

Joint Communiqué of the Governments of Belize and Guatemala

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belize, Said Musa, accompanied by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dean Barrow, and Robert Leslie, High Commissioner of Belize to the United Kingdom, made an official visit to Guatemala on the 16th of September, during which they held meetings with the President of the Republic, Jorge Serrano Elias, the Minister of Foreign Relations, Alvaro Arzu Irigoyen, and other high officials of Guatemalan Government.

In a cordial and friendly atmosphere, inspired by the desire that the recently established relations between Guatemala and Belize be transformed into strong bonds of economic, social, as well as mutual cooperation, based on ties of solid friendship, the Governments of Belize and Guatemala issued the following

Joint Communiqué

The representatives of the Governments of Belize and Guatemala exchanged views on the relations recently established between both countries and their desire to solve the differences still remaining between the two states.

The representatives of the Government of Belize stated that the acknowledgement by the Guatemalan Government of the right of the people of Belize to self-determination, and its recognition of Belize as an independent State are of great importance to the people of Belize, who recognize that relations of friendship and cooperation with Guatemala have special relevance, and are fundamental to its development.

They also acknowledged that these decisions of the Guatemalan Government impel the Government of Belize to exert the greatest good faith and will in the search for appropriate mechanisms

to conclude the differences between the two states, such as Belize's initiative to limit its territorial waters to three miles in its southern areas.

The representatives of the Guatemalan Government stated that the recognition of Belize as an independent state results from President Serrano's foreign policy, which is framed with the highest respect for the norms of international law, and his firm desire to achieve peace, stability and progress throughout the Central American region.

They also stated that notwithstanding the differences existing between both states, that the claim of Guatemala is not an obstacle to the recognition of the right of the people of Belize to self-determination, which, according to international law, is an inherent right.

The Guatemalan delegation expressed their Government's determination to continue direct negotiations with the State of Belize in search of a solution to the existing differences by means of a formula that will satisfy the just aspirations of both peoples, which should be approved in accordance with the constitutional procedures in effect in both countries.

Both delegations agreed that their governments, through their respective foreign ministries, will continue to negotiate a definitive agreement to end their differences, on the understanding that such an agreement will only be definitive and valid after it has been approved by the Guatemalan people through a referendum in accordance with Transitional Article 19 of the Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala; and by the Belizean people in accordance with the political commitment existing between the Government and the Opposition.

Both delegations expressed their firm decision to integrate a bilateral commission with responsibility to seek agreements in the economic, social and cultural areas, including the following:

- A. Joint exploitation of defined areas of the exclusive economic zone of Belize for mutual benefit;
- B. Permanent access of Guatemala to the Caribbean Sea from its Department of El Peten, and the reciprocal use and development of port facilities;
- C. Cultural and educational exchange programmes, to include grants of scholarships to students at different levels;
- D. Cooperation in areas of tourism, continuing the Mundo Maya Project in which Belize and Guatemala are already participating, and establishing tourism promotion projects to benefit both countries, on land as well as sea;
- E. Collaboration in the fight to eradicate the production, traffic and illegal consumption of drugs, narcotics and psychotropic substances;
- F. Development of commerce and investment between both countries.

The representatives of Belize expressed the support and approval of their Government for the peace initiative of President Serrano, which focuses on the importance of finding political solutions to the armed conflicts in Central America, and the promotion of the region's democracies.

Both delegations also expressed that since Belize is a part of Central America, actions toward its full participation in the Central American integration process should be actively encouraged, and that Belize, being likewise a member of the Caribbean Community, should serve as a bridge to the establishment of political, economic and cultural bonds between the Caribbean and Guatemala.

A cordial invitation was extended to the Prime Minister of Belize, the Rt. Hon. George Price, in the name of President Serrano Elias, for the Prime Minister to make an official visit to Guatemala on the 28 and 29 October this year.

Finally, the representatives of the Government and people of Belize expressed their thanks to the Government and people of Guatemala for the final steps that have been taken toward the bringing together of Belize and Guatemala, as well as the friendship and attentions that were offered during their stay in Guatemala, and extended, in the name of the people and Government of Belize, and especially in the name of Prime Minister George Price, a respectful and courteous invitation to President Jorge Serrano Elias, to make a reciprocal visit to Belize, which will have a special significance due to the recognition which the people of Belize wish to grant to President Serrano, whom they consider to be a man of peace and a statesman, whose initiatives are fundamental to the economic and social development of the Central American region. This invitation was accepted for a future date which will be agreed on during the first part of November this year.

In Guatemala City, on the 16th day of September of the year 1991.

SAID WILBERT MUSA
MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF BELIZE

ALVARO ARZU IRIGOYEN
MINISTER OF FOREIGN
RELATIONS OF GUATEMALA

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