



FOREIGN MINISTERS OF BELIZE AND GUATEMALA MEET AT THE OAS

May 3, 2004

Delegations from Belize and Guatemala, headed by His Excellency [Godfrey Smith](#), Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belize and His Excellency Jorge Briz Abularach, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, met with Secretary General [César Gaviria](#), and with Assistant Secretary General Ambassador [Luigi R. Einaudi](#), at OAS headquarters in Washington D.C. on May 3, 2004, to continue their deliberations aimed at reaching a just, equitable and permanent solution to the territorial “differendum” between the two countries, within the framework of the [Organization of American States](#). The Ministers announced the beginning of a new era in their bilateral relationship in which the Parties commit themselves to promote favorable conditions for reaching a definitive solution to the “differendum,” for maintaining a constructive dialogue and for finding new ways of working together to allow socio-economic problems that affect the populations of both countries to be resolved. They also declared that the challenges and opportunities of regional and local development should encourage both Governments to look toward the future with a shared commitment to strengthen their relationship and to expand regional integration, which is inevitable, and which must be based on shared interest, mutual respect and useful and peaceful coexistence. In this regard, and since the confidence building measures currently in effect will expire on May 6, 2004, the Ministers agreed to negotiate a new agreement on confidence-building measures to include innovative elements which would not only contribute to strengthening security, transparency, dialogue and confidence, but would also help to increase the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the peoples of both countries. The agreement will be negotiated by delegations from Belize and Guatemala with the General Secretariat on May 4 and 5. A mutual legal assistance agreement, a free trade agreement, the facilitation of transit of people and goods of both countries and the development of joint initiatives to promote tourism are among the elements which will be considered. Both Ministers recognized and appreciated the impartial and timely efforts of the General Secretariat of the OAS. At the same time, they recognized the importance of having created a Group of Friends, whose purpose is to support the negotiated solution to the territorial “differendum.” At the request of both governments, the Secretary General agreed to call a meeting of the Group of Friends at an early date.