

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



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DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF BELIZE AND GUATEMALA

(Adopted at the second plenary meeting, held on June 14, 2016)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that in the Charter of the Organization of American States member states reaffirm the principle that “controversies of an international character arising between two or more American States shall be settled by peaceful procedures”;

RECOGNIZING the efforts of the Organization to preserve peace and security in the Hemisphere;

CONSIDERING that territorial disputes and disputes of any other nature should not affect the advancement and expansion between the parties of economic and social development; trade, environmental protection, security, and law enforcement;

RECALLING the Permanent Council resolution CP/RES. 780 (1257/00) “Support for the Process of Negotiations between the Governments of Belize and Guatemala” in which both countries agreed that all issues related to the differendum will be addressed by both parties solely within the framework of this process while it is under way, to the exclusion of any other political, diplomatic, or juridical forum;

RECALLING ALSO resolution AG/RES. 1756 (XXX-O/00) “Fund for Peace: Peaceful Settlement of Territorial Disputes”; the Agreement on a Framework for Negotiations and Confidence Building Measures between Belize and Guatemala of 7 September 2005, as well as the Road Map for the Strengthening of the Bilateral Relations in 2014 and Plan of Action for 2014, signed on 24 January 2014, by the Governments of Belize and Guatemala as part of their commitment to maintain and deepen friendly bilateral relations, while the territorial, insular and maritime dispute remains unresolved; and in accordance with their acceptance to put an end to any and all differences regarding their respective land and insular territories and their maritime areas, as outlined in the Special Agreement between Belize and Guatemala of 8 December 2008, by submitting the dispute to the International Court of Justice;

RECOGNIZING the role of the Office of the Secretary General and of the OAS Office in the Adjacency Zone as an independent interlocutor to assist in preventing and resolving conflict, verifying incidents, fostering community-to-community contacts and promoting confidence and better relations between Belize and Guatemala;

NOTING the invaluable support of the Group of Friends for the process, and in particular that of Canada, Costa Rica, the European Union, Germany, Mexico, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, who have assisted in funding the OAS Office in the Adjacency Zone over the last thirteen years since its inception;

RECOGNIZING the need for the Governments of Belize and Guatemala to advance as early as possible with the necessary steps to submit their dispute to the International Court of Justice for a peaceful and final resolution in accordance with the commitments under the Special Agreement of 2008 and the amended protocol thereto.

REQUESTS the Secretary General, Good Offices role, to continue supporting Belize and Guatemala in their efforts to resolve their differences and reach a peaceful and final resolution to Guatemala's Territorial, Insular and Maritime Claim to the International Court of Justice in accordance with their Special Agreement of 8 December 2008 and the amended protocol thereto;

INVITES all member states, permanent observers, multilateral institutions, and other potential donors, as defined in Article 69 of the General Standards to Govern the Operations of the General Secretariat, and in accordance with other norms and regulations of the Organization, to contribute to the financing of the Belize-Guatemala Sub-fund of the OAS Peace Fund and other related activities that promote peace and stability between the two countries;

CALLS on the international community to fully support the continued operations of the OAS Office in the Adjacency Zone between Belize and Guatemala, especially in its critical role of preventing conflict and promoting peace, cooperation and confidence between the two countries;

SUPPORTS efforts directed at promoting community development in the area of the Adjacency Zone, reversing deforestation and combatting illegal activities, especially in the protected areas.

URGES both countries to exercise caution and restraint in the treatment of all issues-related to the differendum, in particular, to cooperate to avoid incidents on the ground conducive to tension between them, and to implement fully the Confidence Building Measures between Belize and Guatemala of 2005, and especially those outlined in Annex C so as to avoid tensions;

URGES Belize and Guatemala to ratify and implement the 25 May 2015 Protocol to amend the Special Agreement of 8 December 2008, as soon as possible;

TAKES NOTE of the agreement of both countries to work in the design and development of a mechanism for cooperation in the Sarstoon River, which should include the participation of relevant institutions of both Parties and be coordinated by both Foreign Ministries with the participation of the Organization of American States;

EMPHASIZES the need for Belize and Guatemala to promote nation-wide public awareness campaigns to properly inform and sensitize their respective citizenry on the importance of peacefully and finally resolving their territorial, insular and maritime differendum through the International Court of Justice.