

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 2020  
Punta Gorda  
Toledo, Belize



### **Ya'axché's COVID-19 food relief program for indigenous communities in the Maya Golden Landscape, Toledo Belize.**

During the current global pandemic crisis, Ya'axché Conservation Trust is assisting indigenous communities in southern Belize with a food basket through the regional European Union/ICCO Cooperation Forest Governance Project.

For the first phase of the program, a 3-day delivery route was executed from June 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of 2020. Ya'axché staff has packaged and delivered 150 food baskets to the communities of Trio, Bladen, Medina Bank, Golden Stream, Indian Creek, Big Falls, San Miguel, Silver Creek, Aguacate and San Jose. These ten communities buffer the Golden Stream Corridor Preserve, Bladen Nature Reserve and Maya Mountain North Forest Reserve, important wild places managed by Ya'axché.

Ya'axché's COVID-19 response mechanism has created a community outreach opportunity to assist the most vulnerable families, providing goods consisting of corn, beans, rice, flour, milk, cereals, oil, coffee, detergents, hand sanitizer, bleach and other hygiene items. Ya'axché plans to continue the second phase of the distribution of food baskets in the upcoming weeks.

Forest communities across the Maya Golden Landscape contribute to safeguarding essential natural resources such as fresh water, fertile soils, forests, and wildlife that help in the sustainable development of Belize. Ya'axché and the European Union/ICCO Cooperation recognizes the vital role of indigenous communities and their vulnerability in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ya'axché has been protecting wild places and empowering communities in southern Belize since 1998. Much of the organization's effort has focused on supporting the livelihoods of communities and directly protecting over 151,000 acres of forests in southern Belize.

**END.**