



H.E. ULRIK FEDERSPIEL, PERMANENT OBSERVER TO THE OAS, BEHALF EUROPEAN UNION
CEREMONY MARKING THE CONCLUSION OF THE FACILITATION PROCESS OF THE BELIZE-GUATEMALA TERRITORIAL DIFFERENDUM
September 30, 2002 - Washington, DC

Mr. Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General, Foreign Ministers, Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted today on behalf of the European Union to speak at this Ceremony marking the conclusion of the facilitation process of the Belize and Guatemalan territorial differendum.

For many years the European Union has closely followed and encouraged the efforts of the Central American countries to find just, equitable and definitive resolution to the still existing border disputes. Disputes, which have hampered the process towards economic and political integration in the region.

Today we are gathered to commemorate the conclusion of the facilitation process, which we hope will put an end to one of these fruitless disputes.

The European Union welcomes unreservedly the conclusion of the facilitation process and the promises this bring for a conclusion of the Belize and Guatemalan territorial differendum in the nearest future.

We applaud the work of the Organisation of American States (OAS) and its Facilitators (Sir Shridath Ramphal for Belize and Paul Reichler for Guatemala) for their determined efforts in helping Belize and Guatemala reach a mutually acceptable and honourable agreement. The constructive approach taken by the Government of Honduras on the maritime issues must also be commended.

Once the agreement has been approved at the necessary referenda, ratified and fully implemented by the Governments of Belize and Guatemala it will constitute an important milestone in the history of the region. A milestone, which paves the way for closer collaboration between the two countries at a time when Central America is seeking social and economic integration.

We believe that regional integration is of key importance to the future development of Central America. A successful regional integration will lead to a successful integration into the world economy as a whole.

We intend wholeheartedly to continue our encouragement and support of the important work by governments, as well as regional organisations to face the present and future challenges of Central America. The Central American countries must work in unity and friendship to overcome and secure the conditions for lasting peace and prosperity.

Today is a day of celebration in which we commend the conclusion of the facilitation process. The European Union hopes that the results, which we celebrate, will spur other countries with territorial disputes to recognise that peaceful negotiation – and peaceful negotiations alone can provide all parties with acceptable and peaceful solutions.