



**ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES**  
**Office of the General Secretariat in the Adjacency Zone**  
**Belize and Guatemala**

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San Ignacio, Belize, October 6, 2013

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Electoral Authorities of Belize and Guatemala meet to strengthen bilateral cooperation**

The highest electoral authorities of Belize and Guatemala met today in San Ignacio, Belize under the auspices of the Organization of American States (OAS) to exchange information, experiences and best practices in electoral management; identify areas for inter-institutional collaboration; and further learn about the norms and processes in each country to conduct referendums. Guatemala's delegation was headed by the President of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, María Eugenia Villagrán de León, and Mr. Bernard Pitts, President of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, led the Belizean delegation.

The meeting took place within the framework of the new confidence-building measures that both countries adopted last May with a view to improving the conditions necessary to establish a new date to hold the simultaneous referenda, which will determine if the territorial dispute between both countries is submitted to the International Court of Justice for final settlement.

This encounter, which was held on the symbolic date of October 6 – the date previously established for holding the referenda – counted on the participation of the CEO of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belize, Ambassador Alexis Rosado and the Deputy Foreign Minister of Guatemala, Carlos Raúl Morales, who offered welcoming remarks. Ambassadors Stuart Leslie and James Murphy, of the Belizean Referendum Unit; Ms. Josephine Tamai, Chief Elections Officer of Belize; General Roberto Letona, Special Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, and His Excellency Manuel Tellez, Ambassador of Guatemala in Belize were also present. The meeting was chaired by the Representative of the Secretary General of the OAS for Belize-Guatemala Affairs, Ambassador Raul Lago, who was accompanied by the Chief of the OAS Peace Fund, Magdalena Talamas and the Director of the OAS Office in the Adjacency Zone, Sergio Benítez.

The delegations expressed their deep satisfaction for the friendly and cooperative environment that prevailed throughout the exchanges and agreed to promote additional initiatives of a technical nature in the near future to continue strengthening the bilateral cooperation in electoral matters.



Mrs. Maria Eugenia Villagran de Leon – President of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Guatemala and Ms. Josephine Tamai – Chief Elections Officer of Belize



From right to left: Mr. Bernard Q. Pitts, His Excellency Stuart Leslie, His Excellency Mr. James Murphy, His Excellency Alexis Rosado, His Excellency Raul Lago, Mrs. Magdalena Talamas, Mr. Sergio Benitez, His Excellency Carlos Raul Morales, Gen. Roberto Letona, Mrs. Maria E. Villagran, Ms. Josephine Tamai.

