

BELIZE

ROADMAP FOR A PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ON THE OPTION OF TAKING GUATEMALA'S TERRITORIAL CLAIM TO THE ICJ

Background

On the 27th of April 2012 at the Headquarters of the Organization of American States in Washington, D.C. the Foreign Ministers of Belize and of Guatemala agreed upon the 6th of October 2013 for the holding of simultaneous referenda in their respective countries in accordance with the Special Agreement Between Belize and Guatemala to Submit Guatemala's Territorial, Insular and Maritime Claim to the International Court of Justice, signed on the 8th of December 2008.

The Special Agreement of 8 December 2008:

Under the Statutes of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) both countries are required to agree that they would grant the ICJ compulsory jurisdiction over a specific matter for adjudication, in this instance Guatemala's claim on Belizean territory.

Article 2 of the Special Agreement reads:

"The Parties request the Court to determine in accordance with applicable rules of international law as specified in Article 38(1) of the Statute of the Court any and all legal claims of Guatemala against Belize to land and insular territories and to any maritime areas pertaining to these territories, to declare the rights therein of both Parties, and to determine the boundaries between the Parties' respective territories and areas."

Article 38.1 of the ICJ provides that the Court shall judge disputes before it in accordance with international law, and especially on the basis of:

- "a. international conventions, whether general or particular, establishing the rules expressly recognised by the contesting states;
- b. international custom, as evidence of a general practice accepted as law
- c. the general principles of law recognised by civilised nations;
- d. judicial decisions and the teachings of the most highly qualified publicists of the various nations, as subsidiary means for the determination of rules of law."

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY AND ROADMAP

A. Strategy:

The public awareness and education campaign will be conducted in a professional and objective manner. Emphasis will be placed on the fact that this is not a party political issue but a national issue. Consequently, public consultations and debates must be kept above the fray of party politics. The success of the campaign will depend heavily upon bipartisan cooperation. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure that representatives of the principal parties in the National Assembly of Belize (the UDP and the PUP) and the wider Belizean communities (including but not limited to churches, NGOs, Bar Association, Civic Groups, Unions, etc.) are a full part of this process.

The target audience for this public awareness and education campaign are all Belizean citizens. Its coverage must include the entire country, including rural and urban areas, and also Belizeans living abroad.

It will be phased over a period of twelve months from October 2012 to October 2013, culminating on 6 October 2013, the day slated for holding the national referendum.

B. Roles and Functions:

The campaign will be spearheaded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through a Referendum Office operating from a Boundaries Affairs Unit. Additional staff will be needed in order to operate dedicated machinery. These will include a Coordinator, professional advisors on public relations and support staff to conduct an effective and comprehensive campaign.

Ambassador James Murphy has been identified as the Coordinator, and former Chief Elections Officer and former Ambassador to the United Nations, Stuart Leslie will provide support. They will be charged with coordinating the implementation of the campaign and informing the public of the activities related to campaign and preparations for the referendum. They will have resource personnel and secretarial and clerical support staff. They will operate out of secure premises which are still to be found as a matter of priority.

Policy guidance and direction will come from Cabinet, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs will avail himself of an Advisory Board comprised of persons with knowledge of security, international law, foreign affairs and negotiations. They will be available for consultations in respect of Belize's international relations and to support the campaign.

A Referendum Commission comprised of around fifteen persons drawn from a wide cross section of Belize society, including churches, the business community, educational institutions, political parties, professional bodies such as the bar association, NGOs, Unions, etc.. It is expected that members of this Commission will provide their input in respect of the campaign's messaging and coverage, identification of priorities for action, and addressing feedback from the general public.

Key individuals from the Advisory Board, the Referendum Commission, and from other government and non-governmental bodies will be invited to also serve as Resource Facilitators to be the visible face of the campaign. They will assist in making presentations across the country and in helping to sensitize the public about the importance of the question and in understanding the issues.

C. Structure

In structuring the campaign it will be important to avoid the perception of a top down vertical approach as if the people will be told what to do. Instead, the Public Awareness and Education Campaign must be seen to take a horizontal approach whereby the Government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and interested parties, will share knowledge and information and the Belizean public will freely decide on the question put to them in referendum.

D. Key Messages

The Central messages of the campaign will be to emphasize that:

- Doing nothing is not an option; all past efforts have failed to bring resolution.
- Going to Court is now an option Belizeans are asked to consider
- Belizeans have a right and a duty to decide which way to go.

E. Methods of Communication

The campaign will use all methods and tools of communication to effectively and comprehensively reach the target audience.

F. Plan of Action

Funding: The strategy will require identification of resources for its full implementation. It is expected that Government will contribute a part of the budget, especially in the initial start-up, and that this will be complemented by contributions from the international community in grant funds.

Start-up: The Referendum campaign will require dedicated and secure office space with storage facilities, with support staff and adequate equipment in order to conduct its functions. Priority must be placed early on in identifying such space and making arrangements for operationalizing it.

Political Parties Participation: It is important that at the highest levels, contact is established between the two main political parties to discuss the goals and objectives of the public awareness and education campaign and as much as possible reach an understanding of how the process could be supported. Government must invite the UDP and the PUP to nominate representatives to participate at all levels of the campaign strategy.

Resource Material: An identification and compilation of all information and resource material relevant to the issue must be made, and where necessary new material must be drafted and prepared for public release. This includes printed material as well as electronic, audio and video contents.

Public Relations Firm: A public relations firm and consultants in this field must be engaged from very early to advise in all aspects of the campaign and provide support in the preparation and dissemination of information, messaging, including arrangements and settings for public discourse and presentations.

Advisory Board: Individuals will be identified and invited to join in an Advisory Board. TORs will be defined and the Board will be formally established.

Referendum Commission: Government and non-governmental organizations will be invited to identify their representatives to serve in the Referendum Commission. TORs will be defined and the Commission will be formally established.

Press Conference: The official launch of the public awareness and media campaign should get as wide publicity as possible, and members of the Referendum Commission and Resource Facilitators presented to the public.

Media Briefings: Arrangements must be made for media briefing sessions to sensitize them of the importance of the issue and to provide a preview of proposed activities and content of the public awareness campaign.

Consultations: Consultations will be made with BDF, Coast Guard, Fisheries, Immigration, Customs, Forestry, NGOs, on their experience and concerns on carrying out their responsibilities along or near the border.

Content: Design, develop, revise, distribute and publicize content for use as resource material for Resource Facilitators and for the general public.

Training: Conduct regular workshops/seminars with Resource Facilitators, and undergo specialized short-term training on relevant areas.

Outreach: Arrange and make presentations for educational institutions, villages, towns and cities across the country and Diaspora communities abroad. Address key members of civil society and organized groups; initiate and encourage debates in schools and universities. Make appearances in all media houses, TV and radio. Arrange for columns on the subject to appear in weekly newspapers. Produce, distribute and air documentaries and video and electronic clips on the subject. Update and activate the website on Guatemala claim. Respond to special requests for presentations, consultations and dialogue. Compile a contacts list for announcements and publications.

Research: Research will be conducted on the effectiveness of the campaign, and on historical research aimed at strengthening Belize's legal case.

G. Costing

A cost estimate of the entire initiative, including the public awareness and education campaign, voter mobilization and the referendum proper, is around Bz\$9 million (US\$4.5million). It is expected that this will be partly funded by the Government of Belize and by non-reimbursable contributions of the international community.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Belize

**BELIZE PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN
COSTING ESTIMATES IN BELIZE DOLLARS**

NUMBER	ACTIVITIES	ESTIMATE
1	Office Space	80,000.00
2	Printing & Publishing matters	775,000.00
3	Distribution, Newspaper, TV & Radio Ads	730,000.00
4	Documentaries	87,750.00
5	Debates/Panel	65,000.00
6	Field Activities	392,000.00
7	Website/Blogs	20,200.00
8	Press Conference/Media Briefings/Launch	210,000.00
9	Consultancies	150,000.00
10	PR Firm	80,000.00
11	Staffing/Allowances	444,082.00
12	Furniture/Equipment	130,000.00
13	Utilities	90,000.00
14	Operating Expenses	150,000.00
15	Miscellaneous	75,000.00
16	Foreign Travel	200,000.00
17	Transportation	192,666.00
18	Legal Fees and Research	1,000,000.00
19	Voter Mobilization	2,000,000.00
20	Referendum	2,078,439.00
	Total	8,950,137.00