

PRESS RELEASE

1. The Delegations of Belize, headed by H.E. Assad Shoman, Senior Ambassador with Ministerial Rank, and of Guatemala, headed by H.E. Gabriel Orellana Rojas, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, held a meeting to review the progress that has been made to date and to discuss the future steps of the dialogue aimed at achieving a resolution of the territorial differendum, at the Headquarters of the Organization of American States (OAS), 5-7 February, 2001. Also in attendance at the meetings were the two members of the Panel of Facilitators, Sir Shridath Ramphal and Mr. Paul Reichler, and the Secretary General of the OAS, Dr. César Gaviria.
2. In furtherance of the 'Plan of Action to Implement the November 8, 2000 Agreement on Confidence Building Measures' agreed by Belize and Guatemala on 17 January 2001 at their Emergency Meeting in Miami, the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), following its determination of the Adjacency Line under the Plan of Action, reported to the Parties, the Facilitators and the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States its determination of the locations of certain settlements and dwellings as requested in the Plan of Action. The findings were contained in a letter of 6 February 2001 to the Secretary General of the OAS and presented orally to the Meeting in Washington by Mr Paul L Peeler, President of the Commission of Cartography of the Institute.
3. The PAIGH determination was that the location of the two settlements known as Rio Blanco and Machaquila as identified in the Plan of Action was in each case on the Eastern side of the Adjacency Line and more than 1 kilometre from it. The determination in the case of the dwellings in the vicinity of the area known as Valentin Camp was that they were also on the Eastern side of the Adjacency Line but that while some were more than 1 kilometre from the Line one was not.
4. As provided for in the Plan of Action, the Facilitators accordingly determined the status of the settlements and associated dwellings at Rio Blanco and Machaquila as being more than one kilometre to the East of the Adjacency Line and therefore beyond the Adjacency Zone. They further determined that these settlements and associated dwellings are subject to the provisions of the Protocol for the Removal of Settlements outside of the Adjacency Zone as set out in Annex B to the Plan of Action. As regards the dwellings in the vicinity of Valentin Camp, the Facilitators determined that all but one were more than 1 kilometre to the East of the Adjacency Line and that those that are more than one kilometre from the Adjacency Line are subject to the Protocol in Annex B of the Plan of Action referred to above. In accordance with their commitment in the Plan of Action, the Parties have agreed to comply in good faith with these determinations of the Facilitators.
5. In making their determinations above the Facilitators also proposed the following implementation procedures, namely:
 - a. that the Parties cooperate as appropriate in the implementation of the relevant procedures;
 - b. that such implementation be carried out in a timely and humane manner as contemplated in the Plan of Action;
 - c. that the process of implementation with regard to all three locations commence with the visit of a joint implementation team, consisting of representatives of both Governments, to the respective locations within 7 days of the conclusion of the Meeting in Washington on 7 February 2001 and be concluded as expeditiously as possible.

The Parties have discussed these recommendations and formally signified their acceptance of them.

6. The Meeting began discussion of the process for addressing the substantive issues in the territorial differendum

6. The Meeting began discussion of the process for addressing the substantive issues in the territorial differendum between Belize and Guatemala and agreed to the procedures set out in an Agreement on Procedure for Addressing the Merits of the Territorial Differendum and other Procedural Matters signed by the Parties on 7 February 2001. That agreement provides, inter alia, for the commencement of the process with the submission of a written presentation to the Facilitators by Guatemala not later than March 30, 2001.


7. At the Emergency Meeting in Miami on January 17-18, 2001 the Parties had invited the Facilitators to provide them with 'guidelines for public statements concerning the negotiation process, any agreements reached there, and any alleged violations of such agreements'. The Facilitators provided such guidelines to the Parties on 5 February and in the light of the discussion of them at the Meeting on 5-7 February, 2001 finalised their Guidelines for Public Statements which the Parties have accepted and undertaken to respect - as they had agreed in their Miami meeting - 'in a manner consistent with their obligations to timely and fully inform their respective public opinions concerning the progress of the negotiations, the facilitation of harmonious relations between Belize and Guatemala, and the maintenance of peace'.

8. The Meeting of 5-7 February, 2001 also discussed a 'Procedural Note' by the Facilitators dealing with a number of issues of difference between the Parties and proposing how they should be dealt with. After discussion the Parties adopted the Procedural Note revised as agreed by them in the discussion.

9. The Parties considered that their Meeting in Washington was a constructive one conducive to the furtherance of the process for the substantive resolution of the differendum. They placed on record their particular appreciation of the contributions to the process by the Pan American Institute of Geography and History and by the Organisation of American States.

Washington D.C., February 7, 2001


Sir Shridath Ramphal
Facilitator


Paul S. Reichler
Facilitator


Camilo Granada

Witness on behalf of the Secretary General of the OAS