

**GUATEMALAN FOREIGN POLICY GUIDELINES
2008-2012**

**Haroldo Rodas Melgar
Minister of Foreign Relations**



Contents

FOREWORD	2
I. The main parameters of Guatemalan Foreign Policy	4
II. Institutional aspects.....	6
III. Guatemalan strategic foreign policy objectives.....	7
IV. Broadening Guatemala's presence in the world and improving the country's image	8
V. Negotiation of the Association Agreement between Central America and the European Union..	14
VI. Consolidation of the Central American Integration Process	15
VII. Strengthening assistance and protection of Guatemalan migrants	16
VIII. Promoting the final solution of the territorial differendum with Belize	18
IX. Incorporating the international dimension to the fight against crime	19
X. Continue shaping the conceptual identity of Guatemalan foreign policy through the commitment towards democracy and the respect for Human Rights	20
XI. Protecting the environment.....	21
XII. Promotion of Guatemalan Culture	22
XIII. Strengthening international cooperation towards Guatemala and national cooperation efforts towards other countries	23
XIV. Strengthening foreign policy related institutions	23
FINAL WORDS.....	24



FOREWORD

The international realm is in the midst of a deep global crisis that has dramatically manifested itself through a complex combination of high prices of food, fuels and raw materials, a global economic slowdown and an unprecedented financial juncture. Severe effects of climate change and asymmetric social development, expressed through migration and its social, cultural and economic consequences must be added to these phenomena.

The world is undergoing radical change, facing the process of the conformation of a new world order, with the lights and shadows of globalization and its effects, which, if not correctly guided, threaten governance and limit the breadth of political will of world leaders.

For years, economic policy has favored the attention of economic interests over social ones; fortunately, such paradigms are being left behind at the international level, and Guatemala is no exception: the Administration of President Alvaro Colom has undertaken the task of building a structure directed to the promotion of freedom, solidarity, social justice and equality, as the main principles that must lead to human development and the common good of Guatemalans, focusing especially on the historically forgotten and excluded when the time has come to configure the country's development scheme.

Bearing all of this in mind, the Plan of Government includes a dynamic Social Cohesion Program, which seeks to care for the poorest and more excluded regions of the country, so as to dignify people and correctly place them as the main and most important objective of the government's policies.

Moreover, a rural development program is under execution, in order to promote production and productivity by means of economical and social activities. It also seeks to recover agricultural strengths and to promote production processes that give added value to products, especially those originated in the small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's).

Such local human development policies have been integrated into foreign policy with the aim of influencing the international agenda and bringing about increasing results in favor of the economic, social, cultural and environmental interests of the Guatemalan society.



Serious consideration has been given by the government to the transnational issue of insecurity. Measures are being taken in order to have effective and vetted security forces, aimed at strategically striking organized crime, especially illegal drug-trafficking and terrorism. However, there are other kinds of security threats: inequity, hunger, economic crises, the use of food for the production of bio-fuels, and global warming—all of which affect international security, stability and governance.

The government is also promoting a fiscal-reform and modernization program, conceived to confront fiscal evasion and circumvention, coupled with consistent and profound measures to ensure transparency, proper governmental spending and fight corruption. These processes are closely linked to the fulfillment of Guatemala's international commitments that seek to attain a thorough and sustainable development in order to ensure security, peace and the integrity of its citizens.

Additionally, the Administration of President Colom is committed to advance in the path set-out by the Millenium Development Goals (MDG's) established by the United Nations Organization in spite of the obstacles that could derive from the current international economic crisis.

In this light, this document seeks to present the guidelines of the Guatemalan foreign policy during the 2008-2012 period, approved in accordance to item o) of Article 183 of the Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala, by the President of the Republic. The guidelines include the four strategic objectives set-out by the Plan of Government:

- **Solidarity—Human loyalty**
- **Governance—Civic loyalty**
- **Productivity—Economic loyalty**
- **Regional perspective—Loyalty towards neighbors**



I. The main parameters of Guatemalan Foreign Policy

Guatemala interacts in innumerable ways and at multiple levels with the rest of the world. The government is responsible for the official aspect of such interaction, basically before other States and inter-governmental organizations, and with non-governmental and entrepreneurial bodies. The actions deployed by the government in this realm are based upon the following six elements:

- Constitutional dispositions
- Conceptual and ideological elements
- Historical principles and contemporary values
- The special relationship with the other countries in Central America
- The national, political, economic, commercial, financial, environmental, social and cultural interests and
- The government's public policy objectives

In what pertains to the first element, Article 149 of the Political Constitution of the Republic states that "Guatemala will regulate its relations with other States, in accordance with the principles, rules and international practices, with the purpose of contributing to the maintenance of peace and freedom, respecting, defending and promoting Human Rights, strengthening democratic processes and international institutions that guarantee mutual and equal benefit between States". Article 119 states that the State must "promote the orderly and efficient development of the country's national and international trade, fomenting markets for national products".

Regarding the second element, the conceptual and ideological framework, the Constitution refers to peace, liberty, defense of Human Rights and the strengthening of democracy as elements that assign identity to our nation, and therefore to its foreign policy. The 1996 Peace Accords are another reference point that is compatible and complementary to the constitutional precepts. The Accords offer the view of a Nation that, within the framework of a multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual society, values representative democracy, tolerance and agreement; the respect for Human Rights, and social, cultural and economic well-being; the preservation of the environment and the strengthening of the institutions that bring about the rule of Law.



Thirdly, in what has to do with principles and values, Guatemala shares with the vast majority of the countries in the region the international principles that inspired the vast legislation contained in international instruments agreed upon during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Within those, the right to self-determination, non-intervention, peaceful conflict resolution, the proscription of the use or threat of force, the sovereign equality of States, friendship and respect with all States that act in accordance to the principles stated in the Charter of the United Nations Organization, are noteworthy.

New elements can be added to those already mentioned, brought about by the contents of the 1996 Peace Accords, such as respect and tolerance; the respect for pluralism within the members of the international community, the high value given to cultural identity and relations between cultures, and the privileged role of dialogue and agreement.

Regarding the fourth element, the special relationship with the Central American countries and with the other member-countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA), it must be said that it has deep historical roots, complemented by shared values, common interests and geographical proximity. In this same sense, Article 150 of the Constitution states that Guatemala, as part of the Central American community, shall maintain and foster links of cooperation and solidarity with the other States that formed the Central American Federation and shall adopt the appropriate measures to put in practice, in total or in partial form, the political or economical union of Central America.

Competent authorities within the government must strengthen Central American integration upon equitable bases. This is a foreign policy mandate that instructs to promote and deepen the Central American integration process, and to take advantage of a regional scope in order to collectively seek new opportunities with the rest of the world.

The fifth element mentioned has to do with the defense of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and Guatemala's national interests in the commercial, economic, and financial arenas. National interests tend to vary with time, but not necessarily with changes in the country's administration. In that sense, this element reinforces the other four and gives foreign policy a State character, which transcends periods of government.



Each different Administration can have its own interpretation of what constitutes national interests. In any case, proactive diplomacy must pursue such interests in the bilateral and in the multilateral spheres, seeking opportunities and mitigating the adverse effects that can originate from unilateral actions of other countries in the international scene. Amongst the latter are protectionist actions and agricultural subsidies in highly-developed countries, the drama that undocumented Guatemalan migrants have had to face while abroad and, more recently, the economic and financial crisis.

The priorities of the Colom Administration are: the fight against poverty and hunger (first MDG); the strengthening of democratic institutions, and especially those that safeguard the security of citizens, priority which is internationally expressed in the fight against transnational organized crime; the defense of the most vulnerable (children, women and indigenous peoples); the environment, since Guatemala has become a country with alarming levels of natural resource degradation and pollution; the preservation of the country's cultural heritage; and the fight against corruption.

Hence, there are sufficient elements to build a reference framework to guide Guatemala's foreign policy. This framework rests upon some constitutional and legal precepts, on elements generated through practice, on internal public policy choices, and on others born from the current or foreseeable interests of the country, and on the different administrations' priorities.

Gone are the days when Guatemala, isolated from the international community due to the nature of authoritarian governments that ruled the country, followed a path dictated by pressures, both national and foreign. Due to the democratic transition and the entry into force of the 1996 Peace Agreements, Guatemala has earned opportunities in the international scene. The Administration of President Colom is committed with an increasingly proactive international policy based on national interests and principles.

II. Institutional aspects

Article 183 of the Political Constitution states that it is the duty of the President to dictate foreign policy, and it also establishes that Congress must approve all international Treaties and Conventions prior to ratification. The Ministry of Foreign Relations, in turn, must formulate policy and apply the juridical regime concerning the



relations that the State of Guatemala maintains with other States and international institutions.

According to the Law of the Executive Branch, the Ministry of Foreign Relations has amongst its duties the responsibility to coordinate, analyze, support and follow-up negotiations of international agreements; conduct and coordinate bilateral and multilateral relations; take care of all aspects related to official international information and communications; study and analyze the state of play of political, economical, commercial, financial and environmental events at the national, multilateral and global levels; prepare foreign policy principle and doctrine proposals in the various fields and also policies and strategies of action; and also ensure the proper and due operation of the Foreign Service.

It must be noted that globalization has implied that every centralized, decentralized and autonomous institution of the government now has a foreign affairs interest. There are some international forums that gather authorities from different institutions within the government, as is the case of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); the International Labor Organization (ILO); and the World Health Organization (WHO), amongst others. The same occurs within the Inter American system.

In that sense, and seeking to introduce a necessary element of coherence in the country's participation in international affairs, the role of the Ministry of Foreign Relations is increasingly important as coordinator of the other public institutions that have a part to play internationally.

III. Guatemalan strategic foreign policy objectives

Since the dawn of the democratic transition in 1986, Guatemalan foreign policy is inspired by a set of elements that value democracy, respect for Human Rights, intercultural relations, the strengthening of civil society, social participation and sustainable development.

When those internal objectives are shaped into the image that is projected abroad, one can clearly see a nation that seeks to be reckoned in the same terms: democratic, progressive, tolerant of diversity, respectful of the rule of Law, supportive and willing to strengthen links of friendship and cooperation with all nations.



Giving real and substantive content to the effort of projecting this image with the purpose of pursuing and defending the country's interests, imposes two tasks on foreign policy. First a proactive attitude on the part of the State, with the purpose of creating opportunities and then taking advantage of them in the international realm. Second, relatively abstract notions need to be translated into policies that generate concrete actions.

Guatemala's foreign policy during the Colom Administration has eleven strategic objectives:

- **Broadening Guatemala's presence in the world and improving the country's image**
- **Negotiation of the Association Agreement between Central America and the European Union**
- **Promoting the consolidation of the Central American integration process**
- **Strengthening assistance and protection of Guatemalan migrants**
- **Promoting the final solution of the territorial differendum with Belize**
- **Incorporating the international dimension to the fight against crime**
- **Continue shaping the conceptual identity of Guatemalan foreign policy through the commitment towards democracy and the respect for Human Rights**
- **Protecting the environment**
- **Promotion of Guatemalan Culture**
- **Strengthening international cooperation towards Guatemala and national cooperation efforts towards other countries**
- **Strengthening foreign policy related institutions**

These strategic objectives are thematic, and not limited by the traditional division between bilateral and multilateral issues. Actually, both approaches—bilateral and multilateral—tend to overlap and reinforce each other, in the process of achieving the tasks at hand.

IV. Broadening Guatemala's presence in the world and improving the country's image

All governmental institutions have an important role in the process of broadening Guatemala's presence in the world and improving the country's image. The Ministry



of Foreign Relations plays a fundamental part in what has to do with the internal coordination and monitoring and also regarding the international scenario, through the diplomatic action of its Diplomatic and Consular offices abroad.

In the bilateral arena, Guatemala maintains diplomatic relations with 143 nations, but only has 37 resident missions around the world, 16 of which are in charge of the ties with 44 countries, on a non-resident basis. The Permanent Mission of Guatemala before the United Nations Organization has the responsibility of the bilateral relations maintained with the remainder of the 143 countries, through their Missions before the UN.

Guatemalan diplomatic resident missions are mainly located in countries with which Guatemala has had meaningful historic, political, commercial or cultural links. Such is the case of the Central American Nations, North America, the vast majority of the South American countries, some States in the Caribbean, our traditional partners in Europe, the Russian Federation, Egypt, Israel and three Asian countries: South Korea, Japan and the Republic of China in Taiwan.

Guatemalan presence is needed in important geographical zones where potential and important interests lie, such as the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean, the African Continent, the Persian Gulf, Central Europe, Southeast Asia, India and Oceania. This yet to be resolved situation responds to the limited financial resources available to the Ministry of Foreign Relations. The distribution of resident missions is an issue that is permanently revisited, so as to properly gauge the cost of opportunity derived from being absent from regions of great importance.

The possibility of establishing common diplomatic representations with the other Central American nations in certain capitals of the world in order to reduce financial costs, and thus be able to expand physical presence in other regions, is being evaluated.

Guatemalan diplomatic missions must also promote trade and tourism in a thorough and efficient manner. In that sense, increasing the participation of specialized commercial attachés through the *Programa de Agregados Comerciales, de Inversion y Turismo* (PACIT) is also being considered.

Selection of Foreign Service personnel must be done upon the basis of experience, merit, suitability, and performance evaluation, in order to ensure a proactive attitude directed at strengthening the bilateral ties with their country of posting.



Foreign policy guidelines make the identification of Guatemala's interests before the various regions of the world possible, and from there, structure a bilateral agenda with each country within the said regions.

In Central America, due to the strong interdependence that was generated between the signatories of the 1960 General Treaty of Central American Economic Integration, bilateral and multilateral diplomacy complement one another to shape foreign policy actions that are often conceived jointly or as a result of close consultations. The promotion and consolidation of the integration process is one of the strategic priorities of the Colom Administration, as will be seen later in this document.

In this context, Guatemala will strengthen even more its bilateral relations with each one of the Member countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA). Mechanisms will be devised enabling more fluid and coordinated bilateral relationships in the areas of security, health, education, ports and border services, environmental and natural resource protection, and socio-environmental disaster prevention *inter-alia*.

In the Caribbean, and particularly in the English-speaking countries, Guatemala must seek new partners, both in the political and commercial fronts. It must also strengthen ties with Spanish-speaking Caribbean nations, with which important cooperation agreements in the fields of health, education and trade, exist.

In North America, immigration, security, trade, investment and intellectual property protection predominate in the vast array of issues that make up the bilateral agenda.

This region is home to one of the main trade partners of Guatemala. Bilateral trade and Guatemalan export figures have increased, partly due to free trade agreements in force with the United States and Mexico. A free trade agreement with Canada is in an advanced stage of negotiation.

Free trade agreements offer an excellent opportunity to attract new foreign investment and increase trade flows, so long as they are correctly administered. In order to be able to make good use of such agreements, proper coordination between civil society, the private sector and the government of Guatemala is needed. A close relationship with private sector branches and with small and medium industries must also exist, in order to fully take advantage of the potential offered by this type of international arrangements.



In what concerns the issue of immigration in North America, the establishment of temporary worker programs that allow Guatemalans to travel and work on a temporary basis in North American countries, as is already successfully the case in some of them, is a priority.

The creation of new cooperation mechanisms in the areas of the fight against illicit drug-trafficking, gang violence and human trafficking are needed.

Concerning the issue of adoptions, the Ministry of Foreign Relations is part of the National Adoptions Council, whose work seeks to make the process of adoptions transparent and to apply the existing international norms.

The region is also home to programs like the Millenium Challenge Corporation, where Guatemala is currently seeking to qualify as participant, and which will make funds available for investment in the country's social development.

In light of Guatemala's geographical proximity to this region, a thorough border development program that emphasizes social development, security, conservation, reforestation, and border infrastructure development among other things should be devised.

Guatemala must also prioritize its relationship with the countries of South America, due to historical, cultural and social ties that allow the identification of common challenges and interests and that open the door for South-South cooperation in very important areas such as social cohesion. Important points of reference can be found in the social development models of these countries, which can then be applied successfully in Guatemala.

Ties with this region should be strengthened, particularly in what has to do with cooperation in fields such as social and sustainable development, renewable and non-renewable energy sources, security, health and housing, as well as technical and scientific training.

In what pertains trade, Free Trade agreements signed with some of the countries in the region should be fully implemented, expanded to include other countries, and new market opportunities explored.



In the field of security, cooperation against organized crime must be present in the list of priorities within the bilateral and regional agendas.

The experience that has been gathered by other countries in renewable energy production should be implemented also in Guatemala, which has set-out to explore and promote the production and the use of this type of energy sources.

In the European context, traditional links of friendship, cooperation and commerce are the bases for the strengthening of economical and trade relations, as well as for the promotion of investment in the country.

Political, economic and cooperation relations will be properly regulated through the Central American – European Union Association Agreement, topic to be addressed later in this document.

Guatemala is keen to attract the European tourist, and hence a new strategy to offer Guatemala as a tourist destination must be designed and implemented through the Embassies in that Continent along with the Guatemala Tourism Board (INGUAT).

Guatemala's diplomatic allies in Asia have favored the country's development and have made important contributions in the areas of health, education, technology, environment protection, agriculture and infrastructure development, among other fields of activity.

Guatemala must strengthen its ties with these countries, especially in the areas of industry, science and technology, sectors where excellent progress has been achieved resulting in great economic growth for that region, and that can serve as development models for Guatemala.

In the field of trade, new foreign investment for the development of road, energy, oil, mining, telecommunications and tourism infrastructure will be sought, as well as for the production of exportable goods.

In spite of our insufficient presence in the Middle East, Guatemala will deploy a dynamic agenda, prioritizing issues like technical, agricultural and educational cooperation, as well as training of community leaders, among other topics.



Guatemala also has a limited presence in the African Continent; nevertheless, political, economic and cultural links with the Arab world and new approaches with other African nations will be sought.

The Ministry of Foreign Relations will take action to improve Guatemala's presence abroad, through a new image that seeks to promote national competitiveness in the economic, commercial and touristic arenas.

Guatemalan foreign policy will focus to favor national economic development through the following means:

- International trade negotiations;
- The World Trade Organization;
- Investment and trade promotion;
- Tourism promotion.

The Ministry of Foreign Relations works very closely with the Ministry of Economy, *Invest in Guatemala* and *Pronacom*, as well as with the Guatemalan Chambers of Commerce and Industry in order to coordinate foreign economic policy. *Agexport*, *Anacafe* and *Asazgua* also have a role in this process.

The Ministry is also part of the National Export Promotion Council (CONAPEX), in charge of the approval of national policies in the fields of international trade negotiations, investment and tourism; participates also in the National Export Coordinating Commission (CONACOEX), where national foreign trade policies are drafted at the technical level to be further examined by CONAPEX; and also belongs to the International Trade Negotiation Commission (CONEI), body that has the task of analyzing and approving the prioritization of international trade negotiation processes. It also belongs to different inter-institutional forums where national policies are discussed.

Guatemala is committed with the strengthening of multilateralism, be it at the Central American, Latin American, Hemispheric, Ibero-American or global levels, through its active membership at the United Nations Organization and its specialized agencies, as well as at the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.



In the Hemisphere, Guatemala is a member to the Organization of American States and to the Inter American Development Bank. Guatemala is also part of the Association of Caribbean States and of the Ibero American Community.

Guatemala has Permanent Missions at the three main seats of the United Nations Organization (New York, Geneva and Vienna), and a Permanent Mission before the Organization of American States in Washington, DC. Guatemalan Embassies in Paris, Vienna and Rome deal with various specialized UN agencies, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Guatemala also participates in various forums, with countries with which it shares values and interests, such as the G-77, that gathers developing countries to coordinate positions regarding economic subjects; the G-22, composed of like-minded countries involved in international trade negotiations; the Cairns Group, gathering agricultural product exporting countries that seek to liberalize the international trade of such products; the Group of Rio, political coordination group that conglomerates Latin American countries with a vocation towards democracy; and the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) which is a very useful plural political dialogue forum for developing countries.

In the multilateral realm, Guatemala takes part in the Peace-keeping operations of the United Nations Organization with military troops in Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and with military observers in Lebanon and in six African countries. The establishment of the Regional Blue-Helmet Training Center in Guatemala is a clear sign of the country's commitment in this respect and shows its solidarity towards other nations.

V. Negotiation of the Association Agreement between Central America and the European Union

Three pillars make up the structure of the Association Agreement currently under negotiation between the Central American countries and the European Union: a Free Trade Agreement, a Cooperation Agreement and a Political Agreement.



The objectives sought by Central America through the negotiation of the Association Agreement are:

- **To consolidate relations between both regions;**
- **To establish a Free-Trade Area;**
- **To develop a privileged political association, based on the promotion of democracy and Human Rights, sustainable development, good governance and the rule of Law;**
- **To increase bi-regional cooperation seeking to attain a more equitable and sustainable socio-economic development in both regions;**
- **To expand and diversify the bi-regional trade relationship; and**
- **To deepen and strengthen the regional integration process.**

VI. Consolidation of the Central American Integration Process

Throughout its history, Guatemala has assigned great priority to its relations with the countries of Central America, and to giving thrust to the Central American Integration process. This is mainly due to the country's interests, considering the high level of interdependence in the areas of trade and direct foreign investments. Thus, a proactive attitude has been adopted to drive the deepening of the process.

Central American economic integration has made significant progress and this has resulted in unprecedented growth of intra-regional trade. As a matter of fact, during 2007 the volume was higher than 5.2 billion US Dollars, which represents 30% of the region's total trade. Seven thousand different companies participate in these exchanges, 70% of which are SME's. Additionally, two million Central Americans make up the region's workforce, 36% of which are Guatemalans dedicated to regional trade. As can be clearly seen, Guatemala's participation in the region's economic integration is significant.

All of this led the Central American governments to approve the Central American Customs Union Framework Agreement in December 2007. The Colom Administration is seeking to enact this Agreement with those countries that are ready to delve into this important integration project, in accordance to what is stated in legal dispositions currently in force in the region.



Foreign policy in the field of integration in the Colom Administration is based upon five foundations:

- First, making integration related commitments even stronger, and make progress towards reaching the final objective of attaining the region's customs union, in a gradual and progressive manner, taking into account each country's possibilities.
- Second, transcend the relative dichotomy that exists between political and economic-commercial integration through a close coordination at the national level between the Ministries of Economy, Foreign Relations, Public Finances and Agriculture.
- Third, strengthening Central American integration institutions, with the purpose of dealing with their deficiencies and insufficiencies.
- Fourth, giving thrust to joint trade negotiations with third parties, and
- Fifth, fomenting a greater civil society and private sector participation in the process of perfecting the path that will lead to integration, through consultations and dialogue with associations and unions, by means of the Consultative Council of the Central American Integration System and through different representative regional institutions.

Lastly, one needs to take note of the fact that Guatemala's integrationist vocation is not limited to its relationship with the other Central American nations, since it has always had a policy of support and of participation regarding the activities of all political or economic institutions that work towards Latin American integration. In that respect, more emphasis shall be given to contact mechanisms with MERCOSUR, the Andean Community (CAN), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) as well as proper follow-up to the recently constituted South American Nations Union (UNASUR).

VII. Strengthening assistance and protection of Guatemalan migrants

The amount of Guatemalan citizens abroad, and especially of those in North America, has increased exponentially during the last two decades. No less than 1.5 million Guatemalans live in the United States of America. Such a large number of people generate a high demand for consular services.



Moreover, many of these Guatemalan citizens are in the United States without proper immigration authorization documentation, in an increasingly restrictive surrounding which has a direct toll on their employment opportunities, on their access to housing and other services, not to mention having to face the constant risk of being arrested and deported.

In a broader context, attention to Guatemalan immigrants has become one of the main topics in the bilateral agenda with those countries where Guatemalans reside, and is thus part of the multi-level dialogue and consultation that takes place on a regular basis with foreign authorities.

The Colom Administration's policy states that support for Guatemalan immigrants must be thorough and participative. In that sense, the policy seeks to facilitate social development conditions in Guatemala, so that our citizens are not forced to migrate to seek better opportunities abroad.

Since there are cases where Guatemalans have migrated due to poverty and extreme poverty conditions, social discrimination or lack of access to employment, one of the goals is to widen and improve the support given to the Guatemalan communities abroad, as well as to their families who were left behind in Guatemala. A program to strengthen and broaden the consular network through the professionalization of personnel and the opening of new consular offices is currently under development. Furthermore, a video conferencing system to improve communication between migrants and their families is being implemented, as well as a system of *e-consular* services, to enable online attention and therefore avoid the need to go to the consular offices.

CONAMIGUA, or the Guatemalan National Council for the Attention of Migrants, is an institution presided by the Minister of Foreign Relations. Amongst its duties, CONAMIGUA will serve as a tool to bridge the gaps to make participation of migrants in the definition and implementation of programs and policies for their own attention possible.

This unprecedented body is a very valuable tool through which the efforts of different institutions will be coordinated in order to establish an official policy on migration, out of which specific programs and projects will be carried-out by the Ministry of Foreign Relations. Mechanisms of counsel, assistance and legal defense for Guatemalan migrants who have been arrested or are at risk due to immigration legislation violations or related offenses remain a priority for the Ministry of Foreign



Relations. This has resulted in the hiring of specialized Attorneys and legal firms through Guatemalan Consulates.

Locally, the services currently given to the public by the *Centro de Atención al Migrante* through its offices located at the site of the Ministry of Foreign Relations and in Huehuetenango, are going to be expanded and an additional program to help the returning migrants will be implemented.

Needless to say, assistance to migrants is not limited to those that have travelled to the United States of America. Even if the number of Guatemalan migrants in Europe is substantially lower in real terms, the restrictions that they have to face are increasing, as is clearly shown by the draft Directive that aims to sanction those who hire undocumented migrants. Guatemala is working through its contacts in European Union member countries, both bilaterally and jointly with other Central American nations, to mitigate the effects of such policies.

VIII. Promoting the final solution of the territorial differendum with Belize

For decades, the main issue in the Guatemalan foreign policy agenda was that of its territorial, maritime and insular claim regarding Belize. The Colom Administration has followed-up on the work done by previous Administrations to reach an agreement with Belize to resolve the territorial differendum. Accepting the recommendation of the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, to take the steps necessary to submit the dispute to the International Court of Justice was agreed upon, seeking a fair and definitive settlement of the differendum.

As stated in Article 19 of the transitory dispositions of the Political Constitution of the Republic, the Executive branch is authorized to carry out the necessary steps to resolve the situation of the rights of Guatemala regarding Belize, according to national interests. Any final agreement must be submitted by Congress to the approval of the People, through a referendum.

While this process progresses, the constitutional mandate to “promote social, economic and cultural links with the people of Belize” is being observed. Also, the strengthening of the good relations that exist between both States, due to their geographical proximity and shared interests, and also due to the fact that Belize is part of the Central American Integration System.



In that sense, the Ministry of Foreign Relations carries out a bilateral relationship that is independent from the territorial differendum and that allows authorities from both nations to have a fluid and coordinated communication through their foreign ministries.

IX. Incorporating the international dimension to the fight against crime

The fight against crime which clearly affects public security and severely weakens governmental institutions is yet another issue in the immediate list of priorities of the Colom Administration. A regional security strategy, within the breadth of the Central American Integration System is needed mainly due to the increasingly transnational and regional character of organized crime activities such as illicit drug trafficking, human trafficking and weapons smuggling, amongst others. As part of this effort, Guatemala has joined the group of nations that have decided to cooperate against the production and trafficking of illicit drugs, within the framework of the Regional Antinarcotics Summit that took place in August 2008 in Colombia.

Guatemala will strengthen its ties with diverse donors, particularly with the United States of America, through the Merida initiative, with Mexico and with Spain, with the aim of broadening and intensifying the scope of action regarding a regional security strategy. Additionally, Guatemala has the support of the United Nations Organization, through the establishment of the International Commission Against Impunity (CICIG), to augment national capacities in the criminal prosecution field. The Ministry of Foreign Relations will play its part so that the local efforts in the fight against crime receive the support of the international community.

Guatemala's links with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), where the annual sessions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice take place, will be strengthened. Guatemala will continue monitoring the full compliance of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption, both strategically important for the purpose of incorporating the international dimension to the fight against crime.



- X. Continue shaping the conceptual identity of Guatemalan foreign policy through the commitment towards democracy and the respect for Human Rights

In the field of Human Rights, Guatemalan foreign policy guidelines must be aligned with constitutional precepts; this is why the Colom Administration will prioritize support for the poorest and socially excluded Guatemalans, seeking to bridge the existing inequity gap in Guatemala. This fact makes the inclusion of the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights mandatory within the context of Human Rights foreign policy.

It is important to underline that Human Rights are closely related to democracy and to the rule of Law, and hence, foreign policy must promote and protect them. Guatemala stands by the commitments made at the “Community of Democracies”, that seeks to promote democratic governance, and will continue to actively participate in this group.

For Guatemalans, democracy not only consists of free and fair periodic elections but rather the acceptance of other imperatives, such as the independence of powers, the protection of Human Rights, transparency and the fight against corruption, amongst other things. The guarantees that civil and political rights bring are fundamental for life in a democracy. Corruption produces and contributes to Human Rights abuses. Transparency, accountability, civil society participation and above all, the political will to transform institutional practices and systems that allow structural corruption schemes is a must. International cooperation towards the fight against corruption is an imperative for democratic societies that results in the strengthening of good governance.

Guatemala is working closely with other countries in the process of reform that is taking place in the United Nations Human Rights Council that adopted the “*institution-building package*”, which includes, among other things, the new universal periodical review mechanism, through which the Human Rights situation of all United Nations member countries will be monitored.

In what has to do with the bodies created as a result of treaties on Human Rights, which monitor the application of the main agreements for the protection of Human Rights, Guatemala will continue to deliver its periodic reports in full compliance of these international obligations.



The promulgation of the Peace Accords framework legislation that consolidates the Accords as commitments of State, and what is stated in the “Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples” agreement, are clear signs of Guatemala’s strong commitment to the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples.

Globally, Guatemala will actively promote the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and at the Inter-American level will continue to exercise positive leadership in the process of drafting of an American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

To better serve these purposes, the Ministry of Foreign Relations will establish a Directorate for Human Rights, in charge of the issue of the rights of indigenous peoples, which will provide the personnel and the tools needed in order to address and follow-up the international agenda and commitments undertaken in this area.

Guatemala has an open and cooperative policy regarding the special UN Human Rights Council and Inter-American system monitoring mechanisms, and fully complies with their urgent requests. This policy was strengthened even more after Guatemala’s incorporation as a Member State at the UN Human Rights Council in 2006. In this light, the Guatemalan government requested the establishment of an office of the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights in Guatemala, which gives technical assistance to national authorities in the development and execution of programs and policies for the promotion and protection of such rights, and that has also contributed to making the relationship between the government and civil society closer.

XI. Protecting the environment

The right to have a better life is better addressed through environment protection. In this context security and well-being of the Guatemalan population is linked, more than ever before, to a sustainable development strategy that is fully cognizant of the capacity that natural resources have, as long as they are properly exploited, to become competitive advantage providers for Guatemala.

Population growth and human activity have produced severe effects on natural resources; global warming has made sustainable and environmentally friendly policy creation a must. Moreover, the Colom Administration is working on a national and on



a regional strategy to contribute with the international negotiating process within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The Ministry of Foreign relations is in the process of establishing a sub-directorate for the environment within the Human Rights, Indigenous Peoples Rights, Culture and Environment Directorate, with the aim of formulating environmental foreign policy and of training technical teams of experts with international negotiation capacity.

XII. Promotion of Guatemalan Culture

Guatemala's reality as a multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual nation demands to reflect about a culture of unity amidst diversity. Such diversity, acknowledged in the Peace Accords, marks the importance of carrying-out thorough research in the cultural field so as to draft a strategic but inclusive plan to promote cultural policies that are in line with such reality.

This is why the Ministry of Foreign Relations is re-orienting its policy in this field towards an international cultural policy, in line with the conceptual proposals of multilateral organizations. Guatemala's cultural heritage and its political will to advance in the creation and implementation of a policy based on the promotion and understanding of its cultures, as an indispensable tool for today's international relations, makes the definition of a policy in this area mandatory.

Material expression of culture, protection of the environment and promotion of tourism are completely fused in the archaeological, natural and touristic program called "*Cuatro Balam*" which spreads over 22,500 square kilometers and includes an important number of archaeological sites, among which are *Tikal*, *Piedras Negras*, *Uaxactun* and *El Mirador*—considered to be the Mayan Culture's birthplace, and also the site of *La Danta*, the colossal 100 meter-high pyramid, amongst the site's most important buildings.

The Ministry of Foreign Relations is working in very close coordination with all of the other governmental authorities in charge of the development of this important program, and dedicates its attention to the international promotion of it and also to seeking foreign financing possibilities so as to contribute to its overall execution.



Guatemalan diplomatic missions abroad, on their part, carry-out a policy that gives thrust to the projection and cultural action of Guatemala in the world, through a series of programs and projects that include art, cinematography, theater, as well as the promotion of languages, history and customs, all expressions of change that strengthen democracy and Human Rights, and that showcase Guatemala's culture in a globalized world.

XIII. Strengthening international cooperation towards Guatemala and national cooperation efforts towards other countries

Another cross-cutting topic that arises in the international relations agenda is the cooperation that Guatemala aspires to receive, both from bilateral and multilateral sources. The Colom Administration established the International Cooperation Council, as an effort to introduce coherence and priorities to international cooperation programs, based upon the five principles of the *2005 Paris Declaration*—the exercise of leadership over development strategies and policies and their coordination; the need that the donor community direct their cooperation towards the national strategies and policies; that there be harmonization in cooperation so as to make it complementary to the national efforts; that there be result evaluation mechanisms; and that accountability applies to both directions.

Guatemala, as an international cooperation recipient, also seeks to be able to grant horizontal cooperation to other countries, regarding good practices at the national level. Cooperation received will complement the government's responsibilities in the implementation of its development policies.

XIV. Strengthening foreign policy related institutions

The formulation, design and implementation of a coherent foreign policy that is also compatible with national public policy priorities as a whole and with national interests entail institutional challenges, particularly in the case of the Ministry of Foreign Relations.



The Colom Administration is committed with the strengthening of the foreign ministry and also supplying it with the necessary human and financial resources to enable it to carry-out its mandate in an efficient and timely manner. It is also conscious of the need to professionalize and dignify the foreign-service career personnel. A clear witness to this fact is the high level of support given to previously nominated career officials who continued to serve in their postings from the time of the inauguration in January of this year.

Steps to come include the drafting of an expanded budget, the entry into force of the Ministry of Foreign Relations Internal Regulations (Governmental Agreement number 415-2003), the strengthening of the commercial attachés program, and training of the personnel of the Ministry, both through virtual and real attendance means, as well as the promulgation of a new Diplomatic Service Law by the Congress of the Republic. This new law will regulate the diplomatic career, by introducing a more rigorous admissions system, the process of promotions up to the Ambassadorial rank, as well as a mechanism for the systematized rotation of officials working in the missions abroad and at the Ministry in Guatemala. The Diplomatic Academy will be established, and it will undertake its duties in close coordination with the country's Universities that have an international relations curriculum, with the purpose of strengthening institutional links and offering internships to students, jointly organize events and promote stronger cooperation through the signing of strategic association agreements.

FINAL WORDS

These foreign policy guidelines should serve as the basis upon which an official policy with short, medium and long term visions can be established, through which the State of Guatemala can lay the foundations of the objectives it seeks to attain, of the leadership that it deserves in the international community of nations, and of the concrete results it pursues in its bilateral, regional and multilateral relations in the political, diplomatic, social, economic, environmental, cultural, Human Rights and international cooperation related issues, amongst others.

Thus, these guidelines should be considered in their own dimension, in the light of national interests.

