



DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

PRESS RELEASE

Belmopan, Tuesday, July 28, 2015

EU Ambassador to observe Belize Guatemala Forum as part of special visit

The Forum on Belize-Guatemala relations is at the centre of European Union (EU) Ambassador to Belize, Paola Amadei's visit to the country this week. Ambassador Amadei who arrived on July 26 participated in the forum held today, Tuesday, July 28. The forum facilitated discussions between representatives of both countries and was being organised as part of a wider EU funded programme **Guatemala- Belize: Support to the Peaceful Resolution of the Long –standing Territorial Dispute** which is managed by the Organisation of American States (OAS). The programme is being implemented over a two year period and facilitates conferences, ministerial meetings, cultural programmes and public education in both Belize and Guatemala.

The EU is a part of the Group of Friends of the Belize-Guatemala Transition Process and works with other interesting parties like the OAS to support a peaceful resolution to the territorial dispute. The Group of Friends acts as an advisory body to the Secretary General of the OAS and provides political and operational support for undertaking various activities under the agreement on confidence-building measures in force.

Commenting on the importance of the initiative, Ambassador Amadei explained "*The EU sees the need to continue to support the OAS in its mandate to mediate and foster confidence-building measures in between Guatemala and Belize. We believe the measures undertaken by the project remain necessary to maintain a climate conducive to the peaceful settlement of the dispute.*"

During her one week visit the Ambassador will also inaugurate infrastructure works funded by the EU at two of the country's popular archaeological sites – Caves Branch in Belmopan and Lamanai in Orange Walk. Both sites are part of a comprehensive portfolio projects of **Making Tourism Benefit Communities Adjacent to Archaeological Sites (MTBCAAS)** implemented under the **Belize Rural Development Programme (BRDP)** which focuses on the infrastructural upgrade of nine archaeological sites as well training for community members who work on the sites as tour guides, vendors and artisans.

The inauguration at Caves Branch will take place on Wednesday, July 29 at 10.00 am and will officially introduce improvements such as better walking trails, increased interpretive, directional and warning signs as well as the handover of new rescue and health care equipment at the site. The second inauguration at Lamanai will be celebrated on Friday, July 31 at 11.00 am and will recognise similar infrastructure improvements which will make the archaeological site more accessible and attractive to visitors. The objective of MTBCAAS is to improve the overall service offered to tourists and local visitors at the sites as well as increase employment opportunities to the communities around these sites.

Throughout the week Ambassador Amadei will also have meetings with senior Government Officials and counterparts of other international institutions. Ambassador Amadei will depart the country on August 1.

For more information Contact
EU Technical Support Office
3358 Floral Park Street
Belmopan
Office number: (011-501)-822-0868
Fax number: (011-501)-822-2863