

**Belize Declaration of the Heads of states and/or
Governments of the Central American Integration
System Dec 19 2003**

DECLARATION OF BELIZE

The Prime Minister of Belize, the Presidents of the Republics of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, the Vice-president of the Republic of Panama and the Presidential Designate of the Republic of Honduras, and the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, representing the President of the Republic of Guatemala, gathered in Belize City within the framework of the XXIII Ordinary Summit of the member States of the Central American Integration System (SICA)

CONSIDERING

That this 23rd Ordinary Summit presents the right opportunity to highlight the work we have done and the progress we have made in the integration process and in a special way, congratulate ourselves for the incorporation of the Dominica Republic as an Associate State of SICA.

That the Integration of Central America is imperative, and that countries in the region welcome as an instrument, increasingly strategic and indispensable to identify with certainty a vision towards the future and the benefits of deepening our integration process.

In this respect, we have discussed various topics related to regional security, progress on economic and commercial issues, as well as the strengthening and deepening of our integration; therefore we:

AGREE

1. To highlight the work and progress achieved during this semester and congratulate the Government of Belize in the exercise of the Presidency Pro-tempore of the Central American Integration System.
2. To congratulate the Dominican Republic for signing the Agreement of Association, therefore becoming an Associate State of the Central American Integration System.
3. To recognize and congratulate the Governments of El Salvador and Honduras for their willingness in resolving their differences through avenues anticipated by the International Right of continuing to fulfill the resolutions and opinions and move towards the trans-border development of their bordering zones in conformity with the signed agreements.

4. Recognize the emphasized integration work by the Honourable Government of Guatemala headed by His Excellency, President Alfonso Portillo Cabrera.
5. Welcome the study: “The Central American Integration: Benefits and Costs” as presented by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), and instruct the General Secretariat of SICA that based on such study implement an ample process of discussion and exchange of opinions with the different sectors of the Central American society, in nurturing the dynamic process of Regional Integration. The SG-SICA should present a report/proposal at the next Ordinary Summit of the member countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA).
6. To instruct the Ministers responsible of Economic Integration in order that in 60 days they present, to an extraordinary meeting of Central American Presidents, modifying measures necessary for the urgent continuation of the Central American Customs Union following the signing of CAFTA and to include the CABEI in discussions on the matter. Likewise, instruct CABEI and SIECA to submit, during the same time-limit, a financial mechanism for the establishment of a social cohesion fund to mitigate possible impacts derived from the Customs Union and to improve its benefits.
7. To instruct the Ministers of Foreign Affairs Council of Central America to carry out the necessary actions for the prompt adhesion of the Dominican Republic to the Central American Parliament on the framework of the Association Agreement.
8. To instruct the Ministers of Foreign Affairs Council of Central America to evaluate and propose a revision of the presidential decisions of July 12, 1997 in Panamá so that, at the earliest possible, an integral reform proposal of the Central American Institution is presented.
9. Express our satisfaction for the signing of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Central America, and instruct the Ministers of Foreign Affairs to develop a joint strategy before the European Union in order to begin negotiations on an Association Agreement which would include the negotiation of a free trade agreement between the two regions. Equally, reiterate the request for Belize to be accepted in the political dialogue sustained with the Central American countries.
10. To instruct the competent authorities to present to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs Council for its consideration and approval and with the support of the sectorial secretariats, a proposal aimed at establishing a Statistic Commission of the Central American Integration System.

11. To continue improving our cooperation for the strengthening of civic security and instruct the Chiefs or Directors of Police of Central America to redouble their efforts for the adoption of a regional strategy against gangs that should be presented at earliest possible to the Security Commission.
12. Express our satisfaction for the progress made in the implementation of the Program for Arms Limitation in Central America, to reach a Reasonable Balance of Forces, encourage Stability, Transparency and Mutual Confidence.
13. To promote the implementation of the Regional Project for the Control of Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons adopted by the Central American Security Commission.
14. To welcome the initiative of the President of Nicaragua for the creation of a Central American Rapid Response Unit to Natural Disasters with its headquarters in Nicaragua and instruct the Secretary General of SICA, based on the offer by the United Nations Secretary General, to urgently implement its execution with the support of the Institutions of the Integration.
15. Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua reiterate their support to the Republic of Panamá and the Dominican Republic in their efforts to establish a privileged commercial relationship through a Free Trade Agreement with the United States of America.
16. Belize, Panamá and the Dominican Republic congratulate El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua for having successfully completed their negotiations on CAFTA and urge Costa Rica for an early conclusion of its negotiation.
17. Reiterate the important role of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) as a financial organization of the regional integration process and express our support for the strategy of said Institution on areas related to poverty alleviation, integration and globalization and the participation in the international economy.
18. To instruct the national authorities responsible for cooperation to support the international mobilization of resources by the Center for the Promotion of Micro and Small Enterprises (CENPROMYPE) in the priority areas of: trade promotion, development of local economies, employment generation, financial services and business development; and encourage its partners, CABEI and the ILO, as well as the international cooperation community, to widen and deepen their decisive and permanent support to the same.

We thank the People and Government of Belize, presided by the Honourable Prime Minister, Mr. Said Musa, for the hospitality and courtesies rendered.

Belize City, 19th December 2003

Said Musa
Prime Minister of Belize

Abel Pacheco de la Espriella
President of the Republic of Costa Rica

Francisco Guillermo Flores Perez
President of the Republic of El
Salvador

Enrique Bolaños Geyer
President of the Republic of Nicaragua

Hipolito Mejía
President of the Dominican Republic

Vicente Williams Agasse
Presidential Designate of the Republic
of Honduras

Arturo Vallarino
Vice President of the Republic of
Panama

Alfredo Trinidad
Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Presidential Representative of the
Republic of Guatemala