

On March 9, 2010, the Organization of American States moderated the first meeting of the High Level Working Group between representatives of Belize and Guatemala in Belize City, Belize, which was created by both countries' foreign ministers during a meeting with the Secretary General at OAS Headquarters in December 2009.

The purpose of the High Level Working Group is to promote a direct and continuous line of communication between the Parties on the situation in the Adjacency Zone, analyze issues of mutual concern, and identify opportunities for bilateral cooperation. The membership of the Working Group, which is convened under the auspices of the OAS, consists of four representatives from each country: two from the foreign ministries and up to two chosen on an ad-hoc basis depending on the subject of expertise to be addressed. Both delegations are headed by their bilateral Ambassadors.

The delegation of Belize was headed by Alfredo Martínez, Ambassador of Belize in Guatemala, who was accompanied by Ambassador David Gibson and Mr. Oliver del Cid from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Belize. Manuel Tellez, Ambassador of Guatemala in Belize, headed the Guatemalan delegation together with Ambassadors Gustavo Orellana and Efraín Aguilera from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala.

During this first meeting, it was agreed that the working group would serve as an informal space for open dialogue and exchange of views, as well as to propose alternatives and solutions to issues that may come up, so as to continue to build on the confidence and understanding that has been fostered over the years between both Parties.

Likewise, it was decided that in order to ensure a clear line of communication among the countries, both Foreign Ministries, as well as the OAS, would be in continuous contact regarding sensitive issues to be addressed by the High Level Working Group.

In addition to the composition and responsibilities of the Working Group, the Parties discussed the recent events in the Sarstoon River and other areas of the Adjacency Zone. In this regard, various ideas were exchanged, which will be submitted for consideration by the foreign ministries.

The Special Representative of the OAS Secretary General for Belize and Guatemala, Ambassador Raúl Lago, expressed his satisfaction with the results of the meeting, as well as with the friendly and cordial tone of the discussions.