

THE BELIZE CONSTITUTION - PREAMBLE

[21st September, 1981]

WHEREAS the people of Belize -

(a) *affirm* that the Nation of Belize shall be founded upon principles which acknowledge the supremacy of God, faith in human rights and fundamental freedoms, the position of the family in a society of free men and free institutions, the dignity of the human person and the equal and inalienable rights with which all members of the human family are endowed by their Creator;

(b) *respect* the principles of social justice and therefore believe that the operation of the economic system must result in the material resources of the community being so distributed as to subserve the common good, that there should be adequate means of livelihood for all, that labour should not be exploited or forced by economic necessity to operate in inhumane conditions but that there should be opportunity for advancement on the basis of recognition of merit, ability and integrity, that equal protection should be given to children regardless of their social status, and that a just system should be ensured to provide for education and health on the basis of equality;

(c) *believe* that the will of the people shall form the basis of government in a democratic society in which the government is freely elected by universal adult suffrage and in which all persons may, to the extent of their capacity, play some part in the institutions of national life and thus develop and maintain due respect for lawfully constituted authority;

(d) *recognise* that men and institutions remain free only when freedom is founded upon respect for moral and spiritual values and upon the rule of law;

(e) **require policies of state which protect and safeguard the unity, freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Belize**; which eliminate economic and social privilege and disparity among the citizens of Belize whether by race, ethnicity, colour, creed, disability or sex; which ensures gender equality; which protect the rights of the individual to life, liberty, basic education, basic health, the right to vote in elections, the right to work and the pursuit of happiness; **which protect the identity, dignity and social and cultural values of Belizeans**, including Belize's indigenous peoples; which preserve the right of the individual to the ownership of private property and the right to operate private businesses; which prohibit the exploitation of man by man or by the state; which ensure a just system of social security and welfare; which protect the environment; which promote international peace, security and co-operation among nations, the establishment of a just and equitable international economic and social order in the world with respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings among nations;

(f) *desire* that their society shall reflect and enjoy the above mentioned principles, beliefs and needs and that their Constitution should therefore enshrine and make provisions for ensuring the achievement of the same in Belize;

Highlights by: BelizeCan - www.BelizeCan.org

**** Gender Equality added to the Belize Constitution in 2001 (2 of 2001)**