Organization of American States

BELIZE-GUATEMALA CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES AND ESTABLISHMENT OF GROUP OF FRIENDS

October 7, 2003

Delegations from Belize and Guatemala, headed by the Vice-Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the two countries, H.E. Lawrence Sylvester and S.E. Gabriel Aguilera, respectively, met yesterday at OAS Headquarters with Assistant Secretary General Luigi R. Einaudi, to conclude a review of the implementation of the confidence-building measures contained in an agreement signed by the Parties on February 7, 2003.

Over the past several weeks, the Parties and the General Secretariat have been reviewing all the confidence-building measures in force between the two countries. Yesterday, the delegations and the Secretariat concluded that the majority of the measures are being successfully applied. With the assistance of the General Secretariat, they also agreed to develop and execute those few measures contained in the February 7, 2003 Agreement which have not yet been activated.

Yesterday afternoon, Secretary General César Gaviria presided over the first meeting of the Group of Friends of Belize-Guatemala. The Group is an advisory body to the Secretary General on the various initiatives under the auspices of the OAS for achieving a peaceful resolution of the territorial differendum between Belize and Guatemala. The Group of Friends is composed of the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan, which participated in the first meeting as an observer.

The Secretary General recognized and thanked the governments of Brazil, Canada, Denmark, the Holy See, Korea, Mexico, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, for their generous financial contributions to the Belize-Guatemala sub-fund of the Fund for Peace. These contributions have allowed the Organization to undertake a series of activities to strengthen peace and security between the two neighbors.

Reference: E-193/03