



## **BELIZE AND GUATEMALA SIGN AGREEMENT AT OAS**

February 7, 2003

An agreement to establish a Transition Process as well as confidence-building measures between Belize and Guatemala was signed today by delegations from both countries, during a ceremony at the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington. Belizean Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Assad Shoman and Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs Edgar Gutiérrez signed the agreement in the presence of OAS Secretary General César Gaviria and Assistant Secretary General Luigi Einaudi. The Assistant Secretary General declared that over the years confidence-building measures have proven to be effective vehicles to strengthen bilateral relations and transparency while contributing to many breakthroughs towards peace around the world. “In the case involving Belize and Guatemala, we can say we have taken a very important step in reducing incidents or controversies stemming from this longstanding dispute,” said Ambassador Einaudi. Foreign Minister Shoman referred to the long tradition of brotherhood between both countries, “at the level of people,” noting that “these confidence-building measures and this Transition Process that we have agreed to... are the result of a much more intense negotiation process between the two parties, with the help of the OAS.” Guatemala’s Foreign Minister Gutiérrez expressed appreciation for “the positive role played by the OAS Assistant Secretary General’s office and by the OAS as a whole,” adding that “this firm step demonstrates a more mature process of understanding between Belize and Guatemala in recent times.”