

## **WIP (Cohort II) graduates 22**

Amidst a groundswell of support for the “Women in Politics” Programme (Cohort II) close to 200 guests, descended on the Best Western Biltmore Plaza on March 31, to witness the graduation ceremony for 22 women from as close as the old capital to as far as the Toledo District.

The two-hour event began with a lovely rendition of the National Anthem by the St. Luke Methodist Choir, voted Best Choir by the Belize District Festival of Arts. Chair of the National Women’s Commission, Esther Ayuso Ramirez, welcomed among the guests, Minister of Human Development & Social Transformation under whose auspices the NWC falls, Peter Eden

Martinez, Education Minister, Patrick Faber and National Security Minister, Carlos Perdomo, Human Development CEO, Judith Alpuche, Deputy British High Commissioner, Jackie Brown, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, UN Partner Hads, namely Christine Norton of UNICEF and Ericka Goldson of UNFPA, Belize City Mayor, Zenaida Moya Flowers and our distinguished Guest Speaker out of Trinidad, Dr. Rhoda Reddock.

Project Manager and Executive Director of the NWC, Ann-Marie Williams gave an overview of the NWCs flagship programme which ran for 13-weeks and the impact the topics have had on the lives of the 25

participants who were originally accepted into the training course.

The course examined issues and topics that are germane to politics and national development, all in an effort to improve women's leadership skills while providing them with the confidence to know that they too, must stand for elections at all levels of government in order to build a critical mass of women candidates at the highest level.

The Hon. Peter Eden Martinez in his address congratulated all the graduates and wished them well, but not before singling out three who have already signed up to contest the 2012 Municipal Elections. **(Full Text of his speech is linked)**

Graduates, Tracy Panton and Georgia Franklin were both chosen by (Cohort II) to do the course's reflection and the Vote of Thanks respectively, while Commissioner Icilda Humes gave a rousing endorsement to Guest Speaker, Dr. Rhoda Reddock, Deputy Principal of the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine Campus, in Trinidad.

Reddock's presentation which was well received, painted a vibrant historical picture of the Feminist Movement, journeyed through the Caribbean Women's Movement, examined what is known as the second wave and linked all of yesterday's happenings to what today shapes women's

present day realities. **(Full text of her speech is linked).**