

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 13<sup>th</sup> 2017

Punta Gorda

Toledo, Belize



## **Paving the future of the cacao industry in Belize**

For over 35 years the environmentally and economically important cacao industry has been developing in southern Belize! Cacao experts, farmers, community members, community leaders, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forest Department, and non-governmental organizations are convening at the first Belize Cacao and Agroforestry Forum to **discuss the future of the cacao industry in Belize.**

Since 2005, Ya'axché, like other organizations, has been promoting, training, equipping and providing materials to farmers in southern Belize so that they can grow cacao. Production from cacao farms in Belize is not meeting the demand of the market, which leaves room for an abundance of opportunity.

This one-day event, hosted by Ya'axché Conservation Trust and the Belize Foundation for Research & Environmental Education, will take place on Thursday, July 20<sup>th</sup> 2017 (from 9am-3:30pm) at the Nazarene Church Medical Center in San Pedro Columbia, Toledo. The goals of the meeting are: 1) to bring together stakeholders to share information; discuss challenges and successes, and to explore opportunities for successful collaboration, and 2) to compile information regarding the cacao industry in Belize for inclusion in a regional cocoa website.

Through the participation of a variety of stakeholders, the first Belize Cacao and Agroforestry Forum aims to inform decision makers with the purpose of helping to create a pathway for the cacao industry in Belize.

**END.**