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### **GAVIRIA APPLAUDS PROGRESS ON BELIZE-GUATEMALA TALKS**

The Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), César Gaviria, congratulated the governments of Belize and Guatemala for the milestone agreement their delegations reached today in their negotiations to resolve their territorial differendum in a definitive manner.

During a session of the OAS Permanent Council, the heads of the delegations - Assad Shoman, Senior Ambassador with Ministerial Rank of Belize, and Gabriel Orellana Rojas, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala - signed an agreement to adopt a comprehensive set of confidence-building measures to avoid incidents between the two countries.

"This is a very significant step that clears the way for the negotiations on the substance of the differendum to be addressed in a climate of mutual confidence and tranquility for both governments and for the people living in the area. It faithfully reflects the commitment of both parties to the process and their will for peace," the Secretary General stated.

The OAS Permanent Council, based on a proposal of both parties, approved a resolution that supports the process of negotiation between Belize and Guatemala and establishes a special fund to support the negotiations by financing the costs of the work of the Panel of Facilitators in the dialogue.

"The decision of the Permanent Council underlines the commitment of the Organization of American States to continue promoting and supporting the peaceful resolution of disputes between member states," Gaviria said.