



Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Report of the United Nations visiting mission to Montserrat, 17–20 December 2019

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I. Origin of the mission

1. At the Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, held in Saint George's in May 2018, and the 9th meeting of the 2018 session of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, held in New York in June 2018, the Premier of Montserrat, Donaldson Romeo, requested the Special Committee to dispatch to the Territory a visiting mission that could also hold meetings with evacuees in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Antigua and Barbuda and the United States of America (see [A/73/23](#), annex II, para. 28, and [A/AC.109/2018/SR.9](#), paras. 1–6).

2. During the annual informal dialogue with the 2018 Bureau of the Special Committee, held on 13 February 2019, the representative of the United Kingdom said that his Government was open to a visiting mission to Montserrat. At a follow-up meeting on 16 April, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that his Government had no objection to the mission, subject to consultations with the territorial Government.

3. In a letter addressed to the Chair of the Special Committee on 10 May 2019, the representative of the United Kingdom confirmed that his Government had no objections to visits by the Committee to any of its overseas territories and that the Government of Montserrat would welcome a visit in order to discuss the impact of the volcanic eruption in the late 1990s as well as the longer-term economic and political challenges facing Montserrat. He also indicated the view of his Government that a visit to London would not be the most effective use of the Committee's time, since a visit to Montserrat would provide all the necessary knowledge and access to expertise on the issues to be addressed.

4. On 14 June 2019, the Special Committee approved the dispatch of a visiting mission to Montserrat at a date to be identified in consultation with the administering Power and the Territory (see [A/AC.109/2019/SR.3](#), paras. 52–54) and requested the Chair, in collaboration with members of the Bureau, to continue consultations with the United Kingdom with a view to dispatching the mission. This decision was communicated to the United Kingdom on 3 July.

5. On 10 July 2019, the Premier addressed to the Chair a communication in which he proposed that the visiting mission be held in the week of 16 December. Subsequently, the Bureau held meetings to discuss the mission's composition, terms of reference and programme of work.

6. On 12 September 2019, at a meeting with the Chair, the representative of the United Kingdom was informed of the terms of reference. He emphasized that the mission should not interfere with the electoral process in Montserrat, which the Chair confirmed was also the firm view of the Bureau and was being taken into consideration with regard, *inter alia*, to the dates of the mission, in order to ensure that it followed – as opposed to preceded – the election.

7. Following the elections held in Montserrat on 18 November 2019, and in response to the letter from the Chair dated 20 November, the newly elected Premier, Joseph Easton Taylor-Farrell, in his letter dated 2 December, confirmed his support for the visiting mission of the Special Committee and the timing agreed upon between the Committee and his predecessor. Following a meeting with the representative of the United Kingdom on 6 December, the Chair, in a letter dated 11 December addressed to the representative, conveyed the dates, terms of reference and composition of the mission.

II. Mandate of the mission

8. In accordance with the decision taken by the Special Committee on 14 June 2019, and on the basis of relevant consultations, it was agreed that the mission would be conducted with the objective of gathering first-hand information on the situation in Montserrat, focusing on the Territory's political, economic, social and environmental development and the challenges to sustainable development, particularly the impacts of the volcanic eruptions since 1995.

III. Composition of the mission

9. Following the decision taken by the Special Committee on 14 June 2019 and subsequent consultations with the Bureau, it was decided that the mission would be composed of representatives of four members of the Committee, namely, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Indonesia and Sierra Leone. The mission members were the Permanent Representative of Grenada and Chair of the Committee, Keisha Aniya McGuire; the Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda, Walton Alfonso Webson; the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, Alie Kabba; the Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Indonesia, Aloysius Selwas Taborat; and the Third Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda, Asha Cecily Challenger. The mission was accompanied by Senior Political Affairs Officer, Rie Kadota, and Political Affairs Officer, Hermes Peñaloza, of the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs.

10. In view of the liquidity crisis facing the Organization, the Bureau sought to find creative solutions to ensure that the mission was dispatched. With the cooperation of the Secretariat, resources from the regular budget allocated to the Special Committee were made available to cover the cost of the participation of the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada. The representatives of Indonesia and Sierra Leone funded their own participation. The cost of the travel of the staff of the Department was covered by extrabudgetary funding resources allocated to the Department.

IV. Acknowledgements

11. The Special Committee extends its sincere appreciation to the Government of the United Kingdom, in particular to the Deputy Permanent Representative and his delegation, for the constructive cooperation in facilitating the mission. A special tribute is paid to the Governor, the Government and the people of Montserrat for the cooperation, excellent support and generous hospitality extended. The Committee also wishes to express its appreciation to the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for the cooperation, assistance and courtesy extended.

V. Background

12. Montserrat is a Non-Self-Governing Territory administered by the United Kingdom since 1946. Under the Montserrat Constitution Order 2010, Montserrat has a Governor appointed by the British Crown, a Cabinet and a Legislative Assembly. The Order provides that the realization of the right to self-determination must be promoted and respected in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

13. The Governor is responsible for internal security (including the police force), external affairs, defence, the public service and the regulation of international

financial services. The British Crown reserves the power, with the advice of the Privy Council of the United Kingdom, to make laws either generally or for the peace, order and good government of Montserrat.

14. The Cabinet consists of the Premier, three other ministers and, in an ex officio capacity, the Attorney General and the Financial Secretary. The Deputy Governor, a Montserratian appointed by the Governor, attends meetings of the Cabinet but does not have the right to vote. The Cabinet is presided over by the Governor, who does not have the right to vote within the Cabinet but is responsible for the general control and direction of the Government and is collectively responsible to the legislature.

15. The Legislative Assembly consists of nine elected members and the two ex officio members of the Cabinet. Elections are normally held every five years on the basis of universal adult suffrage. Elections were held on 18 November 2019 for the nine elected seats in the Assembly.

16. Montserrat falls under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, which consists of two divisions, the High Court of Justice and the Court of Appeal. The final court of appeal for civil and criminal matters is the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The British Overseas Territories Act 2002 provides for the granting of British citizenship to the citizens of British overseas territories.

17. The eruptions of the Soufrière Hills volcano since 1995 have had devastating effects, including the relocation of residents and the evacuation of about 70 per cent of the population from the southern part of the island to the north. The volcanic eruptions have led to a large proportion of the island being designated as an exclusion zone and a decline of two thirds in the population.

18. In 1994, the economy was well balanced, despite the widespread damage caused by Hurricane Hugo in 1989. The economy of Montserrat has been profoundly affected by the volcanic eruptions.

19. The economy, which had shrunk to just over half its former size by 2016, is dominated by the Government of Montserrat, which accounts for 46 per cent of output and employs about 40 per cent of the workforce. The public sector in Montserrat remains dependent on budgetary aid from the United Kingdom, which provides over 60 per cent of the Territory's current income; the proportion is higher if capital is included. The Territory also benefits from an allocation of approximately €18.4 million for the period 2014–2020 under the eleventh European Development Fund.

20. For more detailed information on the Territory, see the working papers on Montserrat prepared by the Secretariat.¹

VI. Key messages delivered by the mission

21. The Chair and the members of the mission explained the mandate of the Special Committee and the objectives of the mission (see para. 8).

22. It was stressed that, in accordance with the 2010 Constitution, the realization of the right to self-determination must be promoted and respected in accordance with the Charter. The options for self-determination in accordance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly were explained. Other points included the following: (a) the mission was impartial and did not seek to promote any particular approach in the self-determination process; (b) the mission intended to hear the views and perspectives of as many stakeholders as possible; and (c) the report of the mission would be made available to the public. The members of the mission also called for

¹ Available at www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/documents?key=working%20paper%20montserrat.

the active engagement and participation of the Territory in the work of the Special Committee.

VII. Meetings in Antigua and Barbuda

23. In Antigua and Barbuda, the visiting mission held a meeting on 17 December 2019 with six members of the Montserratian diaspora and another meeting on 18 December with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration of Antigua and Barbuda.

A. Meeting with the Montserratian diaspora

24. Stressing the long-standing relationship between Montserrat and Antigua and Barbuda, the members of the diaspora who attended the meeting expressed their appreciation for the support provided by the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda to Montserratians, including those who had relocated there following the volcanic eruptions that had started in 1995. The members of the diaspora also pointed out that Montserratians living in Antigua and Barbuda, particularly older persons and single mothers, faced such problems as the high cost of living, lack of access to health care and pensions, and the repatriation of remains to Montserrat. The honorary consul of Montserrat, who had been informally performing that function since 2009, explained his role and the assistance that he had provided to the diaspora in the country, a substantial portion of which had been rendered on a voluntary basis, except for a small stipend paid to him by the Government of Montserrat since 2014. The office of the territorial Government had closed in 2005 and had not reopened, and no funds were allocated to provide consular and other services to Montserratians in Antigua and Barbuda. According to the members of the diaspora, the most recent discussions with the territorial Government on how to address the challenges facing the diaspora in Antigua and Barbuda had been held about three years previously, with the Premier.

25. In response to a question regarding the number of Montserratians currently residing in Antigua and Barbuda, the members of the diaspora noted that, although the number had initially been around 3,000 after the volcanic eruptions, many Montserratians had subsequently moved from Antigua and Barbuda to the United Kingdom or elsewhere, or returned to Montserrat. The exact number of members of the diaspora currently in Antigua and Barbuda was unknown, but could be estimated at around 200 to 300, some of whom had come to reside in Antigua and Barbuda before the eruptions.

26. The interlocutors identified the following main factors preventing the return of members of the diaspora to Montserrat: (a) the limited health care in the Territory, in particular the minimal care offered at the hospital, which had been housed in a converted school since the volcanic eruptions; and (b) the lack of post-secondary education and adequate primary and secondary teaching in the Territory. In that context, it was their view that the United Kingdom had not done enough for Montserrat, where conditions remained the same almost 25 years after the volcanic crisis. One participant, contending that the members of the diaspora in the United Kingdom and in Antigua and Barbuda had settled there and therefore did not seem to wish to return to Montserrat, pointed out that economic growth was unsustainable in the Territory, which had a population of less than 5,000, only one third of whom were native Montserratians. The discussions also touched upon the issue of the policy on the nationality and citizenship of British overseas citizens, a policy that had evolved over time.

B. Meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration of Antigua and Barbuda

27. The Chair of the visiting mission underlined that decolonization continued to be one of the priorities of the United Nations and praised the leadership and role of Antigua and Barbuda in the work of the Special Committee. The Chair commended Antigua and Barbuda for the support that it had lent to Montserratians who had relocated after the volcanic eruptions, as recognized in a series of General Assembly resolutions on Montserrat, and sought the views of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda on the situation in Montserrat and the Montserratians residing in that State.

28. The Minister stated that Montserratians residing in his country enjoyed the same privileges as the citizens of Antigua and Barbuda, and his country continued to support them; he emphasized that Montserratians were integrated into his country's social, educational and health systems. In the ensuing discussions, he clarified that, even before the volcanic eruptions, Montserratians had been among the immigrants from neighbouring States residing in Antigua and Barbuda, which had a generous immigration policy. Emphasizing the importance of advancing decolonization in general, the Minister stated that it was quintessentially for Montserratians to take a decision on self-determination for the Territory.

29. Upon enquiry, the Minister stated that any support from the international community for the efforts of Antigua and Barbuda to host Montserratians would be appreciated, especially in the areas of health, education and social services. The Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda emphasized the historical connection between Montserrat and his country, saying that Montserratians were part of the fabric of Antigua and Barbuda. He suggested that United Nations agencies, in cooperation with his Government, could play a role in assisting Montserratians and that such assistance could be channelled through the Government of Antigua and Barbuda by means of agreements with the Government of the United Kingdom in the area of health care.

30. On the status of the honorary consul of Montserrat, the Minister stated that some protocols had been established between Montserrat and his country, in the absence of formal arrangements with the United Kingdom and Montserrat.

VIII. Meetings in Montserrat

31. The visiting mission met 44 interlocutors at 19 meetings from 18 to 20 December 2019 in Montserrat.

A. Meeting with the Governor

32. The Governor considered the relations between the administering Power and Montserrat to be positive, while recognizing the history of Montserrat and giving credit to Montserratians for those positive relations.

33. While precise figures were unavailable, the number of evacuees was estimated at around 600 in Antigua and Barbuda and 8,000 to 9,000 in the United Kingdom, with other evacuees in the United States and Canada. Mentioning difficulties in establishing, at that stage, the exact number of evacuees who had left as a result of the volcanic eruptions, taking into account natural migration, he stated that most evacuees had settled in the destinations of relocation and that a very small percentage might wish to return to Montserrat, although many visited Montserrat for major holidays. Incentives were in place to support those returnees, and all native

Montserratians had the same right to access loans and purchase land, but high housing costs remained a major issue that affected return. He also emphasized that Montserratians were British citizens and, as such, were able to have access to education in the United Kingdom and settle there. Currently, some 2,600 of the 4,600 inhabitants of the Territory were Montserratians, while the remainder came from other States in the Caribbean, such as the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti and Jamaica.

34. With regard to constitutional reform, noting that the 2010 Constitution provided for a significant number of commissions and committees, which had proved difficult to establish owing to the small population, he said that strategic simplification could be considered.

35. In total, 68 per cent of the budget of Montserrat and all the public capital investment in the Territory came from the United Kingdom, while other sources of capital investment support included Canada, the United States and the European Union. The European Union gave high priority to funding the energy and tourism sectors, with success in solar energy development. The need for the development of airport, port, school, hospital and other infrastructure was mentioned.

36. The Montserrat Capital Investment Programme for Resilient Economic Growth was a five-year plan for the period from 2019 to 2024. Funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development, it included projects to improve critical infrastructure by building a new hospital (a priority for the previous and current Administrations), installing a subsea fibre-optic cable and improving the only airport. The total cost of the Programme was estimated at £30 million, and funding for the period after 2024 had not been determined.

37. With regard to the exclusion zone established after the volcanic eruptions, a cautious approach had been taken, given the loss of 19 lives in 1997.

38. Concerning voting rights, the Governor underlined that all Montserratians were British citizens and could therefore vote in the United Kingdom with no distinction made between them and other British citizens, while the opposite did not apply in the case of elections in Montserrat. Any Commonwealth citizen who had resided in Montserrat for three years was entitled to register as a voter.

39. The Governor also noted that the territorial Government, which was responsible for education, faced challenges in recruiting highly qualified teachers.

40. With regard to the population's awareness of the right to self-determination and the administering Power's assistance in promoting that right, the Governor recalled that the right was enshrined in the 2010 Constitution. Furthermore, pursuant to the white paper on the overseas territories, published in 2012, in which the Government of the United Kingdom had set out its overall approach to all its overseas territories, the United Kingdom would not prevent Montserrat from becoming independent, if that was the wish of Montserratians.

B. Meeting with the Premier, ministers and the Parliamentary Secretary

41. It was underlined that Montserrat had been doing well until the volcanic eruptions in the 1990s, which had destroyed infrastructure and livelihoods and rendered two thirds of the island uninhabitable. Most areas of farming land, along with huge stocks of sand, were in the exclusion zone, the demarcation of which was under the authority of the Governor. In the view of the interlocutors, in the absence of any imminent danger, only Plymouth should be zoned for exclusion. The restrictions in the exclusion zone also affected the growth of the sand-mining industry.

42. While, under the 2010 Constitution, Montserrat had more control than previously over certain areas, the United Kingdom had retained control of internal security, external affairs, defence, the public service and international financial services. Laws enacted by the Legislative Assembly were subject to the assent of the United Kingdom. According to the interlocutors, the administering Power had total control over the Territory's affairs and could impose laws on Montserrat; the situation in the Territory, where a non-elected official had more rights than those elected, was a "benevolent dictatorship"; there was no real democracy in Montserrat, and Montserratians were treated as second-class citizens and with no respect; and the United Kingdom had a legal obligation to help Montserrat to end its situation of dependency.

43. With regard to self-determination, the interlocutors stated that the devolution of some powers to Montserrat was expected and that any decision on independence must be taken through a referendum, while stressing the immediate need for and goal of financial independence. It was noted that the participants in the public consultations held in the Territory as part of the inquiry on the future of the overseas territories by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom had shown no support for a change in status. It was indicated that there were no ongoing discussions or public education related to self-determination, as people were preoccupied by day-to-day issues. According to the interlocutors, the situation and needs of Montserrat differed from those of other overseas territories of the United Kingdom.

44. The interlocutors were of the view that, while legally the Cabinet had the authority to make decisions, most decisions were in fact made by technical consultants from the Department for International Development, which provided the funding and "dictated" the setting of priorities. The interlocutors raised the issue of the technical consultants not doing enough to build the capacities of local staff.

45. It was stressed that the Territory's infrastructure remained inappropriate, with the administering Power not providing sufficient infrastructure and thus preventing Montserrat from becoming financially independent and sustainable. The infrastructure should be at least as developed as before the volcanic eruptions. The scope of the fibre-optic cable project was limited, as the cable was expected to be installed only as far as the shore; the geothermal energy project had stalled after the drilling of three wells.

46. One interlocutor stated that the lack of such basic services as health care and education hindered population increase and was a deliberate attempt by the administering Power to maintain the status quo. Medical evacuations, which were not possible after dark, were often necessary owing to the lack of basic care or examinations in the Territory, and the cost of health care in Antigua and Barbuda was high. Under the quota system, up to four patients per year from Montserrat had free access to primary care through the United Kingdom National Health Service, which, however, covered only medical services and not the travel or accommodation of the patients; access to free primary care was therefore difficult and out of reach for many. In the area of education, the school infrastructure, which had been intended as a temporary measure after the eruptions but remained in place, was unsatisfactory, teachers were demoralized, and qualified teachers were hard to attract and retain.

47. There were no census data regarding the number of Montserratians wishing to return. An interlocutor suggested that a database related to such individuals be established. The possibility of offering incentives to returning Montserratians was also mentioned. The absence of a housing programme also deterred the diaspora from returning.

C. Meeting with a member of the Public Service Commission and the Electoral Commission

48. According to the interlocutor, before the volcanic eruptions of the 1990s, Montserrat had been confident about moving towards independence and had recovered from Hurricane Hugo, which had struck in 1989. However, the eruptions had adversely affected the Territory and caused the relocation or departure of a large percentage of the population, a reduction in the available geographical space, the destruction of infrastructure and the departure of major industries that had supported the Territory's economy. The challenge remained to effect the return of the diaspora and maintain the Territory's population of both native Montserratians and immigrants. Montserrat was still rebuilding. While the concept of independence had not been discarded, a number of actions needed to be taken to tackle the issues surrounding the Territory's demographics, resources, economic activities and infrastructure before it could consider independence. Changing demographics in the Territory had altered the priorities for Montserrat.

49. Following the volcanic eruptions and the resulting loss of constituencies, in order to conduct a functional election, Montserrat had adopted a single-constituency electoral system under which voters voted for up to nine candidates on a single ballot paper. In the interlocutor's view, that solution had been reasonable at the time. An electoral reform commission had been established, and ongoing discussions about such reform had revealed a variety of opinions, including that the Territory should revert to a multiple constituency system and that the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly should be reduced to seven. Activities were being conducted to educate the population through a radio programme and community meetings to discuss aspects of electoral reform.

50. It was also noted that the relationship with the United Kingdom was difficult, as the priorities set by the territorial Government differed from those of the technical consultants from the Department for International Development, who, in his view, had no attachment to Montserrat, did not understand its needs and strove only for cost-effectiveness.

D. Meeting with the Deputy Governor and Attorney General

51. According to the interlocutors, the current Constitution, enacted after wide-ranging discussions and an intense negotiation process, was a living document. As such, areas for possible review, 10 years after the Constitution's entry into force, included: (a) the electoral system; (b) the role of the Parliamentary Secretary; (c) the Governor's responsibilities; and (d) constitutional institutions. It was clarified that ongoing discussions about constitutional reform were informal and that no formal process had begun.

52. An interlocutor stated that the people had a fair understanding of self-determination and options. While the option mostly discussed was independence, there were concerns about the Territory lacking the means for such an option, owing to economic dependency and the declining population. Another interlocutor pointed out that the general population might not be fully aware of other options available with regard to self-determination, since there was no public education campaign.

53. In the interlocutors' view, the Territory's economic dependency had strained the relationship between Montserrat and the United Kingdom. The Government of Montserrat had to negotiate with and, according to the interlocutors, "beg" the administering Power for aid to be dispensed. A historical perspective was shared regarding the changing responsibilities of the Governor: before the volcanic

eruptions, the Governor had been more of a figurehead. However, in the aftermath of the eruptions, the relationship had changed to the extent that the Cabinet was unable to determine how to spend the aid received and the Department for International Development, instead of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, had become the major interlocutor.

54. Although no significant impact was anticipated as a result of Brexit, the issue of access to funding from the European Union was mentioned.

E. Meeting with the current and former Financial Secretaries

55. The interlocutors stated that there had been a lack of capital investment over the years, with the prime examples being the hospital, port development, housing, rented government buildings and the education system. One interlocutor said that Montserratians who held British passports should be treated in the same way as British people and receive the same level of health care and education as those in the United Kingdom, but such care and services at the basic level did not exist in the Territory. The Montserrat Capital Investment Programme for Resilient Economic Growth was intended for that purpose. An interlocutor emphasized that the territorial Government should launch the projects planned under the Programme, instead of focusing on what was missing from them, while acknowledging that the Programme was not perfect and should not be a final solution. The differences between the processes for gaining access to European Union aid and United Kingdom aid were highlighted: the European Union tended to work efficiently with Montserrat by asking how it could help, while, under the British process, a series of questions must be answered, in a manner similar to an audit, before aid was granted. Recalling the thriving economy of the era before the volcanic eruptions, another interlocutor underscored the need for development and basic services, such as health care, in the Territory. Building regional relations and working with neighbouring States, financially or otherwise, was proposed as an option for the future development of Montserrat, as a member of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States and the Caribbean Community.

56. Brexit might be expected to have an impact on access to funding from the European Union and on the sand-mining industry, whose production was exported to French islands in the Caribbean. According to the interlocutors, although funding was available from regional sources of the European Union, the approval of the United Kingdom was required in order to gain access to such funding, and engagement with the European Union would differ after Brexit.

F. Meeting with political parties

1. People's Democratic Movement

57. The leader of the Opposition and other members of his party, the People's Democratic Movement, stated that Montserrat was in survival mode, still rebuilding after the eruptions, and had no viable population for its sustainable development. Various issues related to housing, the cost of living, land use, economic activities, employment and health care were referred to as factors that resulted in depopulation. It was underlined that health-care facilities and staffing in the Territory were inadequate and that the costs for treatment outside Montserrat, including in the United Kingdom, were prohibitive.

58. Interlocutors also emphasized that, to ensure the sustainability of Montserrat, critical infrastructure and private investment were required. In the case of the

geothermal energy project, three wells had been drilled with funding from the United Kingdom, but partnership with the private sector was necessary for the construction of the power plant.

59. One interlocutor stated that Hurricane Irma, which had struck in September 2017, had resulted in Montserrat being given higher priority after having been sidelined for so long. The Montserrat Capital Investment Programme for Resilient Economic Growth was a glimmer of hope, although the Programme's implementation agency, which consumed 10 per cent of the total budget, was not based in Montserrat. Progress in the socioeconomic sphere included social services to support older citizens, and customs duties and consumption tax incentives on electric and hybrid vehicles. Consideration should be given to the access of Montserrat to climate change funds.

60. The current relationship with the United Kingdom was welcomed, notwithstanding the challenges faced. With regard to self-determination, there were differing positions, including some support for integration, in Montserrat.

2. Independent member of the Legislative Assembly

61. An independent member of the Legislative Assembly said that challenges had arisen in relation to receiving the mission, because of the lack of understanding of the Special Committee's role among the people of Montserrat. He underlined the importance of public education in helping the population to make an informed decision on self-determination, and noted that, for Montserratians, decolonization was often associated with independence. He called upon the mission to return for the purposes of public education.

62. With regard to the volcanic eruptions, he stated that the public had been inadequately informed about the danger faced, despite warnings from scientists before the eruption in 1997. The United Kingdom should be held accountable for what had happened, and the United Nations needed to study the authorities' neglect of the scientists' warning.

63. In his view, there was blatant neglect of development needs, which had intentionally not been met for over 20 years, leading to a continuous brain drain, population loss and lingering stagnation of the society and economy. He cited such examples as the housing provided by the United Kingdom, which was not hurricane resistant, the subsea fibre-optic cable project, which had been criticized in the British media, and the high project implementation cost of the Montserrat Capital Investment Programme for Resilient Economic Growth.

64. He reiterated some of the requests that he had made to the Special Committee, at its 2019 session, for assistance for the territorial Government in relation to: (a) good governance and the associated public education and constitutional review; (b) provision of assistance to 400 Montserratians who had remained in Montserrat and were in need of housing; (c) retention of the current population, in particular young people; and (d) a repopulation programme for Montserratians living overseas, among others. He again requested a representative of the United Nations to provide public education, support the negotiations with the United Kingdom on establishing a programme of action for the full, sustainable redevelopment, transformation and decolonization of Montserrat, and monitor the implementation of the programme.

65. In his view, Brexit should not change the relations between Montserrat and the United Kingdom because of the latter's obligations under Article 73 of the Charter. Noting that the attitude of the European Union to aid provision was more cooperative and understanding than that of the United Kingdom, he stated that the United Kingdom had pledged to match the European Union funding after Brexit. He said that

the relationship of Montserrat with the United Kingdom was one of gentle diplomatic abuse of the former by the latter, and that Article 73 was the only means of holding the United Kingdom accountable. He advocated equal treatment with other British overseas territories vis-à-vis infrastructure development.

66. He emphasized that there was a need for a drastic change in the relationship with the United Kingdom. That country's laws on same-sex marriage, for instance, could not be imposed on Montserrat. Autonomy and proper discussion were needed in making such an important decision. In that context, he referred to the rejection by the Department for International Development of the decision taken in 2017 by his Administration to increase the salaries of civil servants by 3 per cent. He stated that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was a better partner than the Department, which he described as a "bully". The United Kingdom-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council could, if used properly, be an effective mechanism for the overseas territories, as had been proved in 2017.

3. Montserrat National Congress

67. A representative of the Montserrat National Congress stated that, as the Territory was economically dependent on the United Kingdom, self-government was not possible, and that the slow process of recovery and development was regrettable. He referred to the lack of discussion on the return of evacuees and on repopulation, pointing out the large percentage of the current population that consisted of migrants from the region. Concerns about housing, health care, education and the retention of young people were repeated.

68. He shared his idea of holding six festivals in Montserrat to attract people back and develop tourism in the Territory. In his view, the exclusion zone could be used as a tourist attraction. He also proposed that the drilled geothermal wells be privatized and used to produce electricity.

69. It was difficult for the territorial Government to speak to the administering Power through the Department for International Development. Priorities should be set by the Governments of Montserrat and the United Kingdom, not a development agency.

4. Montserrat United Labour Party

70. Representatives of the Montserrat United Labour Party indicated that too much power was given to the Governor, who, for instance, retained responsibility for the regulation of international financial services and stressed the importance of keeping the civil service independent from politics. They shared various proposals related to the electoral system, in particular the number of constituencies and the electoral boundaries. They were concerned about the disqualification of members of the diaspora who had not resided in Montserrat for five years or more.

71. According to the interlocutors, aid was used to control the Territory by the United Kingdom, which prevented the territorial Government from deciding how to allocate funds, although Montserrat itself financed 40 per cent of the Territory's budget. Conditions were attached to the aid provided and senior posts were occupied by technical consultants from the United Kingdom. The small size of the economy represented a challenge for Montserrat in terms of considering its future political status. Montserratians would not be able to consider self-determination for some time, as the current priority was to achieve economic self-sufficiency and financial independence. Given the enduring perception that the United Kingdom was a mother country for Montserrat and provided assistance and protection, a change in the mindset of Montserratians was necessary. Concerns were also expressed about projects being brought to a halt as a result of political blame games whenever a new

Government came to power. Uncertainty surrounding the implementation of such projects as the port development affected the growth of the private sector.

G. Meeting with constitutionalists, former elected officials, representatives of civil society organizations and the private sector, and other stakeholders

1. Constitutionalists

72. One interlocutor said that few people in Montserrat understood the role of the Special Committee. Montserrat had neither the human nor the economic resources to break the cycle of dependency. It had taken the administering Power 25 years to realize that Montserrat needed basic infrastructure such as a hospital, schools, a port and housing. Programmes to assist returnees, especially young people, were lacking. Incentives had been provided to go to the United Kingdom but not to return. The reality was that the Department for International Development was the only entity supporting the island.

73. Concurring with the above-mentioned points, another interlocutor noted that it was positive that Montserrat was still listed as a Non-Self-Governing Territory and said that there was no desire to have the Territory removed from the list. According to him, the underlying intention of the Government of the United Kingdom was to incorporate Montserrat into the United Kingdom, keep the Territory in a state of subsistence, depopulate it and establish a military base on it. Montserratians who had migrated to the United Kingdom after the volcanic eruptions had been given only one-way tickets. The United Kingdom had systematically told the world that it was capable of looking after the Territory and that Montserrat did not need financial assistance. Elected leaders in the Territory had no constitutional authority to govern. Although the right to self-determination was enshrined in the Constitution, the necessary infrastructure must be built for the realization of that right. The proportion of the population that supported self-determination had not reached a critical mass. On the most recent identification documents, such as passports and driving licences, the holder's nationality was not indicated as Montserratian. Given that nothing had been achieved in three International Decades for the Eradication of Colonialism, Montserrat should be placed under the international trusteeship system.

74. A third interlocutor emphasized that there was no great appetite or desire for constitutional reform or review in Montserrat, as people were preoccupied with economic development. No discussions on the topic had been held since 2010, when the Constitution had last been revised. In his view, the highest priority should be given to infrastructure development, and aid should be geared towards ending the Territory's economic dependence. In that context, he called for creativity on the part of the Governments of the United Kingdom and Montserrat. Using the example of the recent purchase by the Bank of Montserrat of the Royal Bank of Canada's banking operation in the Territory, he underscored the need for the territorial Government to devise a plan without waiting for the Department for International Development or the administering Power to propose one. That approach should also be taken in the areas of housing, education and health care. He also expected Brexit to affect the provision to Montserrat of funding from the European Union.

75. With regard to electoral reform, he explained that the current single constituency system had been devised, with his involvement, to address a particular situation created after the volcanic eruptions, when people's residency had been in flux. With only about 3,000 voters and an ever-increasing number of candidates running for office, as had been the case at the 2019 elections, there was a need to modify the

constituency system, which he described as unwieldy. He proposed a combination of a single at-large constituency with a system based on three or four constituencies.

76. The same interlocutor mentioned the unbalanced relations between the Department for International Development and the territorial Government, and the need to treat people with respect. In his view, Montserrat was in a state of stagnation from which it needed to escape. He proposed that outside investment, which was necessary but currently insufficient, be obtained from regional partners and neighbouring States, including Antigua and Barbuda. He also pointed out the frequent changes of Government, at every election.

2. Former elected officials

77. One interlocutor voiced scepticism about the ability of the visiting mission to make a difference or of the Special Committee to pressure the administering Power to rebuild Montserrat. Another interlocutor stated that Montserratians themselves, not the United Nations or the Committee, were the biggest problem and must address the issues, while the administering Power would do as it wished.

78. The interlocutors emphasized the difficult, ongoing recovery process for Montserrat since 1995. The current population statistics, the financial support from the United Kingdom, the Governor's power vis-à-vis the elected Cabinet and issues related to the weak infrastructure were reiterated.

79. One interlocutor stated that, although significant focus was placed on aid from the United Kingdom, Montserrat, whose Government was defined as self-sufficient in the Constitution, should seek private investment, as the permission of the United Kingdom to receive such funding was not required. Private investment had not been pursued owing to a lack of political will and people's dependency mentality. In his view, the private sector could fund the development of the port and other infrastructure necessary for the Territory's economic development. It was regrettable that the Special Committee had not provided the assistance requested for the drafting of the 2010 Constitution on the basis that such assistance was not within its remit, while the United Nations Development Programme had assisted Montserrat in the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Further exchanges on the topic were held, and the mission members clarified the role that the Committee and the wider United Nations system could play in supporting the Territory within the respective mandates. Regional cooperation for the economic development of Montserrat was also proposed.

80. In the context of self-determination, one interlocutor doubted that Montserratians would give up their British citizenship, which was beneficial at a time when economic development was needed. Underscoring the importance of a public education campaign in Montserrat, the interlocutor noted the Deputy Premier's indication that the Government would step up its efforts in the area.

3. Women's groups

81. Representatives of the Women's Support Group and Montserrat Women's Resource Centre called for psychological support for Montserratians who had experienced the volcanic eruptions, in order to cope with the trauma. There had been cases of suicide and sexual violence in shelters and increased teenage pregnancy in the immediate aftermath of the eruptions. The situation remained painful for many.

82. Representatives lamented the fact that many current residents were in Montserrat on a transient basis, and stated that Montserrat had been in a temporary mode for too long. The Territory currently faced such socioeconomic issues as scarce social services, lack of after-school activities for girls, problems arising from cultural

differences between English-speaking and non-English-speaking children, an insufficient number of experienced teachers, inadequate school infrastructure, a slow justice system, a brain drain among young people, and a lack of basic health care and a viable economy. In their view, the authorities were not committed to addressing those problems. According to the interlocutors, the Government of Montserrat lacked an office dedicated to women and gender issues. They pointed out that the extension of the territorial application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to the Territory was pending. Legislation on women had not materialized.

83. In the view of one interlocutor, the options for Montserrat in terms of self-determination were either independence or “absorption” into the United Kingdom; the period of 18 months as an associated State before independence, which had been offered by the administering Power to Montserrat in the past, had been insufficient, and Montserrat had therefore been “made British” against the will of Montserradians. The change in the nationality indicated on driving licences and other official documents from “Montserratian” to “British overseas territory citizen” was mentioned as a major concern for the preservation of Montserradian identity.

84. According to the interlocutors, the inability of civil society organizations to register as non-profit organizations in Montserradian law made it difficult for women’s groups to engage with organizations such as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and to gain access to outside funding. Difficulties in consolidating various organizations for collective action were also raised.

4. Montserrat Association for Persons with Disabilities, Montserrat Diabetes Association and Montserrat Senior Citizens Association

85. According to one interlocutor, the Constitution contained no provisions for persons with disabilities (of whom there were 243 in the Territory, according to the 2011 census data), and no disability-related funding was provided by the Department for International Development. Recommendations made by previous electoral commissions to ensure that voters with disabilities could exercise their right to vote had not been followed. The territorial application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had not been extended to Montserrat.

86. The interlocutors were deeply concerned about the accessibility of public buildings and facilities to individuals with disabilities. Noting that the Montserrat tourism strategy contained no reference to accessible tourism, they emphasized the need for a disability impact assessment to be conducted when every project was formulated.

87. Stigma and lack of understanding related to diabetes existed in Montserrat, despite the fact that almost 400 people were living with diabetes and that weekly and monthly educational radio programmes on the disease were broadcast. While support for senior citizens (who comprised 18 per cent of the population) existed, including two care homes and home visits to housebound people, the interlocutors were concerned about the lack of physical and occupational therapy, accessible vehicles and venues or programmes offering mental and physical stimulation for older persons. The issue of the transient nature of home-care workers who did not remain in Montserrat after receiving training was also raised.

5. Christian Council

88. According to one interlocutor, the challenging times that had followed Hurricane Hugo and the volcanic eruptions had shown some Montserradians the

importance of having the United Kingdom as the administering Power. In his view, independence was not viable. Financial independence and economic development were the prerequisites, along with a population sufficient to support the Territory's economy.

89. Another interlocutor stated that the volcanic eruptions had created opportunities for Montserratians, as the requirement for people to obtain a visa before moving to the United Kingdom had been removed. The crisis had also resulted in issues, such as the loss of properties and infrastructure, which had led people to leave Montserrat. In reference to inadequate infrastructure, the only hospital in Montserrat was still housed in a former school building nearly 25 years after the volcanic eruptions; the interlocutor described that as an inhumane situation. In his view, it was unlikely that Montserratians receiving better health care in Antigua and Barbuda or the United Kingdom would be willing to return. In addition, the depopulation cycle continued as a large number of migrants, including teachers, from neighbouring Commonwealth countries left the Territory after residing there for long enough to migrate to the United Kingdom. With many teachers coming from outside Montserrat, the quality of education might be sacrificed, and cultural differences affected children and their development. He underscored the need to train what he described as "home-grown" Montserratian teachers and called for a policy change to tackle the current depopulation cycle. The political cycle in the Territory, where a new Government was elected every five years, was also mentioned.

6. Civil Service Association, Montserrat Union of Teachers and Royal Montserrat Police Service

90. The representative of the Civil Service Association said that it was regrettable that Montserrat was still in emergency mode, nearly 25 years after the volcanic eruptions. Montserrat must be self-sustaining before it could begin to consider any form of decolonization. The United Kingdom continued to provide Montserrat with facilities such as the airport, the port and the ferry service, which she described as "below standard". Better financial investment from the Government of the United Kingdom in core infrastructure, rather than in patching up existing infrastructure, was vital. Concerns were also expressed about civil servants' working conditions at the airport, the port development project, accountability and good governance, including recruitment processes and whistle-blower protection. The issue of civil servants' salaries, which had been frozen in Montserrat for the preceding 10 years, was mentioned. In the view of the interlocutor, the previous Administration had been penalized by the administering Power for deciding on a salary increase, while the technical consultants employed by the Government of the United Kingdom were overpaid and failed to upskill and train local officers. Other issues raised included the need for private sector development, more housing solutions, better educational facilities, and a modern hospital and security for nurses.

91. The representative of the Montserrat Union of Teachers identified as areas of concern the lack of a national curriculum, an educational psychologist and classes in English as a second language for the large number of pupils from non-English-speaking countries, in addition to the structurally unsafe building used for the only secondary school, scarce teacher training and the low teacher retention rate.

92. The representative of the Royal Montserrat Police Service emphasized that resources were needed to keep Montserrat safe and secure. Key issues raised included the need for a salary increase in the interests of staff retention, the lack of elected officials designated to represent the police, the need for up-to-date equipment, and a solution to the problem that basic forensic procedures were currently performed outside Montserrat and could take several months to be completed.

7. Montserrat Bar Association and Youth Parliament

93. Representatives of the Montserrat Bar Association said that there were anachronisms in the Constitution, citing the reserved powers of the Governor as an example. The Governor was chosen without consultations with the elected officials in Montserrat. In the view of one interlocutor, no true form of democracy existed in Montserrat because of the limited power delegated to the elected Government, which was financially controlled by the Department for International Development and had little involvement in discussions on budget expenditure. Concerns were raised regarding the deteriorating quality of the public service, which was “top-heavy”, “inefficient”, “lacking in accountability” and an obstacle to the progress of Montserrat. The delegation of authority from the Governor to the Deputy Governor in relation to disciplinary action for civil servants was mentioned in that regard. The administering Power was called upon to send an effective Governor who could make unpopular decisions when necessary and assist Montserrat in becoming more financially independent.

94. The interlocutor referred to the process leading up to the adoption of the 2010 Constitution, stating that concerns raised in the constitutional review process had been ignored and that last-minute changes had been introduced by the administering Power.

95. In the view of the interlocutor, with regard to law enforcement, people tended to take the administration of justice into their own hands. The police force, although large in number, was ineffective and suffered from a lack of confidence. The establishment of an independent mechanism for investigating police misconduct had been recommended to the Governor. Concerns were voiced regarding respect for prisoners’ rights and the prison facilities, in which young offenders were not separated from other prisoners. Issues concerning the land registry, the administration of justice and the High Court registry and facilities were also raised.

96. Discrepancies between the pay scales of Montserratians and those of the technical consultants hired by the Department for International Development were also mentioned, as were the tendency to hire “imported” staff rather than qualified “home-grown” people to work in the judicial system and the need to train locals.

97. The representative of the Youth Parliament said that the population was unaware of the Special Committee’s mandate and work, and underscored the importance of ensuring that the public understood the significance of the visiting mission. A large majority of Montserratians who had experienced the volcanic eruptions continued to be affected by post-traumatic stress disorder, an issue that had not been properly addressed. The private sector was weak, and basic infrastructure and programmes were still needed. He also referred to the excessive power delegated to the Governor, concerns about the control exercised by the Department for International Development and difficulties in establishing non-profit organizations.

8. Private sector

98. In a meeting with representatives of the private sector, concerns about the inadequate transportation infrastructure of the airport and ferry operations were raised. According to the interlocutors, while the Committee for the Redevelopment of Montserrat had succeeded in securing a longer runway at the current airport than originally planned, it was regrettable that an alternative location to allow further expansion of the runway had not been chosen.

99. The Committee for the Redevelopment of Montserrat had initiated the process of geothermal development with the aims of making Montserrat the first green area in the world, creating jobs and attracting people to the Territory. In the members’

view, with two productive wells, the costly geothermal energy development project required private investment or other financial mechanisms to raise the necessary funds. In terms of the development of other possible industries, the production of bottled water had been explored, given the abundance of water in the Territory, but the high shipping and electricity costs had prohibited it.

9. Royal Montserrat Defence Force, Disaster Management Coordination Agency, Montserrat Red Cross and Montserrat National Trust

100. The mission was informed that the Disaster Management Coordination Agency was the lead agency for the coordination of emergency and disaster response activities in Montserrat. The Montserrat Defence Force had three core functions: (a) the provision of assistance to the police; (b) humanitarian aid and disaster management; and (c) ceremonial duties. Although the Force currently had some 40 volunteer soldiers, over 100 soldiers had been deployed during the volcanic crisis. The Force reciprocated the assistance provided by neighbouring countries after the eruptions by dispatching its soldiers to those in need, for example in disaster relief situations.

101. It was noted that Montserrat had spent many years in an emergency phase and that housing problems should be addressed before the situation deteriorated further. In order to build resilience to disasters, some projects, including a new fibre-optic cable, were in the pipeline; Montserrat, which relied on a satellite for its Internet connection, had been offline since Hurricanes Irma and Maria had struck in 2017. There was a need for greater capacity to store equipment for emergency response and to ensure that the updated building codes were met in shelters and housing. According to the interlocutor, local politics resulted in impediments to project implementation, since each new Administration sought to undo what its predecessor had done.

102. According to another interlocutor, the Montserrat Red Cross received significant operational support from the British Red Cross but experienced low volunteer recruitment, owing to the departure of a large proportion of the population and the arrival of non-nationals who did not have the same emotional connection with Montserrat. Another challenge was that the economic situation made it difficult to raise funds locally. In education, the amount of resources provided to Montserrat should be commensurate with the amount provided in the United Kingdom, as the Department for International Development set high standards by measuring Montserratian pupil performance against British standards. Problems in recruiting qualified teachers were also mentioned.

103. According to the interlocutor, the Montserrat National Trust, established to preserve the Territory's cultural and environmental heritage, was not eligible for funding from such sources as the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, which was available to neighbouring countries, because of the status of Montserrat as a Territory administered by the United Kingdom. The issue also arose because of the piecemeal approach to the disbursement of aid, in which the needs of Montserrat were not strategically considered.

104. Concerns about the condition of and care provided by the hospital, the trend towards depopulation, the increasingly aging population, the scarcity of tertiary education and the possible economic impact of Brexit were also expressed.

IX. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

105. The visiting mission, which was the third such mission to Montserrat, following those dispatched in 1975 and 1982, was welcomed by the interlocutors, who engaged

seriously with it. The interlocutors expressed genuine curiosity about the ability of the Special Committee to help to bring about what they deemed as necessary change in the Territory. The members of the mission reiterated, at all meetings, their impartiality and objectivity under the Charter and the mandate of the Committee.

106. The overall atmosphere in Montserrat was calm and peaceful following the elections held in November 2019. The importance of unity with the common purpose of meaningful development was a recurring theme expressed and underscored by the stakeholders in the Territory.

107. The sole unifying message received by the visiting mission was the urgent need for long-awaited and perpetually delayed infrastructure improvements to allow Montserratians to return to a degree of normalcy and security, following the devastation caused by the volcanic eruptions since 1995 and the resulting need to rebuild in a previously largely uninhabited section of the island in the north.

108. The majority of the interlocutors shared the view that the current situation of economic dependence on the administering Power, coupled with the small population size, precluded any serious consideration of self-determination. There appeared to be a lack of awareness of the available options related to the Territory's political status, other than independence, for the exercise of the right to self-determination by the people of Montserrat.

109. The mission became aware of general dissatisfaction with regard to the relationship between the territorial Government and the administering Power. Interlocutors generally expressed the view that weak local governance stemmed from the government structure, in which the administering Power retained much control over several portfolios, as defined in the Constitution.

110. Furthermore, following the volcanic eruptions, conditions attached to aid provided by the administering Power had, in the view of many, created further strains on the relationship. The Department for International Development had become the main interlocutor of the territorial Government, replacing the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which had played that role before the eruptions. Concerns about the inability of the territorial Government to set its own priorities and the lack of capacity-building and knowledge transfer to the territorial Government were often heard.

111. The interlocutors expressed concerns about the loss of their identity as Montserratians, since that term was no longer used as their nationality on their official identification documents.

112. They also voiced concerns about the transient nature of both native and immigrant populations in Montserrat; the effects of migration from neighbouring States and Territories, which had contributed to demographic and other changes; and the lack of a repatriation plan and supporting services to facilitate the return of Montserratians who had left the island.

113. Many interlocutors said that there was a need for a constitutional amendment to reinforce the authority and competence of the territorial Government. The mission was also informed that the need for electoral reform was the subject of ongoing informal discussions in the community.

114. The majority of the people and of the members of the Government of Montserrat were dissatisfied with the progress that had been made and expressed a lack of confidence in the process for the sustainable development of the Territory. That dissatisfaction was attributable to the passage of almost 25 years since the volcanic eruptions, with – in the interlocutors' view – no tangible progress and, as a result,

doubt regarding the commitment of the administering Power to restoring basic infrastructure and social services to the Territory.

115. The interlocutors said that the following four main improvements were urgently needed for progress in the development of infrastructure, education, health and social services, environmental protection and cultural heritage preservation, which they deemed essential to ensuring the recovery of the Territory: (a) an airport with a runway with the possibility of extension; (b) a hospital with basic modern medical equipment and infrastructure; (c) school repair; and (d) a port built with resilience and future economic growth in mind.

116. The ongoing efforts of the United Kingdom to support development measures, including through the Montserrat Capital Investment Programme for Resilient Economic Growth, were welcomed by the people of Montserrat, but there were concerns about the administering Power's lack of commitment to the development of Montserrat with a view to ending the Territory's status as an emergency economy based on aid, the administering Power's cumbersome bureaucratic process for the approval of capital projects and the adequacy of the funding allocated for the Territory to achieve sustainable development.

117. Difficulties in gaining access to health-care services on and off the island were a major concern. The need to provide psychological support to those Montserratians affected by the trauma caused by the volcanic eruptions was also underlined.

118. The mission found a vibrant group of civil society organizations working on a wide range of issues. Its attention was drawn to concerns about the registration and legal status of those organizations.

119. The potential consequences of Brexit in terms of access to funding from the European Union, which had been an important partner for the recovery of Montserrat, were highlighted.

Recommendations

120. The mission encourages all relevant stakeholders to continue to work together to ensure that the rebuilding of Montserrat progresses speedily.

121. The mission acknowledges the calls made for better explanation of the self-determination process and options, and encourages the administering Power, in consultation with the Government of Montserrat and relevant stakeholders, to launch awareness-raising campaigns regarding self-determination, including potential outcomes and consequences.

122. The mission stresses the importance of building a society with basic infrastructure and services in order to secure the welfare of the people of the Territory and facilitate the return of Montserratians living abroad.

123. The mission underscores the importance of ensuring that Montserratians are meaningfully engaged in the decision-making process related to the future of the Territory. It is also critical that adequate education, capacity-building and knowledge transfer, and employment opportunities be provided for all, especially young people and women.

124. The mission calls upon the administering Power and the Government of Montserrat to conduct an analysis and mapping of the development steps needed to ensure the implementation in the Territory of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in order to build a sustainable community and leave no one behind. In that context, the mission considers that greater efforts need to be made to respond to the challenges and the needs of the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, women and girls, and older persons.

125. The mission underlines the need for the administering Power to work together with the Caribbean Community to produce a plan for socioeconomic development in Montserrat.

126. The mission urges the administering Power to assist Montserrat in preparing for the extension of the territorial application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

127. The mission recommends that the General Assembly request the administering Power to report to the Secretary-General on the steps taken and progress made with regard to the above recommendations.

Annex**Itinerary and activities of the visiting mission**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activities</i>
17 December 2019	Arrival in Antigua and Barbuda (Saint John's) from New York Meeting with the Montserratian diaspora
18 December 2019	Meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration of Antigua and Barbuda Flight to Montserrat Meeting with the Governor Meeting with the Premier, ministers and the Parliamentary Secretary Meeting with a member of the Public Service Commission and the Electoral Commission
19 December 2019	Meeting with the Deputy Governor and the Attorney General Meeting with the independent member of the Legislative Assembly Meeting with the Leader of the Opposition and opposition members of the Legislative Assembly Meeting with the Montserrat National Congress Meeting with constitutionalists (Chedmonde Browne and Peter White) Business lunch with former elected officials Meeting with the Montserrat United Labour Party Island tour
20 December 2019	Meeting with the Women's Support Group and Montserrat Women's Resource Centre Meeting with the Royal Montserrat Defence Force, the Disaster Management Coordination Agency, the Montserrat Red Cross and the Montserrat National Trust Meeting with the Montserrat Association for Persons with Disabilities, the Montserrat Diabetes Association and the Montserrat Senior Citizens Association Meeting with the current and former Financial Secretaries Meeting with the Christian Council Meeting with the Montserrat Civil Service Association, the Montserrat Union of Teachers and the Royal Montserrat Police Service Meeting with a constitutionalist (Howard Fergus) Meeting with the Montserrat Bar Association and the Montserrat Youth Parliament Meeting with representatives of the private sector from the Committee for the Redevelopment of Montserrat and the Montserrat Geothermal Power Company Departure