of Action for Older Persons has an overall goal of building an “ageing friendly society”. The Plan focuses on critical thematic areas and emphasizes the importance of partnership between Government and non-state actors in seeking to provide the required services to older persons in a holistic and effective manner. Its successful implementation will depend greatly on the extent to which priority is given to the allocation of resources for programmes that assist older persons to achieve longevity and a better quality of life. This is especially important in the current environment of economic uncertainty. In addition, there is a need for increased public awareness generally on the contributions made by older persons to society, such as their important role as care givers to the younger generations. Box 3 below highlights the objectives of the National Plan for Older Persons which are relevant to poverty elimination and enshrined in Strategy 5.3.

Crime and Violence

An important issue raised at the consultations and highlighted in the NHDAC Public Consultation report (2006b, p. 40) is that of vulnerability of children of families in the lower income brackets to crime and violence. This vulnerability manifests in children being at risk of becoming either victims or perpetrators of crime and violence. An important cause of this vulnerability identified in the rural sector is the inevitable neglect arising from parents working away from home cited in the NHDAC report (ibid). Based on interventions at the final consultation for the Action Plan, children in urban communities appear to be increasingly at risk because of the escalation of crime and violence within schools.

Strategic activities focused on alleviating the impact of crime and violence on children and at-risk individuals are included in Action Plan at Strategy 5.3.

4.2.6. NPESAP Thrusts and Activities Frame

The strategic thrusts and activities which constitute the NPESAP are set out in Frames 1 and 2 on the following pages. Frame 1 outlines the strategies and expected outcomes related to each of the five thrusts. It also includes indication of the MDG to which each of the strategies contributes, and the key implementing agency or group of agencies. The government and quasi-government ministries that would be critical to the full implementation each strategy is indicated, and where non-government agencies are an important part of the delivery, the collective term “NGOs” is noted to ensure full inclusion. Strategies are numbered in accordance with the thrust to which they correspond, so that strategy 1.3 is the third strategy under thrust 1 (economic policies for enabled growth), whereas strategy 3.2 is the second strategy under thrust 3 (Investment in Human Capital).

The NPESAP is further detailed in Frame 2 in that the activities, targets and means of verification for the strategies under each of the five thrusts are articulated.

NPESAP Frame 1: Thrusts, Strategies and Expected Outcomes

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	MDG Goal	Expected Outcome	Key Implementing Agencies
<i>Strategic Thrust 1: Economic Policies for Enabled Growth</i>				
1.1.	Pursue effective monetary, fiscal and external debt management policies.	1, 8	i) Economic stability and growth. ii) Manageable level of fiscal debt.	MOF.
1.2.	Promote Private Sector Led Investment and Employment.	1, 8	i) Increased investment levels (Capital Formation/GDP). ii) Increased productivity levels (GDP growth per employed worker).	MED; BELTRAIDE.
1.3.	Provide better access to financial services for poor and marginalized persons and for micro-enterprises.	1,8	i) Increase in available credit for small and micro-enterprises development.	MED; BELTRAIDE; Financial Intermediation NGOs.
1.4.	Support cohesion between the demand and supply of skilled labour.	1, 8	i) Reduction in female and youth unemployment levels. ii) Sustained low male unemployment levels.	MOE; MHD.
<i>Strategic Thrust 2: Effective Planning and Transparent and Accountable Governance for Growth</i>				
2.1.	Improve governance structures/institutions and practices.	8	i) Improvement in citizens' perception of security ii) Improved firewalls for public sector financial systems. ⁸	National Assembly (i); MOF (ii & iii).
			iii) Local governments able to fully participate in planning and negotiations at the national level, to implement community level projects and to adopt financing sustainability strategies.	MED and Ministry responsible for Local Government with Village, Town and City Councils.

⁸ Firewalls here refer to policies and mechanisms that insulate public funds from private stakeholders of public and quasi public institutions and thus avoid the channeling of such funds to private interest.

NPESAP Frame 1: Thrusts, Strategies and Expected Outcomes

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	MDG Goal	Expected Outcome	Key Implementing Agencies
2.2.	Increase efficiency and accountability of all public sector agencies, officials and political representatives.	8	i) Better service delivery to the public. ii) Throughput rates at no less than required by legislation where applicable.	National Assembly; Prime Minister's Office and Cabinet.
2.3.	Strengthen the decision making process through effective consultation mechanisms at the national and local levels.	8	i) Improved democratic processes engendered through effective mechanism for public consultation and participation.	MED with International Agencies.
2.4.	Improve fiscal planning and management		i) Optimum use of fiscal allocations.	
2.5.	Improve land and natural resource management framework and practices for sustainability.	7	i) Modernized land and forest management legislation. ii) Natural resource benefits extend to poorest sectors	MNRE with Natural Resource Management and Conservation NGOs.
<i>Strategic Thrust 3: Investment for Human Capital Development</i>				
3.1.	Improve access, coverage, efficiency and equity in Health and Education.	4, 5, 6	i) Improvement in ratio of males completing primary and secondary school. ii.) Levels of female completion and transition rates maintained and improved. iii). Level of technical skills of workforce increased. iv) Levels of communicable and non-communicable diseases reduced. v). Better access to healthcare by lower income communities. ⁹	MOH, MOE.

⁹ Interventions both here and in Frame 1 must be better targeted to achieve this end.

NPESAP Frame 1: Thrusts, Strategies and Expected Outcomes

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	MDG Goal	Expected Outcome	Key Implementing Agencies
3.2.	Collaborate with International Partners and NGOs to <i>effectively</i> prevent and treat HIV/AIDS.	6	i) Containment and reversal of the rate of advance of HIV/AIDS infection. ii) Extension in life expectancy of persons living with HIV and AIDS. iii) Improvement in quality of life of persons living with HIV/AIDS.	MOH; National AIDS Programme; National AIDS Commission; MHD.
Strategic Thrust 4: Infrastructure for Growth and Sustainability				
4.1.	Target poor, isolated communities to improve access to services available in larger population centers.	1	i) Improved integration of rural communities in national economic and social fabric.	MOW; MAF; Ministry responsible for Communication.
4.2.	Improve access of rural communities and under-resourced urban pockets to potable water and to adequate sanitation facilities.	7	i) Improved access to potable water by rural and under-resourced urban communities.	Ministry responsible for Rural Development; SIF, BWSL.
			ii. Expand coverage of sanitation facilities.	
4.3.	Support access to affordable housing by low income families.	1	i) Reduction in number of families living in substandard housing.	MHD.
4.4.	Improve education and health facilities through expanded and upgraded infrastructure.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	i) Extension of health services to rural communities ii) Improvement in number of children able to attend secondary school in rural communities.	MOH; MOE.
4.5.	Continue expansion of public utilities and information technology to rural sectors.	8	i) Increase in number of rural communities integrated into national electricity grid ii) Increase in number of rural communities accessing information systems.	Ministry responsible for Communication along with Public Utilities and Private Sector.
4.6.	Promote alternative energy in rural communities.	7, 8	i) Access to affordable electricity in remote rural communities.	MED with NGOs and Private Sector.

NPESAP Frame 1: Thrusts, Strategies and Expected Outcomes

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	MDG Goal	Expected Outcome	Key Implementing Agencies
<i>Strategic Thrust 5: Strategic Support for Equity and Social Development</i>				
5.1.	Develop and implement community based plans for the specific needs of the poorest rural and urban areas.	1, 7, 8	i) Improved allocation of resources to the poorest rural and urban communities. ii) Reduction in numbers of families living in substandard housing in targeted communities.	MED and Ministry responsible for Rural Development, with Development NGOs and Ministries responsible for land and community development.
5.2.	Develop and pursue a National Gender Policy.	3	i) Reduction in gender based violence ii) Improvement in ratio of girls to boys in the formal education system. iii) Improved rate of female participation in the labour force. iv) Improved income levels for females.	MHD and MOE with Human Development NGOs and International Agencies' local Offices.
				MHD with Human Development NGOs and Employer Organizations
5.3.	Enhance and develop policies and programmes for improved legal, economic and social protection of groups vulnerable to poverty.	7	i) Increase in portion of income earned by lowest 20% of income earners. ii) Increase in level of average and modal income per person for the lowest percentile of income earners. iii) Improvement in quality of housing for lowest 20 percentile of income earners.	MED, MHD with NGO and Private Sector Agencies.
5.4.	Enhance mechanisms for public private partnership in social protection and social dialogue.	7	i) Active dialogue and coordination on social protection issues. ii) Improved social safety nets.	MHD and MOH with Private Sector.
5.5	Integrate disaster risk management in environmental, social and infrastructure projects to minimize vulnerability of poor and marginalized persons to natural disasters.	1,7	i) Effective mitigation against effects of climate change and natural disaster. ii) Reduction in citizens vulnerabilities to catastrophic disasters	Ministry responsible for disaster risk reduction; Ministry of Works, Human Development, Natural Resources, Fisheries and Agriculture. Environment and social NGOs

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
<i>Strategic Thrust 1: Economic Policies for Enabled Growth</i>				
1.1.	Pursue effective monetary, fiscal and external debt management policies.	i. Pursuit and maintenance of fiscal balances conducive to growth.	a. Achievement and maintenance of overall deficit below 3.0% of GDP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiscal outturns. SIB GDP estimates.
			b. Achievement and maintenance of the primary surplus above 3% of GDP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOF monthly fiscal outturns.
		ii. Maintenance of manageable levels of foreign debt.	c. Containment of external debt at or below 80% of GDP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CBB Quarterly and Annual Reports. IMF, S&P and, Moody's reports.
		iii. Pursuit of complementary monetary and fiscal policy for improved terms of trade and foreign reserve balance.	d. Level of international reserves increased to and sustained at 3 months cover of imports of goods and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CBB monthly, quarterly and annual reports.
		iv. Pursuit of tax policies that balance fiscal revenue and growth stimulus objectives.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business tax and income tax acts.
1.2.	Promote Private Sector Led Investment and Employment.	i. Completion of design and implementation of a National Export Strategy.	a. Level of exports of goods and services increased by 5 % by 2012.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SIB trade performance. Reports and GDP estimates.

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
		ii. Promotion of Investment Manual.	b. Level of production and exports of goods and services in areas of NES focus as a proportion of GDP increased and maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIB National Income Data and Reports. • Central Bank of Belize Balance of Payments Data and Reports.
		iii. Strengthening of newly established SME programme.	c. National SME policy completed and implemented. d. Increase in capital formation level by 10% of GDP by 2012.	
		iv. Development and/or expansion of information systems on domestic and international markets.	e. Increase in numbers of newly exporting and near exporting SMEs. f. Expansion in volume of exports of existing SMEs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BELTRAIDE Reports.
1.3.	Provide better access to financial services for poor and marginalized persons and for micro-enterprises.	i. Development/strengthening of public/private mechanism for investment financing.	a. Re-establishment of Development Finance Corporation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFC Reports.
			b. Expansion of available non-government funding mechanisms for micro-enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO Reports
			c. Establishment of new and sustainable funding mechanism for micro-enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline and intermediate surveys.
1.4.	Support cohesion between the demand for and supply of skilled labour.	i. Develop capacity to and conduct Labour Market Survey to set baseline and identify gap between supply and demand for particular knowledge and skill	a. HRD Policy developed and Disseminated b. 90 and 120 students supported by DFC by 2012 and 2013 respectively. c. Reduction in knowledge and skill set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline and intermediate surveys of labour force and of employers. • Analysis of gap in demand and supply of skills sets.

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
		<p>sets (current and project industry and service needs).</p> <p>ii. Development of Human Resource Development Policy based on Labour Market Survey.</p> <p>iii. Development and/or coordinated implementation of national human resource development strategy and plan.</p> <p>iv. Development of UB and ITVET programs to match identified knowledge & skill set needs.</p> <p>v. Strengthening of TVET body responsible for identifying national training needs and formulating/designing relevant programs (including curriculum development) to address them.</p>	<p>gap (percentage reduction to be determined by baseline established by gap analysis)</p> <p>d. Percentage increase in the percentage of graduates (UB or ITVETs) who are employed in their field.</p> <p>e. Percentage decrease in youth unemployment to levels comparable to other age groups. (youth age-group to be defined.</p> <p>f. Percentage increase in satisfaction of employers in graduates of UB and ITVETs</p> <p>g. Reduction in the youth unemployment rate to the same levels of other age groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SIB Labour Force Data.
Strategic Thrust 2: Effective Planning and Transparent and Accountable Governance for Growth				
2.1.	Improve governance structures/institutions and practices.	i. Pursuit of recommendations of 2003 and 2004 Integrity Commission Reports.	a. Programme budgeting approach applied to at least 3 ministries by 2010/2011 fiscal year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved legislation. Integrity Commission Reports. Auditor General's Reports.

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
		.	<p>b. Increase/deepening in level of public officials required to comply with Prevention of Corruption in Public Life Act, Chapter 12 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000-2003.</p> <p>c. Timely audit of and reporting on public accounts as legislated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on compliance with Commonwealth. Development Initiative Benchmarks. • Country reports of International and Regional Agencies with Policy/Governance Mandate.
		ii. Pursue political reform recommendations.	d. Increased autonomy of Integrity Commission and Ombudsman and Contractor General's office.	
		iii. Strengthening of DFC and of Social Security Board Investment Committee.	f. Improved accountability and transparency of public sector development financing procedures.	
			h. Improved autonomy and accountability of SSB Management and Governance Bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amended DFC and/or SSB Legislation.
			i. Continuous update and publication of the Committee's investment criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Reports.

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
2.2	Increase efficiency and accountability of all public sector agencies, officials and political representatives.	i. Implementation of earlier Integrity Commission recommendations with respect to categories of public officers for which public disclosure of financial accounts is required.	a. Expansion in categories of public officers of which public disclosure is required under the Corruption in Public Life Act Chapter 12 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000-2003.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved legislation. • Integrity Commission Reports.
		ii. Enforcement and strengthening of the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act Chapter 105 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000-2003.	b. Improvement in level of integrity in delivery of public service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Surveys. • Organizational Reviews.
		iii. Establishment of practice of inspecting lifestyle and auditing financial activities and assets of public officials.	c. Improvement in the level of compliance under the Corruption in Public Life Act to at least 90%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity Commission Reports. • Ombudsman Reports. • Reports on performance of business and income taxes. • Assessment Reports of SLM and UNDP/SIF/CDI Institutional Strengthening Projects.
		iv. Implementation of Public Sector Reform and Modernization.	d. Improved public service efficiency and effectiveness.	
		v. Supporting institutional strengthening of local government organizations.	e. Improved resource mobilization capacity and efficiency of expenditures by local governments. f. Improved accountability of local government agencies.	
		vii. Strengthening Village Council Act and pursuing decentralization.	g. Improved efficiency of and community participation in local government operations.	

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
2.3.	Strengthen the decision-making process through effective consultation mechanisms at the national and local level.	i. Establishing long term vision/objectives and related Medium Term Strategies for National Development.	a. Articulation of and collective commitment to, a long-term goal and clear parameters for development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published comprehensive development plan. • Published strategic plans.
		ii. Designing and/or implementing national planning framework for effective local government inclusion.	b. Increase in level of local authorities' dialogue and involvement in local governance issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved legislation. • Assessment of land management institutions. • Assessment of planning institutions. • NAVCO Reports.
		iii. Improving coordination protocols among NHDAC and related national planning committees and agencies.	c. Public-private sector commitment and involvement in design and implementation of development and poverty elimination plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Development Plan. • Reports of NHDAC and other planning agencies.
2.4.	Improve fiscal planning and management	i. Designing and implementing programme budgeting framework.	a. Established long term vision and complementary strategic plan. b. Established process and mechanism for identifying and addressing multi-year rolling priorities for fiscal allocations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MED Reports. • MOF Reports/Budget Plans. • Estimates of Revenues and Expenditures.

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
		ii. Designing and implementing a framework for debt sustainability.	c. Establish debt/GDP targets and debt management systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBB Reports. • MOF Reports. • IMF Article IV Reports. • Approved GOB Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. • SIB Reports.
2.5.	Improve land and natural resource management framework and practices for sustainability.	i. Modernization and consolidation of existing environmental and land and protected areas legislation. ii. Incorporation of land management practices into modernized land management legislation. iii. Implementation of approved natural resource management projects and initiatives.	a. Articulated policy for comprehensive land management. b. Modernized forest management legislation. c. Land management legislation inclusive of planning and self-enforcing provisions. d. Indigenous land practices mainstreamed into national land management framework. e. Increase in total value and sustainability levels of alternative livelihoods activities implemented in and by rural communities. f. Sustained levels of fresh water available to entire populace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved land policy. • Approved amended/consolidated and modernized forest and land management legislation. • Land use studies. • Land management institutions. • NGO Reports. • NAVCO Reports.

Strategic Thrust 3: Investment for Human Capital Development

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
3.1.	Improve access, coverage, efficiency and equity in Health and Education.	i. Programme for comprehensive care for women during pregnancy to prevent, control, manage and refer patients with obstetric complications.	a. 97% coverage prenatal care at clinics or during mobile clinic. b. 60% of pregnant women booked at < 12 weeks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BHIS reports, Monthly Clinical audits, Epidemiology Unit reports.
		ii. Program to promote adequate growth and development among children less than three years of age at community level.	c. Vaccine coverage achieved and maintained at greater than 95% in all communities by the end of 2011.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BHIS reports, Epi Unit, Under five case investigation reports, Maternal & Child Health Reports.
		iii. Protocols in the cold chain management, training and epidemiological surveillance, social mobilization, monitoring and evaluation and research.	d. Vaccine coverage achieved and maintained > 95% in all communities by the end of 2011.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BHIS reports, Epidemiology Unit, vaccination reports, MCH Reports, Vital Statistics.
		iv. Development and implementation of nutrition surveillance system for early detection of maternal and child malnutrition.	e. Stunting rates in children under 3 years reduced by 15% by the end of 2011.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BHIS reports, MCH reports, Epi Unit, Surveys reports.
		i. Modification of school financing mechanism to improve equity.	f. Improve primary school completion rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrolment and school statistics. Education Statistics. Health Sector Reports. SIB Reports.
		ii. Establishment of programme of financial incentives to encourage transition, participation and	g. Improve survival rates for secondary schools.	

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
		retention of students at the Secondary level. ¹⁰		<ul style="list-style-type: none">MOE Reports
		ii. Develop relevant secondary school curriculum including Tech-Voc. Options.		
		iii. Institutionalize the upgrade and maintenance of occupational standards in technical and vocational trades through legislated certification requirements.	h. System for testing and certification of workers implemented. i. System for continuous monitoring of standards is in place.	
		iv. Develop relevant secondary school curriculum including Tech-Voc. Options.		
		v. Implement school improvement/development planning vi. Implement School Inspectorate vii. Expand Early Childhood Education particularly in disadvantaged communities.		

¹⁰ This activity refers to incentive vis-à-vis assistance since the intention is to fully offset the cost of schooling for the children of families in the lowest income/expenditure brackets, as well as provide compensation to families in lieu of foregone income. Given the concern regarding dependency syndrome explored in this document, alternatives such as work scholarships should be encouraged.

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
3.2.	Collaborate with International Partners and NGOs to effectively prevent and treat HIV/AIDS	i. Expansion of public education and information campaigns. ii. Expansion of outreach into remote communities with high rates of infection. iii. Increasing supply of anti-retroviral drugs. iv. Expansion of support programmes for persons living with HIV/AIDS to enable improved quality of life.	a. Status of 30,000 members of productive segment of the population determined. b. Contain the rate of spread of HIV/AIDS. c. Percentage of persons afflicted with HIV/AIDS provided with anti-retroviral treatment increased to 100%. d. Increase in average life expectancy of persons living with AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of National AIDS Commission. • Reports and statistics drafted and generated by Ministry of Health. • Reports of NGOs
Strategic Thrust 4: Infrastructure for Growth and Sustainability				
4.1.	Target poor, isolated communities to improve access to services provided in larger population centers	i. Identification of and intervention for communities with highest levels of socioeconomic need. ii. Road and telecommunication infrastructure extension projects aimed at linking targeted communities.	a. Expand access in remote Toledo, Orange Walk and Belize District through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i). Expansion of feeder road network. ii). Increase in numbers of telephone lines per capita in remote rural areas. iii). Increase in output and sale of non-traditional products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour force surveys. • SIB Trade Statistics. • Marketing Board Reports. • Census Reports. • Poverty Assessment Reports. • Specialized baseline and evaluation surveys.
4.2.	Improve access of rural communities to potable water and sanitation facilities.	i. Continue expansion and improvement in water supply systems.	a. Increase in the number of villages and towns with access to potable water from a rudimentary water systems or from BWSL in rural and urban areas in Belize.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of local. government agencies. • SIF assessments and reports. • Specialized baseline and evaluation surveys.

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
			b. All the remaining villages in the Corozal, Orange Walk, Cayo and Stann Creek District have access to potable water from a rudimentary water system or to BWSL.	
		ii. Expansion of coverage of sanitation facilities.	c. Potable water and sanitation infrastructure accessed by urban communities with high poverty rates. d. Increase in the number of villages and towns with full coverage by sanitation facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIF Reports; SIB Reports.
4.3.	Support access to affordable housing by low income families.	i. Design and establishment of housing financing programme.	a. Establishment of formal income-based threshold for resource targeting. b. Establishment of concessionary mortgage financing mechanism targeting the needy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized baseline and evaluation surveys.
			c. 80 new homes constructed and 100 homes repaired through DFC funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFC Reports • MOH Reports
4.4.	Improve education and health facilities through expanded and upgraded infrastructure.	i. Rehabilitate and expand rural primary (inclusive of early childhood education centers) and secondary schools and health facilities based on poverty, school statistics and population	a. Consolidation of small multi-grade schools into more viable units. b. Additional classrooms at the primary and secondary levels in the areas of need as indicated by poverty and school statistics and population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School buildings and health/poly clinics in targeted communities. • Education sector studies and reports. • SIB Reports.

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
		census/demographic projections.	census. c. Rehabilitation and/or expansion of schools as indicated by population census and school statistics. d. Construction of Health Centers and Poly-clinics per need indicated by poverty and population data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Statistics. Health Sector Studies and Reports.
			e. Numbers of additional classroom spaces provided as indicated by population census/demographic projections and by school statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Buildings in targeted communities. Educational Statistics. MoE Reports.; SIB data.
4.5.	Continue expansion of public utilities and information technology to rural sectors.	i. Construction of rural electrification facilities. ii. Implementation of information technology projects in rural areas.	a. Connection of following communities to national electricity grid: i) Toledo Communities; ii) Orange Walk Communities; iii) South Stann Creek Communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community water and sanitation systems. Community telephone system/infrastructure. Reports of Public Utility Companies.
4.6.	Promote alternative energy in rural communities.	i. Pursuit of options for establishing renewable energy facilities in rural communities.	a. Establishment of renewable energy systems in remote rural communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Systems. Reports of Specialized/donor Agencies.
Strategic Thrust 5: Strategic Support for Equity and Social Development				
5.1.	Develop and implement community based plans for the specific needs of the poorest rural and urban areas.	i. Design and implementation of comprehensive development programmes targeted to communities such as Toledo, Southside Belize City, and the	a. Complete Dolores Integrated Development Project. b. Complete design and Implementation of Community Development Plan for area encompassing contiguous parts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports of the SIF. Socioeconomic Reports. Poverty Assessments. Labour Force Surveys.

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
		rural areas.	of Port Loyola, Lake Independence and Collet Electoral Divisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector Specific Report. • Monitoring and Evaluation Reports.
5.2.	Develop and pursue a National Gender Policy.	i. Development and implementation of a programme for training and credit targeted at female entrepreneurs.	a. Reduction in differential between the rate of male and female labour force participation and employment rates. b. Increase in number of female entrepreneurs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Country Reports for Belize. • Reports of the Department of Women's Affairs. • Annual Labour Force Surveys.
		ii. Develop or expand on programmes to provide training in non-traditional areas for women.	c. Reduction in differential in average incomes of males and females and income of the lower income brackets.	
		iii. Development or replication of programmes for training in gender roles and relationships at the formative level.	d. Reduction in level of gender-based violence.	
		iv. Charter programme for skills training and access to capital for single parents.	e. Improve average income level of single parent households.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHD/Women's Department Reports.
5.3.	Enhance and develop policies and programmes for improved legal, economic and social protection of groups vulnerable to poverty.	i. Development and implementation of public/private programme for retraining for transitioning.	a. Reduction in level of unemployment in rural areas dominated by traditional exports. b. Increase in number of residents in urban pockets with skill sets for emerging industries, such as ICT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Force Surveys. • Surveys of economic systems. • Productive sector reports (e.g. agriculture, tourism). • Approved Legislation. • Institutional Reports.

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
		iii. Strengthening of NDACC capacity as a lead Agency in the prevention and control of drug abuse.	c. Strengthen the administration of NDACC by 2011: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill all existent vacant post (10 approximately) by 2011. • Implement organizational policies and procedures for NDACC staff by 2011. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Reports and Monthly Reports • Audit Reports. • BHIS.
		ii. Development and strengthening of programmes for reduction in drug Abuse, including- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug Abuse prevention infusion classes and • Training in drug abuse prevention and education. 	d. Reduction in addiction levels. e. 100% Pre-School, Primary, Secondary, Tertiary schools by the end of 2011. f. 100% Primary and Secondary Teachers/Counselors certified by 2011.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Drug Abuse and Control Council reports, Infusion classes reports, School records, MOE reports. • Certifications extended, school records.
		iv. Development of legislation for protection of children and the aged against abandonment.	g. Reduction in number of homeless and abandoned children and elderly persons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws of Belize
		v. Implementation of programmes to improve nutrition levels in children.	h. Reduction in level of chronic malnutrition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys.
		vi. Implementation of programmes for care and support for the aged.	i. Reduction in number of working poor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour force and Living Standards Measurement Survey.
		vii. Development of programmes to reduce risk of crime and violence to children/vulnerable individuals.	j. Reduction in levels of abuse of children and vulnerable individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of the Ministry of Human Development; Reports of NGOs.
5.4.	Enhance mechanisms for public private partnership	i. Expansion of existing facilities and or establishment of new structures	a. Increase in number of spaces for battered women and orphans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of Ministry of Human

NPESAP Frame 2: Activities, Targets and Means of Verification

	Strategic Thrusts and Strategy	Activities	Targets	Means of Verification
	in social protection and social dialogue.	for at risk women and children.		Development. • Annual reports of corporate agencies. • Television and Print Media.
		ii. Private sector managed scholarship programmes.	b. Increase in number of scholarships granted to students in need.	
		ii. Establishment of private sector led fund for major medical intervention for the uninsured living at or below the poverty line or at risk.	c. A minimum of 5 additional families of children and young persons requiring major medical intervention abroad supported each year.	• NGO reports. • MOH Reports. • Private Sector Reports.
5.5	Integrate disaster risk management in environmental, social and infrastructure initiatives to minimize vulnerability of poor and marginalized persons to natural disasters.	i. Climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives. ii. Sustainable land management projects aimed at containing or reducing land degradation. iii. Institutional strengthening activities for improved disaster risk management.	a. Reduction in rate of biodiversity loss. b. Improvement in water quality c. Maintenance of adequate levels of water resources d. Minimal physical damages due to catastrophic events	• Infrastructure projects • Renewable energy projects • Biodiversity levels

5.0. Constraints and Risks

The NPESAP has been formulated against a background of severe economic and social constraints. Its sustainability will require political will and a national consensus to promote the adoption of targeted pro-poor policies and programmes that seek a better existence for poor people in Belize. The successful implementation of the poverty reduction goals of the NPESAP is contingent on forces which are both internal and external to Belize. Internally, factors that public policy and civil society can influence such as robust economic growth, inspired financial management, transparent governance, poverty targeting, as well as the more equitable allocation of resources and enhanced citizen participation that contribute to stable economic and political environments, will be critical. They will be constrained by external factors, including: terms of trade, threats to financial stability, reduction in development assistance, and the decline of preferential markets, over which Government has only limited control. Moreover, natural disasters in recent years have weighed heavily on the economy and have underscored the vulnerability of the poorest people, their livelihoods and their communities.

The NPESAP is vulnerable to five serious threats to implementation:

- (i). Failure to achieve and maintain national consensus on the NPESAP goals.
- (ii). Inadequate implementation capacity.
- (iii). Inadequate external resources.
- (iv). Impact of global economic factors.
- (v). Impact of natural disasters.

5.1. National Consensus

The attainment of national consensus on pro-poor policies and the allocation of resources will be crucial to the sustained implementation of the NPESAP. This has been a challenge throughout the formulation of the strategy, as policies requiring the reallocation of scarce resources in favour of the poor may be contentious. The major objective of the participatory process was to establish a dialogue on poverty between the social strata closest to its consequences and the non-poor and decision-makers. This process can continue to be consolidated as an inclusive instrument for poor people to have influence on policies that promote solutions to their deprivation. However, the public consultation process experienced difficulty in mobilizing the poor to act as a constituency in their own behalf. Because of unfulfilled promises in the past, the process was not as well supported as anticipated and revealed deep antagonism towards politicians and political processes. Despite the inclusive philosophy of the formulation process, consensus on the need for expeditious, deep economic, social and governmental reform and significant resource allocation consensus may not be easily achieved.

To countervail this possibility, the NPESAP proposes a broadly based institutional framework elaborated in the previous Chapter that incorporates the material and human resources of the public sector and civil society in the struggle to reduce poverty among Belizeans. Under the overall mandate of MED and NHDAC, the framework creates an

arena for dialogue on poverty reduction as a means for sustaining momentum, periodically revising goals, and including the poor in the decisions that improve their social conditions and define their life chances. In an economically austere environment total consensus on poverty reduction policies may be elusive, as decision-makers and advocates for the poor debate priorities and decide on the allocation of resources. The profound lack of confidence in the political process revealed by the public consultations may also inhibit the development of trust necessary to consensus. Even so, disagreements need to be minimized based on the mutual commitment of public, private and civil society institutions to meeting the MDG 1 and its target of reducing extreme poverty by one half, from 10.8 to 5.4% by the year 2015. The magnitude of extreme poverty is small and it should be possible, through economic growth, fiscal reform, better governance, and human resource development, to exceed this goal and improve the lives of many near-poor ensnared in the second population quintile. Reducing overall poverty to around 15% should be feasible, but only if the NPESAP is perceived as a long-term national programme that transcends narrow political and private self-interests¹¹

5.2. Capacity to Implement the NPESAP

Implementing a national poverty reduction programme is a complex political, social, and administrative endeavour. Even as the NPESAP was being formulated, skepticism among the public, civil society, and the international community about GOB's resource capacity and political will to address poverty issues was continuously expressed. These concerns arise from past performance of previous policies, programmes, and projects in addressing social policy and poverty issues. Particular factors identified as constraints on implementation included;

- (i) Scarce human resource capacity at the technical, managerial, and administrative levels.
- (ii) Weak legal and institutional frameworks that have yet to guarantee transparency in public administration and political life.
- (iii) A punitive debt burden that reduces the availability of financial and material resources available for poverty reduction.
- (iv) Lack of participation and the dependence of poor people on others to define their needs and advocate for them.

To offset the risks of low implementation capacity, the NPESAP advocates measures that bring about rapid changes in the ability of GOB to formulate policies and programmes pertaining to overall improvements in transparency and the performance of all public sector agencies. This is the remit of the newly restructured Office of Governance, which

¹¹ Jamaica, after a tremendous struggle with structural adjustment in the 1990s, reduced poverty from a high of 34% in 1990 to 16% at the end of the decade through robust fiscal management, public sector reform, improved service delivery and measures to improve governance. This was done in cooperation with the international development banks and donors, which was necessary for access to financial and technical resources for poverty reduction.

envisages a modernized public sector with increased efficiency in line ministries and improved delivery of public services. Additionally, greater dialogue among the public, private, and civil society sectors will act to increase the influence of these sectors on decision-making affecting Belizeans. Of particular importance will be the economic and productive sectors (including the Trade Union movement) and their concern for robust investment in human capital and the nurturing of peoples' livelihoods through well designed investment in education, training, and job preparation. The NPESAP proposes the establishment of a focal point within MED to coordinate and monitor the work of public sector and civil society stakeholders contributing to the implementation of the poverty elimination strategy.

5.3. Available External Resources

Like most newly independent nations in the Caribbean, Belize was long dependent on former metropolitan country contributions to finance economic infrastructure and social development. Advances in roads, schools, health facilities and natural resource sectors in particular, benefited from external assistance either in the form of grants or concessionary loans. Preferential markets for agricultural and other products also played an important part in economic growth and the sustenance of livelihoods. Economic development in the two decades after Independence in 1981 was relatively robust and rapid and in consequence, Belize progressed to Middle Income Country status. This was commendable progress for so new a nation but at the same time that this was achieved, Belize graduated from access to much of the concessionary assistance previously so important to its advancement.

Over the past five years the economy has undergone a period of recession triggered by inordinate debt service obligations, resulting financial austerity, and constraints on maintaining necessary basic services. Safeguarding the economic and social advances won over the past two decades and meeting the rising aspirations of Belizeans will be the major challenge for public policy. The NPESAP is GOB's response to the austerity resulting from the debt and financial crisis which has increased national economic vulnerability. The poor with least resources are most exposed to the impact of recession. Budget restructuring and careful targeting of the most vulnerable poor can achieve some poverty reduction goals. It is clear, however, that external resources will be required if the NPESAP is to be fully realized. To minimize the risk of the NPESAP not meeting its goals GOB will need to collaborate with its partners in the donor community such as the EU, IDB, and UN agencies to ensure that their resources are judiciously aligned with the objectives of the poverty strategy. Furthermore, GOB will need to encourage its traditional donors to reinvest in Belize and/or seek out new partners, as it has done with the procurement of funds to implement the Belize City Southside project. Debt relief on the CDI model can also liberate local resources to address poverty, and should be sought wherever available. The promotion of private sector investment that creates and sustains livelihoods also is a most critical source of reducing poverty and maintaining living standards in all sectors.

5.4. Global Economic Factors

To small, open economies like Belize, globalization presents both opportunities and threats. The recent and ongoing economic recession underscores the importance of participation in the world economy and the fact that a non-competitive condition can threaten Belize's ability to substantially reduce poverty and enhance the living standards of the entire population. As one of the most open economies in the region, the country's trading regime is marked by high commodity and market concentration. Almost ninety percent of export earnings come from five commodities (sugar, bananas, citrus, marine products, and garments) which expose the economy to external trade shocks, such as the termination of preferential markets, volatility in commodity prices and exchange rates and threats to the tourism industry, which are all hazardous to living standards and livelihoods in Belize.

Whilst Belize cannot control external threats, it can attempt to attenuate their impact through tackling the fiscal deficit, reining in and minimizing the debt burden, maintaining sound macro-economic policies, encouraging external investment, promoting exports, and sustaining reserves of foreign exchange to mitigate unfavourable effects generated by the international environment. The NPESAP encourages the targeting of poor regions and stresses micro-enterprise and the development of diversified agricultural production within a viable macro-economic framework as an avenue to sustained poverty reduction.

5.5. Natural Disasters

Belize lies in the hurricane belt and so is prone to natural disasters. There are periodic hurricanes, floods and tropical storms which devastate large regions. Given the country's small size, significant levels of population living along the coast and river valleys and high dependence on agriculture and natural resource, even moderate occurrences can have profound economic and social impacts. Natural disasters reduce many people to temporary poverty and exacerbate the misery of the already poor who typically are worst affected. Furthermore, heavy borrowing by the public sector for relief and reconstruction is usually required in the aftermath of a disaster.

The average cost of natural disasters during the 1990s has been estimated at about 10% of GDP. Agriculture and tourism tend were most affected. In 2000 Hurricane Keith ravaged the tourist centers of San Pedro and Caye Caulker and largely flattened the sugar crop in Corozal District. In 2001 Hurricane Iris wreaked havoc in the banana and cacao growing areas of the south devastating a number of Maya villages and the fast-growing tourist area of Placencia. Although it did not hit the country directly, damages from Hurricane Dean in 2007 are estimated at US\$89.5 million (Presentation by ECLAC, http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sids/2008_roundtable/presentation/session1_pierre.pdf, accessed 29 August 2009).

Upgrading of the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) has improved preparedness and responses to natural disasters. Evenso, Hurricanes remain a persistent threat to the economy and especially to the living standards of poor people. Moreover, Belize has experienced new events recently, such as earthquakes and localized floods , which indicates a need to strengthen disaster risk management. In particular, they

indicate a need for a more comprehensive and proactive approach that focuses on reducing or confronting risks *ex-ante* rather than responding to disasters and undertaking recovery *ex-post*. Such an approach requires adequate planning and fiscal allocations, and special attention to communities and groups vulnerable to a variety of catastrophic events.

6.0. The NPESAP Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

This monitoring and evaluation framework supports NPESAP implementation. It is intended to provide for constant oversight of the implementation of the plan by the key stakeholders, and for periodic evaluations that will inform shifts in policy or strategies, and decisions on resource allocations.

6.1. INSTITUTIONAL ROLES

The World Bank *Poverty Reduction Strategy Sourcebook* asserts that “[b]oth monitoring and evaluation activities need to be carried out by institutions that are competent and that have strong links to key decision makers (2002, p. 107). Furthermore, it is recognized that implementation is strengthened by the incorporation of the various stakeholders. These factors suggest that the National Human Development Advisory Committee (NHDAC), which has both a strong linkage to the policymakers and an inter-sectoral membership, must play a critical role in the monitoring and evaluation framework.

The systemic collection of data to inform the consistent monitoring and to provide for a more effective periodic evaluation must be spearheaded by the secretariat to the NHDAC, which is the Ministry of Economic Development. In this regard, it is important that every effort be made to avoid duplication of effort in monitoring and evaluation by ensuring the coordinated input of those teams and capacities within the Ministry that have separate responsibility for MDG monitoring and for coordination of poverty assessments. There is therefore a need for dedicated capacities within the MED to support these technical and coordination functions.

Another organization critical to the monitoring and evaluation framework is the SIB. Given the resource constraints of the MED, as well as the established expertise in data collection and statistical analysis within the SIB, it is advisable that data for monitoring the NPESAP be channeled through and validated by this agency. It is important to note that in fact they would be the repository in any event of a significant proportion of the indicators required for monitoring. In particular, the SIB is in the process of strengthening its capacity for the collection and maintenance of MDG-related data.

The optimum approach to the data collection and reporting then would be a coordinated effort amongst the poverty assessment and MDG monitoring teams within the Ministry and an assigned capacity or unit within the SIB. The SIB would be responsible for establishing the computerized system for the data processing and setting out the data requirements, whilst the MED would be responsible for liaising with the ministries and agencies that have primary responsibility for implementation and ensuring that data is forwarded to the SIB, as well as liaising with the SIB to ensure that the quality of data received is acceptable. This activity must also cover the data to be mined from within the SIB.

6.2. MONITORING AND EVALUATION SCHEDULE

The information presented in this section is intended to support the NPESAP performance monitoring. It is important to note that the monitoring and evaluation activities *must* be anchored by an initial period of research and collection of baseline data, inclusive of the preparation of metadata for each indicator to be used. In this regard, a baseline plan should be developed which incorporates this section and includes suggestions for the organizations that should collaborate in the determination of the indicators and the recommended data sources for each.

6.2.1. Regular Data Mining for Performance Monitoring

Data collection for the monitoring of the implementation of the NPESAP should be done on a regular basis. Given the demands of multiple programmes, and the established routine for data collection and generation of statistics through surveys and from administrative records, it is advisable that a plan detailing fixed frequencies for the mining, analysis, and dissemination of data for monitoring of NPESAP implementation be developed and implemented. A further consideration is the relatively lengthy time frame for implementation of poverty reduction initiatives and for outcomes and impacts to be realized. In view of these considerations:

1. Focused effort at updating the established NPESAP database should be made on a quarterly basis;
2. Reporting on the status/measure of intermediate (input and output) indicators should be done on a semi-annual basis; and
3. Analysis of achievements against targets in terms of intermediate indicators, identification of implementation issues and recommendations for redress should be done on an annual basis.

Table 7 at the end of this section shows the projected points in time when data collection and statistical reporting should be undertaken.

6.2.2. Periodic Evaluation

Periodic evaluation should aim at measuring the outcome of NPESAP-related activities and where possible, impacts. For those activities and programmes that will be undertaken in the first two years of NPESAP implementation, it may be possible to measure some impacts. Within the 2008-2012 time-frame to which the NPESAP applies, however, the main focus of the periodic evaluations will be that of outcomes.

Table 4 indicates when periodic evaluations of the outcomes and, where possible, impacts of the NPESAP implementation should be undertaken.

6.2.3. Baseline Activities

In many instances, the baseline information is not yet available. For effective monitoring of the outcome and impact of the NPESAP it is imperative that baseline information be collected in a number of areas.

Table 7 below incorporates the timeline for the conduct of baseline surveys and/or the collection of additional baseline information. In this regard too it must be noted that the ongoing related initiatives which have been described in the NPESAP document, the Horizon 2030, the MDG Needs Assessment and Costing Prognosis Stage II and the Country Poverty Assessment, will provide critical updated information that will further inform the direction of the NPESAP and the extent and types of initiatives that are to be undertaken. These initiatives will therefore generate further baseline information.

A critical output of the information to be gathered through these initiatives, and of specific surveys or other data and information collection activities during the period assigned in the Table for baseline assessment is refined or newly generated targets. The M&E frame included herein shows the targets that have been indicated and/or endorsed by the various agencies with lead responsibility in the respective areas.

Table 7: Schedule of M&E Monitoring and Reporting Activities

Data Mining Schedule	Baseline Monitoring and Reports
October 2009	September to November, 2009
January 2010	
April 2010	Progress Reports
July 2010	May 2010
October 2010	October 2010
January 2011	May 2011
April 2011	October 2011
July 2011	May 2012
October 2011	October 2012
January 2012	May 2013
April 2012	
July 2012	Mid-term Review
October 2012	October-November 2011
January 2013	

6.3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION TARGETS AND INDICATORS

NPESAP Frame 3 overleaf sets out the targets and indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the NPESAP. The Frame shows the MDG targets relevant to each strategic thrust and, consistent with the World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Sourcebook, two levels of indicators. The first set are intermediate level input and output indicators and the second set are final level outcome and impact indicators. Input indicators gauge the level of human, physical or financial resources to be dedicated to a particular action, whereas output indicators measure the specific and immediate outputs from an action. These intermediate indicators measure actions that are fully

within the control of the key stakeholders and proponents of the action. The second level of indicators is outside of the proponents' control and measures the overall results of the NPESAP strategy actions. The most immediate level to be measured in this regard is the direct outcomes of the strategy actions. For effective evaluation and to inform further policy design and implementation, at least one impact indicator is selected per strategic thrust. It must be noted here that the ultimate impact to be measured is reduction of the general level of poverty and indigence, which stood at 33.5% and 10.8%, respectively, as of 2002.

NPESAP Frame 3: Targets and Indicators for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	Targets	Intermediate Indicators (Input and Output)	Final Indicators (Outcome and Impact)
MDG 1 (Over-arching)	Indicator 1: Proportion of persons living on less than US\$1 per day. Indicator 2: Poverty gap ratio Indicator 3: Share of poorest quintile in national consumption Indicator 5: Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption			
Strategic Thrust 1: Economic Policies for Enabled Growth				
MDG 8	Indicator 37: Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) received in Small Island Developing States as a percent of their Gross National Income. Indicator 44: Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services Indicator 45: Unemployment rate of 15-24 year olds, by sex and total.			
1.1	Pursue effective monetary, fiscal and external debt management policies.	1. Achievement and maintenance of overall deficit below 3.0% of GDP. 2. Achievement and maintenance of the primary surplus above 3% of GDP. 3. Contain external debt level at below 80% of GDP or lower. 4. Level of international reserves increased to and sustained at 3 months cover of imports of goods and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fiscal outturns compared to budgetary allocations.Fiscal incentives programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Real GDP and per capita GDP.Levels of take-up of available credit by individuals and micro-enterprises.
1.2	Promote Private Sector Led Investment and Employment	1. Level of exports of goods and services increased by 5 % by 2012. 2. Level of production and exports of goods and services in areas of NES focus as a proportion of GDP increased and maintained. 3. National SME policy completed and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Approved SME policy.SME programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Changes in domestic capital.Ratio of domestic capital to GDP.Level of fiscal incentives received by SMEs.Levels of exports of

NPESAP Frame 3: Targets and Indicators for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	Targets	Intermediate Indicators (Input and Output)	Final Indicators (Outcome and Impact)
		<p>implemented.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in capital formation level by 10% of GDP by 2012. Increase in numbers of newly exporting and near exporting SMEs. Expansion in volume of exports of existing SMEs 		<p>goods and services by institution type.</p>
1.3	Provide better access to financial services for poor and marginalized persons and for micro-enterprises.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase proportion of small and micro-enterprise start-up sourced from grant or low interest loans and microcredit facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels of credit available for agriculture. Level of credit available for small, medium and micro-enterprise development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratio of domestic capital to GDP.
1.4	Support cohesion between the demand and supply of skilled labour.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> HRD Policy developed and Disseminated 90 and 120 students supported by DFC by 2012 and 2013 respectively. Reduction in knowledge and skill set gap (percentage reduction to be determined by baseline established by gap analysis) Percentage increase in the percentage of graduates (UB or ITVETs) who are employed in their field. Percentage decrease in youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITVET and tertiary institutions student enrolment and graduation levels. Graduates' skill sets. Curriculums and Education Delivery Programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployment/Employment rates, summary and disaggregated by region, gender and age. Labour force Participation Rates. GDP per capita of employed labour force. Levels of employer satisfaction.

NPESAP Frame 3: Targets and Indicators for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	Targets	Intermediate Indicators (Input and Output)	Final Indicators (Outcome and Impact)
		<p>unemployment to levels comparable to other age groups. (youth age-group to be defined.</p> <p>6. Percentage increase in satisfaction of employers in graduates of UB and ITVETs</p> <p>7. Reduction in the youth unemployment rate to the same levels of other age groups.</p>		
Strategic Thrust 2: Effective Planning and Transparent and Accountable Governance for Growth				
MDG 7	<p>Indicator 25: Proportion of land area covered by forest.</p> <p>Indicator 26: Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area.</p> <p>Indicator 32: Proportion of households with access to secure tenure.</p>			
2.1	Improve governance structures/institutions and practices.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programme budgeting approach applied to at least 3 ministries by 2010/2011 fiscal year. 2. Increase/deepening in level of public officials required to comply with Prevention of Corruption in Public Life Act, Chapter 12 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000-2003. 3. Timely audit of and reporting on public accounts as legislated 4. Increased autonomy of Integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation and documented manuals for governance structures and operating procedures of public financial agencies enhanced. • Extent of application of multi-year (programme) budgeting to government ministries. • Corruption in Public Life legislation. • Ratio of social investment to GDP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens' perception of security. • Citizens' perception of quality of public service delivery. • Citizens' perception of corruption (TI corruption perception index or other locally develop index).

NPESAP Frame 3: Targets and Indicators for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	Targets	Intermediate Indicators (Input and Output)	Final Indicators (Outcome and Impact)
		<p>Commission and Ombudsman and Contractor General's office.</p> <p>5. Improved accountability and transparency of public sector development financing procedures.</p> <p>6. Improved autonomy and accountability of SSB Management and Governance Bodies.</p> <p>7. Continuous update and publication of the Committee's investment criteria.</p>		
2.2	Increase efficiency and accountability of all public sector agencies, officials and political representatives.	<p>1. Expansion in categories of public officers of which public disclosure is required under the Corruption in Public Life Act Chapter 12 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000-2003.</p> <p>2. Improvement in level of integrity in delivery of public service.</p> <p>3. Improvement in the level of compliance under the Corruption in Public Life Act to at least 90%.</p> <p>4. Improved public service efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>5. Improved resource mobilization capacity and efficiency of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughput rates of service delivery processes of government and quasi-public agencies. Numbers of local government local government capacities trained in planning and negotiations, project implementation and financial management implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizens' perception of security. Citizens' perception of quality of public. Citizens' perception of corruption (TI corruption perception index or other locally develop index).

NPESAP Frame 3: Targets and Indicators for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	Targets	Intermediate Indicators (Input and Output)	Final Indicators (Outcome and Impact)
		<p>expenditures by local governments.</p> <p>6. Improved accountability of local government agencies.</p> <p>7. Improved efficiency of and community participation in local government operations.</p>		
2.3	Strengthen the decision making process through effective consultation mechanisms at the national and local levels.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Articulation of and collective commitment to, a long-term goal and clear parameters for development. 2. Increase in level of local authorities' dialogue and involvement in local governance issues. 3. Public-private sector commitment and involvement in design and implementation of development and poverty elimination plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented national Development Policies and strategies. • Mechanisms for public consultation and participation in decision-making. • Applied mechanism/methodology for allocation and targeting of social investments in place (social investments as % of GDP, GOB recurrent, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen's perception of inclusiveness.
2.4	Improve fiscal planning and management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish debt/GDP targets and debt management systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied mechanism/methodology for allocation and targeting of social investments in place (social investments as % of GDP, GOB recurrent, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debt to GDP ratio • GDP Growth.

NPESAP Frame 3: Targets and Indicators for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	Targets	Intermediate Indicators (Input and Output)	Final Indicators (Outcome and Impact)
2.5	Improve land and natural resource management framework and practices for sustainability.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Articulated policy for comprehensive land management. 2. Modernized forest management legislation. 3. Land management legislation inclusive of planning and self-enforcing provisions. 4. Indigenous land practices mainstreamed into national land management framework. 5. Increase in total value and sustainability levels of alternative livelihoods activities implemented in and by rural communities. 6. Sustained levels of fresh water available to entire populace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation on land and forest management. • Number of citizens with citizens'' access to potable water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard of Living Index disaggregated by region and gender. • Level of access to natural resources by poorest sector of economy.

NPESAP Frame 3: Targets and Indicators for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	Targets	Intermediate Indicators (Input and Output)	Final Indicators (Outcome and Impact)
Strategic Thrust 3: Investment for Human Capital Development				
MDG 1	Indicator 4: Prevalence of underweight children under five years.			
MDG 2	Indicator 6: Net enrolment ratio in primary education Indicator 7: Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5. Indicator 8: Literacy rate of 15- 24 year olds. Indicator 9: Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education.			
MDG 4	Indicator 13: Under five mortality rate. Indicator 14: Infant mortality rate. Indicator 15: Proportion of 1 year old children immunized against measles.			
MDG 5	Indicator 16: Maternal mortality ratio Indicator 17: Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel.			
MDG 6	Indicator 18: HIV Prevalence among 15-24 year old pregnant women.			
3.1	Improve access, coverage, efficiency and equity in Health and Education.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 97% coverage prenatal care at clinics or during mobile clinic 60% of pregnant women booked at < 12 weeks Vaccine coverage achieved and maintained at greater than 95% in all communities by the end of 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recurrent total, emolument and non-emolument public expenditure in health and education. Capital expenditure in Health and Education infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDP per capita of employed worker. Citizens' level of satisfaction with healthcare and education services.
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stunting Rates in children under 3 years reduced by 15% by the end of 2011 Primary school completion rates of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of trained health and education personnel. Certification programmes. Vaccine programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers' level of satisfaction with employees' output. Ratio of males completing

NPESAP Frame 3: Targets and Indicators for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	Targets	Intermediate Indicators (Input and Output)	Final Indicators (Outcome and Impact)
		100% by 2015 6. Survival rates for secondary schools of 100% by 2015. 7. System for testing and certification of workers implemented. 8. System for continuous monitoring of standards is in place.		primary and secondary school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of female completion and transition rates. • Levels of communicable and non-communicable diseases. • Access to healthcare by lower income communities. •
3.2	Collaborate with International Partners and NGOs to <i>effectively</i> prevent and treat HIV/AIDS.	1. Status of 30,000 members of productive segment of the population determined. 2. Contain the rate of spread of HIV/AIDS. 3. Percentage of persons afflicted with HIV/AIDS provided with anti-retroviral treatment increased to 100%. 4. Increase in average life expectancy of persons living with AIDS).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved allocation of recurrent fiscal budget to HIV/AIDS programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate of advance of HIV/AIDS infection. • Life expectancy of persons living with HIV and AIDS. • Quality of life index for persons living with HIV/AIDS.
Strategic Thrust 4: Infrastructure for Growth and Sustainability				
MDG 7	Indicator 30: Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural. Indicator 31: Proportion of urban and rural population with access to improved sanitation.			

NPESAP Frame 3: Targets and Indicators for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	Targets	Intermediate Indicators (Input and Output)	Final Indicators (Outcome and Impact)
MDG 8	Indicator 47: Telephone lines and cellular subscriber per 100 inhabitants. Indicator 48: Personal computers in use per 100 population and internet users per 100 inhabitants.			
4.1	Target poor, isolated communities to improve access to services available in larger population centers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Expand access in remote Toledo, Orange Walk and Belize District through <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of feeder road network. Increase in numbers of telephone lines per capita in remote rural areas Increase in output and sale of non-traditional products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion in secondary road infrastructure Increase in number of rural communities integrated into national electricity grid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception of inclusiveness of citizens from rural communities. Rural poverty rates. Level of income of rural inhabitants.
4.2	Improve access of rural communities and under-resourced urban pockets to potable water and to adequate sanitation facilities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the number of villages and towns with access to potable water from a rudimentary water systems or from BWSL in rural and urban areas in Belize All the remaining villages in the Corozal, Orange Walk, Cayo and Stann Creek District have access to potable water from a rudimentary water system or to BWSL. Potable water and sanitation infrastructure accessed by urban communities with high incidences of poverty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in number of water wells. Enhancement in sanitation facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural poverty rates. Improved/increased access to potable water by rural and under-resourced urban communities

NPESAP Frame 3: Targets and Indicators for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	Targets	Intermediate Indicators (Input and Output)	Final Indicators (Outcome and Impact)
		4. Increase in the number of villages and towns with full coverage by sanitation facilities.		
4.3	Support access to affordable housing by low income families.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of formal income-based threshold for resource targeting. 2. Establishment of concessionary mortgage financing mechanism targeting the needy. 3. 80 new homes constructed and 100 homes repaired through DFC funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of public expenditure in housing. • Level of housing credit available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of families below poverty line or other established criteria living in sub-standard housing. • Number of families living in substandard housing • Number of children able to attend secondary school in rural communities.
4.4	Improve education and health facilities through expanded and upgraded infrastructure.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Additional classrooms at the primary and secondary levels in the areas of need as indicated by poverty and school statistics and population census 2. Rehabilitation and/or expansion of schools as indicated by population census and school statistics 3. Construction of Health Centers and Poly-clinics per need indicated by poverty and population data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of schools built and/or expanded. • Number of clinic and health care facilities established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School enrollment and participation rates in rural communities. • Standard of living index. • Rural poverty rates.

NPESAP Frame 3: Targets and Indicators for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	Targets	Intermediate Indicators (Input and Output)	Final Indicators (Outcome and Impact)
4.5	Continue expansion of public utilities and information technology to rural sectors	1. Connection of following communities to national electricity grid: i) Toledo Communities; ii) Orange Walk Communities; iii) South Stann Creek Communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new electricity connections disaggregated by region. Number of new internet connections disaggregated by region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of rural inhabitants with access to affordable electricity in remote rural communities Number of rural inhabitants with access to affordable telecommunication by rural communities
4.6	Promote alternative energy in rural communities.	1. Increase in level of access to reliable energy of remote rural communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of renewable energy sources and systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved earnings of rural residents due to improvement in productivity.
Strategic Thrust 5: Strategic Support for Equity and Social Development				
MDG 3	Indicator 10: Ratio of literate women to men 15-24 years old. Indicator 11: Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector			
MDG 8	Indicator 34: Proportion of total bilateral, sector allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)			
5.1	Develop and implement community based plans for the specific needs of the poorest rural and urban areas.	1. Completion of Dolores Integrated Development Project. 2. Completion of design and Implementation of Community Development Plan for area encompassing contiguous parts of Port Loyola, Lake Independence and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Dolores development plan advanced significantly. South Side Development Plan advanced significantly. Mechanism to facilitate integrated policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved allocation of resources to the poorest rural and urban communities. Reduction in numbers of families living in substandard housing in

NPESAP Frame 3: Targets and Indicators for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	Targets	Intermediate Indicators (Input and Output)	Final Indicators (Outcome and Impact)
		Collet Electoral Divisions	implementation in place at sub-national levels	targeted communities.
5.2	Revise and Adopt the National Gender Policy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduction in differential between male and female labour force participation and employment rates 2. Increase in number of female entrepreneurs 3. Reduction in differential in average incomes of males and females and income of the lower income brackets 4. Reduction in level of gender-based violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Gender Policy. • Revised legislation • Skills Training Programmes within Government and quasi government agencies established/enhanced. • Gender awareness and educational outreach programmes implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate of female participation in the labour force. • Income levels for working females. • Average income level of single parent households • Rate of female and youth unemployment • Sustained low male unemployment levels
5.3	Enhance and develop policies and programmes for improved legal, economic and social protection of groups vulnerable to poverty.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of spaces for battered women. 2. No. of spaces for abandoned children and orphans 3. Establishment of a transitional programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's Shelters established/enhanced. • Transitional Programme with established live-in facility. • Children's Homes enhanced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portion of income earned by/consumption of lowest population quintile • Level of average and modal income per person for the lowest percentile of income earners. • Access to quality housing of lowest quintile.
5.4	Enhance mechanisms for public private partnership in social protection and social dialogue.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved/enhanced/expanded social safety nets 2. Comprehensive social protection strategy/ transparent mechanism/ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social investments as % of GDP. 2. Level of GOB recurrent, programmes targeted to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in level of vulnerability of women, youth and those in career

NPESAP Frame 3: Targets and Indicators for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

No.	Strategic Thrust and Strategy	Targets	Intermediate Indicators (Input and Output)	Final Indicators (Outcome and Impact)
		criteria for identification/service of vulnerable populations in place.	specific communities and geographic areas.	transitions.
5.5	Integrate disaster risk management in environmental, social and infrastructure initiatives to minimize vulnerability of poor and marginalized persons to natural disasters.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biodiversity levels maintained/increased. 2. Impact of catastrophic disasters reduced. 3. Natural resource levels maintained/improved. 4. Resilience levels improved. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of sustainable land management programmes. 2. Number of adaptation and mitigation initiatives. 3. Proportion of fiscal budget and external aid channeled to ex-ante disaster risk management initiatives. 4. Level of debt incurred <i>immediately after</i> a catastrophic event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of risk and vulnerability of living habitat. • Export earnings. • Income level of lowest population quintile.

Agencies and Capacities Consulted for 2009 Update

Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Chief Executive Officer and Policy and Planning Unit, Ministry of Economic Development and Industry

Chief Executive Officer and senior management team, Ministry of Human Development and Social Transformation.

Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Education.

Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment.

European Union Coordination Officer, Ministry of Economic Development and Industry

Financial Secretary, Ministry of Finance.

National Human Development Advisory Committee.

Planning and Policy Analysis Unit, Ministry of Health

Project Director, Southside Alleviation Project, Ministry of Works.

Social Investment Fund.

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Annex 1: Select Socioeconomic Indicators for Belize, 2000 - 2008

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Macro Structure and Trade^a									
Macroeconomic Indicators									
GDP (\$mn)	1,663.5	1,743.7	1,865.4	1,976.1	2,112.6	2,229.7	2,426.2	2,553.5	2,773.4
Per capita GDP (\$)	6,659.3	6,829.9	7,100.7	7,290.3	7,515.1	7,691.9	8,093.6	8,243.5	8,610.4
Real GDP growth (%)	13.0	5.0	5.1	9.3	4.6	3.0	4.7	1.2	2.1
Sectoral Distribution (% GDP)									
• Primary activities	15.2	14.4	13.3	16.9	18.1	18.1	16.2	12.8	11.0
• Secondary activities	18.0	17.2	17.2	15.2	15.1	14.6	17.5	17.7	19.8
• Services	56.4	57.6	55.2	53.7	57.8	56.7	57.5	59.9	55.0
Inflation (annual avg. percent change)	0.6	1.1	2.2	2.6	3.1	3.7	4.2	2.3	6.4
Disbursed Outstanding External Debt (US\$ M)	532.8	494.9	653.1	822.4	913.0	969.7	985.0	971.8	965.5
Ratio of outstanding debt to GDP (%)	64.1	56.1	67.8	81.6	84.5	87.1	81.3	76.2	68.9
Trade^a									
Merchandise Exports ^b (f.o.b.)	281.8	269.1	309.7	315.5	308.4	325.2	427.1	425.6	464.7
Merchandise Imports ^c (f.o.b.)	478.4	478.1	496.9	522.3	480.7	556.2	611.9	642.0	788.1
Trade Balance	-196.6	-209.0	-187.2	-206.8	-172.3	-231.0	-184.8	-216.4	-323.4
Remittances (inflows)	52.6	26.4	24.3	29.3	30.9	40.9	57.8	70.8	74.1
Tourism Exports	116.2	110.5	121.5	149.7	168.1	213.6	260.1	286.6	281.1
Services Account Net	33.7	46.1	46.0	71.1	88.2	143.0	210.7	229.9	219.5
Capital and financial flows	202.9	179.2	168.0	188.5	127.3	147.3	83.2	113.6	218.1
Import cover in reserves (in months)	3.2	3.2	3.2	2.1	1.4	0.8	1.8	2.3	2.8
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT									
HDI^d	0.795	0.776	0.737	0.753	0.751	0.778	0.771	0.772	
HDI RANK^d	58	67	99	91	95	80	88	93	
Health, Nutrition and Population									
Health^e									
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	21.2	16.6	19.2	14.8	14.1	18.4	19.6	17.2	
Under 5 mortality (per 1,000 live births)	41	40	23.2	17.7	18.4	23.5	24.8	20.5	
Population using improved water (%)	50	n.a.	47	n.a.	47	47			

NATIONAL POVERTY ELIMINATION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2009-2013

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Population using adequate sanitation (%)	92	n.a.	91	n.a.	91	91			
Health expenditure (public, % of GDP)	2.3	2.1	2.4	2.5	2.2	2.7			
Health expenditure (private, % of GDP)	0.5	2.5	2.9	2.7	2.3	2.4			
Population^f									
Total Population (1,000s)	249.8	257.3	265.2	273.7	282.6	291.8	301.3	311.5	n.a.
Population growth rate	1.6	1.8	2.3	1.8	1.8	2.0	n.a.		
Urban population (%)	48	48.1	50.2	48.4	48.1	48.3	n.a.		
Population under 15 (%)	38.4	38.3	37.9	37.9	37.3	37.6	n.a.		
Population over 65 (%)	4.2	4.1	4.4	3.5	4.3	4.2	n.a.		
Employed labor force (1,000s)	83.7	85.9	84.7	89.2	95.9	98.6	102.2	111.8	
Unemployment rate (%)	11.1	9.1	10.0	12.9	11.6	11.0	9.4	8.5	
EDUCATION^g									
Net primary school enrollment (%)	99	100	96	90.3	89.9	88.1	86.4	83.9	n.a.
Net secondary school enrollment (%)	39	63	60	44.1	42.7	45.3	55.1	40.0	n.a.
Adult literacy rate	93.2	93.4	76.9	76.9	75.1	75.1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Spending (% of GDP)	5	6.2	6.2	5.2	5.1	5.4	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Spending (% of total government expenditure)	19.5	20.9	20.9	18.1	18.1	18.1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE^g									
Telephone mainlines (per 100)	149	143	114	113	119	114	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Cellular subscribers (per 1,000)	70	159	188	205	346	319	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Internet hosts (per 1,000)	1.2	73	108.9	-	124	130	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Sources and Notes:

- From 2000, Central Bank of Belize Annual Report 2007; 2001 through 2008: Central Bank of Belize Annual Report 2008
- Includes CFZ gross sales
- Includes CFZ imports
- From Human Development Reports 2002 to 2009
- From Abstract of Statistics, 2008
- From Abstract of Statistics 2008, 2000-2002; 2003-2007
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Annex 2: Synthesis of 2002 Methodology for Estimating Poverty and Indigent Lines

This Annex draws heavily on the Introduction Chapter of the 2002 Poverty Assessment Report to synthesize the methodology applied by the Central Statistical Office (now the Statistical Institute of Belize) to measure poverty in Belize. As indicated in the Executive Summary and Introduction of that Report, the statistics from which the estimates and indicators were calculated were collected through the Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS). In an attempt to mitigate against the typical reluctance to share information on incomes, the LSMS collected data on expenditures. The specific data collected was on individuals' expenditure on food and non-food items for two periods—seven (7) days and thirty (30) days prior to the survey date.

Described in the methodology section of the above-referenced Chapter, the **main parameter** on which the poverty indicators were established was **the cheapest cost of a 2,400 calorie basket**. This level of caloric intake is indicated by the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute as the minimum daily food requirement per adult. The list of items comprising the basket used in the calculations reflected the dietary preferences of Belize, and the prices used were from the February round of price collections for the compilation of the Consumer Price Index. In addition, since minimum nutritional requirements vary by age and sex, expenditures were determined by using the appropriate adult equivalents for household members. The report cites instances of the minimum requirement for a baby calculated at 27% of the adult requirement or 648 calories, and for a 14 year old girl set at 69.5% of the adult requirement or 1,668 calories.

As implied above, the indigent and poverty lines were established using the caloric intake, so that the **Indigent Line** is *the minimum cost of food requirement necessary for healthy existence*. The **Poverty Line** on the other hand is based on the minimum estimated cost of both basic food and non-food items that a household requires to meet its basic needs, and was derived by adding the non-food cost to the indigent line. The non-food cost estimated was based on the spending pattern of the food share of the poorest 40% of the population (as measured by the expenditure on food). The monthly indigence and poverty lines generated are reproduced in Table A below.

Table A: Indigence and Poverty Indicators for Belize per 2002 LSMS

District	Minimum Cost of Daily Requirement/Daily Indigent Line	BZ\$	
		Monthly Indigent Line	Monthly Poverty Line
Corozal	3.41	102.30	192.32
Orange Walk	3.33	99.90	178.82
Belize	3.64	109.20	222.77
Cayo	3.03	90.90	150.69
Stann Creek	3.41	102.30	179.03
Toledo	4.29	128.70	236.81

Annex 3: Results of Key Poverty Indicator Estimates, 2002 Country Poverty Assessment

Poverty levels for Belize were estimated in 2002 through three main indices. The first of these, the Head Count Index (HCI), constitutes the basic measure of the population in poverty. A further indicator, the poverty gap, measures the average distance between the income of the poor and the income defining the poverty line. This average was calculated at 11.1% at the national level. The CPA found sharp regional variations in the poverty gap ranging from 6.2% in Belize District to a startling 44.4% in Toledo. This implies that whereas an increase in annual income of BZ\$165 per year over the 2002 level would be required to move each poor person in the Belize District into the non-poor category, additional yearly earnings of BZ\$1,261 would be needed to achieve the same in Toledo.

A second measure, similar to the poverty gap, focuses on the severity of poverty but is weighted towards the poor furthest from the poverty line. Again Toledo emerges as the most severely impoverished region of the country. Another indicator—the Gini Coefficient—measures degrees of inequality in the distribution of assets and resources on a scale of 0-1 with 1 being gross inequality. Nationally the Gini Index is 0.4, but at the district level inequality ranges from 0.6 in Belize District to 0.2 in the Toledo and Orange Walk Districts. These figures indicate less inequality where poverty is highest and vice-versa, with Toledo having the lowest level of inequality and the highest incidence of poverty. The main poverty indicators are set out in Table B.

Table B: Main Poverty Indicators by District 2002

District	Poverty Gap	Severity of Poverty	Gini Index
Belize Total	12.7	7.0	0.4
Corozal	7.8	3.7	0.4
Orange Walk	10.4	4.3	0.2
Belize District	7.7	3.5	0.6
Cayo	7.7	3.3	0.3
Stann Creek	7.6	2.9	0.3
Toledo	50.4	35.8	0.2

Source: Country Poverty Assessment 2002.