



September 7, 2005

Belize and Guatemala today signed an on a framework of negotiation and confidence-building measures, in a bid to maintain and deepen their friendly bilateral relations until the territorial differendum is permanently resolved.

Chief Negotiator for Belize and Senior Ambassador with Ministerial Rank, Assad Shoman, signed on behalf of his government, along with Guatemala's Foreign Affairs Minister Jorge Briz and Organization of American States (OAS) Secretary General [José Miguel Insulza](#).

The parties signed the agreement during a ceremony at OAS headquarters, the Belize and Guatemala governments committing to respect and implement, with OAS assistance, a series of measures on a framework of negotiation and confidence-building measures as well as an architecture for future negotiation.

Belize's Shoman hailed this "significant moment in the ongoing attempts by Guatemala and Belize to finally and honorably resolve a longstanding territorial dispute that exists between the two countries." Stating that neither country desires this dispute, he recalled efforts over the past five years in particular to settle the long running territorial differendum. "It is really not good for Guatemala, Belize, nor for the countries of the Americas to have such a dispute continue into the 21st century."

Minister Briz meantime noted that with the goodwill the agreement entails, and with the involvement of the OAS Secretary General, "we will work together to move forward on projects as sister nations...to not only work out specific problems but also to pursue progress and well-being for our citizens." The Guatemalan Minister underscored the importance of the framework for negotiating a just settlement of this dispute and for confidence-building.

And, for his part, Secretary General Insulza called today's signing an important achievement for the OAS as well as for the member states and the two states involved, in particular. He expressed confidence that Guatemala and Belize would continue working together towards the common objective, and pledged to fulfill the responsibilities that fall to him under the terms of the agreement.

Following the ceremony, which was attended by OAS member state representatives, the group of friends of Belize and Guatemala met and were briefed by both countries' representatives and by a representative of the Secretary General.

Reference: E-188/05