

Partial Scope Agreement with Guatemala

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WRITTEN BY ADMINISTRATOR

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Belize signed a Partial Scope Agreement with Guatemala on 26th June, 2006 in Belize City. Eight years later, on 28th February, 2014, Belize hosted the first meeting of the Administrative Commission established through the provisions of the Agreement. The Commission has direct oversight of four technical committees also created by the Agreement to resolve trade and trade related issues in the areas of Customs Procedures of Rules of Origin (ROO), Plant and Animal Health (SPS), Standards and Quality (TBT) and Land Transportation. . The objective of this meeting was to gather the relevant stakeholders to make effective the administrative mechanism that would facilitate the resolution of cross border trading issues between the two countries.



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Ms. Margaret Ventura, mistress of ceremony, opened with Belize's national prayer; followed by the Head of the Belize Delegation, Chief Executive Officer Michael Singh, who reaffirmed the Government of Belize's strong interest and commitment in commerce between Belize and Guatemala. He also noted the importance of conducting trade in an official manner and in accordance with the Partial Scope Agreement (PSA). The Head of the Guatemala delegation, Vice Minister Maria Luisa Flores Villagran echoed similar concerns and commitments from the Government of Guatemala.

A substantial part of the meeting addressed the approval and adoption of the Rules of Procedure of the Administrative Commission in accordance with section 34 of the PSA.

The meeting also afforded the opportunity for the Belize delegation to inform their trading counterpart of some of the current cross border issues between the two countries. The Belize technical team from Customs and Excise Department and the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) gave presentations that outlined the existing trading issues for exporters, including currency exchange, application of Customs procedures, the application of outdated tariff codes, mutual recognition of food and health safety measures and procedures for the registration of agricultural products.

By the close of the meeting, both Parties were committed to advancing progress and trade relations between both countries, and to take the second step to the Belize/Guatemala Partial Scope Agreement, so the practical aspects of the agreement can be materialized.

Courtesies were exchanged and the meeting ended at 3:00pm.