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

### Bermuda

#### Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

#### Contents

	<i>Page</i>
The Territory at a glance . . . . .	3
I. Constitutional, legal and political issues . . . . .	4
II. Budget . . . . .	5
III. Economic conditions . . . . .	5
A. General . . . . .	5
B. Financial services . . . . .	6
C. Tourism . . . . .	7
D. Construction . . . . .	7
E. Transport and communications . . . . .	7
IV. Social conditions . . . . .	8
A. General . . . . .	8
B. Labour . . . . .	8
C. Education . . . . .	9
D. Public health . . . . .	9
E. Crime and public safety . . . . .	10
F. Human rights and related issues . . . . .	10

*Note:* The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 9 December 2020. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available at [www.un.org/dpa/decolonization/en/documents/workingpapers](http://www.un.org/dpa/decolonization/en/documents/workingpapers).



V.	Environment . . . . .	11
VI.	Military issues . . . . .	11
VII.	Relations with international organizations and partners. . . . .	12
VIII.	Future status of the Territory . . . . .	12
	A. Position of the territorial Government. . . . .	12
	B. Position of the administering Power . . . . .	12
IX.	Action taken by the General Assembly . . . . .	13
Annex		
	Map of Bermuda . . . . .	16

### **The Territory at a glance**

*Territory:* Bermuda is a Non-Self-Governing Territory, as defined under the Charter of the United Nations, administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

*Representative of administering Power:* Governor Rena Lalgie (since December 2020)

*Geography:* Bermuda is located in the western part of the Atlantic Ocean, approximately 917 km east of the North Carolina coast of the United States of America. It consists of 8 major and 130 smaller islands.

*Land area:* 53.35 km<sup>2</sup>

*Exclusive economic zone:* 450,370 km<sup>2</sup>

*Population:* 64,054 (July 2020)

*Life expectancy at birth:* 82.8 years (men: 79.8 years; women: 85.8 years (2020 projection))

*Ethnic composition:* Approximately 52 per cent black, 31 per cent white and 17 per cent mixed and other races (2016 census)

*Language:* English

*Capital:* Hamilton

*Head of territorial Government:* Premier David Burt (since July 2017, re-elected in October 2020)

*Main political parties:* Progressive Labour Party; One Bermuda Alliance

*Elections:* Most recent: 1 October 2020; next: due to be held by October 2025

*Legislature:* Bicameral legislature, comprising an 11-member Senate appointed by the Governor (3 at his or her discretion, 5 on the advice of the Premier, 3 on the advice of the leader of the Opposition) and the 36-member House of Assembly, elected in 36 constituencies for up to a five-year term.

*Gross domestic product per capita:* \$116,890 (2019)

*Economy:* Financial services, tourism

*Main trading partners:* United States, Canada, United Kingdom and States members of the Caribbean Community

*Unemployment rate:* 3.8 per cent (November 2019)

*Monetary unit:* Bermuda dollar, pegged at parity with the United States dollar

*Brief history:* Bermuda was discovered in 1505 by the Spanish explorer Juan de Bermudez, and by 1510, it was referred to as “La Bermuda”. It remained uninhabited until 1609, when British settlers on their way to Virginia were shipwrecked on one of its reefs. In 1612, King James I extended the charter of the Virginia Company to include Bermuda. After the Company’s charter was annulled in 1684, government passed to the British Crown.

## I. Constitutional, legal and political issues

1. The 1968 Constitution of Bermuda has been amended on five occasions, with the most recent revision being in 2003. According to the administering Power, the Constitution gives the Territory almost full internal self-government, leaving the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with a minimum number of constitutional controls. The Governor (and Commander-in-Chief), appointed by the British Crown, is responsible for defence, external affairs, internal security and the police. The current Governor, Rena Lalgie, is the first woman Governor of Bermuda.

2. The Territory has a parliamentary system of government, comprising a governor, a deputy governor, a cabinet and a bicameral legislature. The Governor appoints as Premier the member of the House of Assembly who appears to be best able to command the confidence of a majority of the 36 members of the House, each of whom represents a parliamentary constituency. The Premier heads a cabinet that consists of the Premier and not less than six other Ministers.

3. The law and legal system of Bermuda are based on the application of English common law and the principles of equity, the legislation of the United Kingdom (in force since 1612) that has been extended to Bermuda and acts of the Bermuda Parliament. The judiciary is appointed on the advice of the Chief Justice. There are three courts: the Magistrates' Court, the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal. The British Overseas Territories Act 2002 provides for the conferral of British citizenship on citizens of British overseas territories.

4. Voters in the general elections or referendums must be 18 years of age and Bermudian by birth or status or non-Bermudian electors on the register as at 1 May 1976. General elections were held in the Territory to elect 36 members to the House of Assembly on 1 October 2020, and the incumbent Progressive Labour Party won, increasing its seats from 25 to 30, while the One Bermuda Alliance saw its seats decrease from 11 to 6. Eight women were elected to the House of Assembly. David Burt of the Progressive Labour Party continues to serve as Premier, in his second term.

5. In 1995, a referendum was held on the question of independence. Of the 58.8 per cent of eligible voters who participated, a small number by Bermudian standards according to the administering Power, 73.6 per cent voted against independence. The then-opposition party, the Progressive Labour Party, had organized a boycott of the referendum among supporters of independence, arguing that the issue should be resolved by general election.

6. In its 2005 report, the Bermuda Independence Commission noted that the racial question had been an ever-present feature of the social, economic and political landscape of Bermuda throughout its history. Racial divisions in Bermuda have, in significant measure, played out in support for, or in opposition to, independence and the method to be used to ascertain the wishes of the population. The Progressive Labour Party, which was the ruling party in 2005, wanted the issue of independence to be settled in the context of an election. The Progressive Labour Party reportedly remains publicly committed to pursuing a policy of disengagement from the United Kingdom. On the other hand, the United Bermuda Party, a forerunner of One Bermuda Alliance, favoured a referendum. The Commission concluded that it was incumbent upon both political parties to share the merits of each method.

7. In an interview on 14 September 2017, the Premier, Mr. Burt, stated that, while the achievement of independence was in the constitution of his party, the territorial Government was not committed to pursuing independence at that moment, as it was committed to growing the economy and addressing the immediate challenges inside the Territory. In an interview in June 2018, the Premier, reiterating the above-mentioned position, stated that, while independence was an ultimate aim and

objective of the Progressive Labour Party, it was not part of the current mandate of the Party and that Bermuda would not pursue independence during the term of his office in order to address more important issues.

8. At the Caribbean regional seminar held by the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Saint George's, Grenada, from 2 to 4 May 2019, the Deputy Premier of Bermuda, Walter Roban, stated that, even though the administering Power maintained the prerogative over foreign affairs, in the context of the prospect of the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union (known as "Brexit"), the Territory had been required to take more responsibility for its overseas relations with the European Union and other countries and territories and that the prospect of a "Brexit" had caused the Territory to expend additional resources to ensure that its relationship with those countries was secure and stable. He also stated that the current Government of Bermuda supported independence and full sovereignty for the Territory and that if at some point in the future the Territory sought full sovereignty, it would follow a proper process of public engagement through an exhaustive public education campaign to ascertain the will of the people in that regard, with the assistance and advice of the Special Committee.

## **II. Budget**

9. The fiscal year of the Territory begins in April. According to the 2020/21 budget statement of the territorial Government, delivered on 21 February 2020, for the 2019/20 fiscal year, the revenue was forecast at \$1.111 billion. The operating expenses of the Government for the same year were projected at \$940.2 million. The revised capital expenditure was predicted at \$66.1 million. Debt service costs were expected to be \$2.7 million above the estimate of \$116.5 million. Accordingly, the revised estimate of the overall deficit was \$14.6 million. The total debt at the end of the 2019/20 fiscal year net of sinking fund payments was \$2.658 billion.

10. The budget deficit for 2020/21 is expected to be \$19.8 million, based upon current and capital expenditures at \$1.14 billion and a revenue yield of \$1.12 billion. In 2020/21, the Ministry of Finance reintroduced a zero-based budgeting strategy to bring greater discipline to the allocation of limited financial resources, in line with the territorial Government's overall policy initiatives and objectives.

11. According to the administering Power, the economic impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is expected to have severe knock-on effects on the 2020/21 budget, and the combination of lower fiscal revenues and higher public spending is expected to significantly increase the projected budget deficit of \$19.8 million.

12. On 13 November 2020, the Minister of Finance stated that unbudgeted COVID-19 expenditures for the 2020/21 fiscal year were estimated at \$125.2 million; COVID-19 was also expected to have a significant impact on Government revenues and the Ministry had revised the revenue estimate for 2020/21 from \$1.122 billion to \$914.1 million, a reduction of \$208 million or 18.5%.

## **III. Economic conditions**

### **A. General**

13. The economy of Bermuda is based primarily on the provision of financial services for international businesses and on tourism. According to the administering Power, the industrial sector is small and agriculture is limited, since only about 20 per cent of the land is arable. According to data from the territorial Government, the

agriculture, forestry and fishing industries shared 0.2 per cent of the nominal gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019.

14. As indicated in the 2020/21 budget statement, the territorial Government estimated that its GDP had increased by 1 to 2 per cent in 2019, following growth of 0.1 per cent in 2018. In November 2020, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the territorial Government lowered the projected GDP growth for 2020 to be in the range of -7 to -9 per cent, mainly owing to the anticipated contraction in global growth; the negative impact of the pandemic on international business, tourism and financial market conditions; and the impact of social distancing policies.

15. The Minister of Finance has established a COVID-19 Economic Advisory Committee to provide insight and expert advice on how to protect jobs and stimulate economic activity during the economic crisis stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **B. Financial services**

16. Bermuda is one of the world's leading international financial and business centres; the sector accounts for about 28 per cent of its GDP. Bermuda is also one of the major jurisdictions worldwide in the fields of large-scale insurance and reinsurance.

17. The Bermuda Monetary Authority, the integrated regulator of the financial services sector, has the power to levy civil fines. The Territory has no central bank. The peg to the United States dollar is managed by commercial banks meeting supply and demand at a one-to-one rate. The banks, rather than the Authority, own the foreign exchange reserves of Bermuda.

18. According to the 2020/21 budget statement, 846 new international companies and partnerships were registered in 2019, compared with some 830 in 2018.

19. According to the administering Power, Bermuda has never been a jurisdiction with bank secrecy laws and has maintained a private beneficial ownership register since the 1940s. The existing register contains the details of the ultimate owners of the private corporate entities operating in Bermuda. It is a central register held by a public authority and, as ownership changes over time, it is updated using an active automatic system. Under the regulatory legislation, there are provisions for financial institutions regarding controlling shareholders that require the approval of such persons by the Bermuda Monetary Authority.

20. For more than 70 years, Bermuda has required persons wishing to incorporate a company there to provide information on the ultimate beneficial owner. Currently, such persons are vetted by the Authority (subject to a 10 per cent controller threshold). Transfers of shares to non-Bermudians are also subject to vetting by the Authority. The Authority retains all of the information on the ultimate beneficial owner, which is provided to the Authority as part of the vetting process.

21. The Government exchanges the information with the competent authorities of the United Kingdom and of the United States of America, with which it has entered into international agreements. In April 2016, Bermuda concluded a bilateral arrangement with the United Kingdom on the reciprocal exchange of beneficial ownership information to allow law enforcement authorities to have timely access to beneficial ownership information on corporate and legal entities incorporated in the respective jurisdictions.

22. In May 2018, the Parliament of the United Kingdom passed the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act, pursuant to which the Secretary of State is required to provide all reasonable assistance to the Governments of overseas territories to enable

each of those Governments to establish a publicly accessible register of the beneficial ownership of companies registered in its jurisdiction and to prepare, no later than 31 December 2020, a draft Order in Council requiring any overseas territory that has not introduced such a register to do so. That deadline has since been extended to 2023. On 15 July 2020, the Government of the United Kingdom welcomed the statements made by eight overseas territories, including Bermuda, in which they committed themselves to greater transparency in financial services by announcing that they would establish publicly accessible registers of the beneficial ownership of companies.

23. In September 2013, Bermuda joined the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to facilitate cooperation between jurisdictions in the assessment and collection of taxes, in particular to combat tax avoidance and evasion. The Convention came into force on 1 March 2014. The ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption by the United Kingdom was extended to Bermuda on 4 June 2018.

### **C. Tourism**

24. Government statistics indicated that, in 2019, 808,242 travellers visited Bermuda (up by 37,559, or 4.9 per cent, from 2018), 66 per cent of whom arrived by cruise ship (535,561 visitors). The territorial Government stated that 2019 was the third consecutive year with the largest number of total visitor arrivals. According to the administering Power, the estimated total visitor spending amounted to \$518.5 million, up from \$505.3 million in 2018. However, according to the administering Power, in 2019, the direct contribution of the tourism sector to the Territory's GDP declined to \$379 million, down by 1.8 per cent from 2018. The 3,734 tourism-related jobs in Bermuda represented 11 per cent of the total number of jobs in the Territory in 2019, slightly down from 3,762 in 2018.

25. The official statistics of the territorial Government indicated that, in the first three quarters of 2020, 39,744 visitors had come to Bermuda, including 6,457 cruise passengers. In the second and third quarters, there were no visits by cruise passengers. The significant reduction is a result of the action by the territorial Government to curtail the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic by closing the borders from late March to July 2020.

### **D. Construction**

26. According to the administering Power, the total value of new construction projects that had started in 2019 fell by 9.7 per cent, from \$105.3 million to \$95.1 million. The estimated value of construction work implemented in 2019 increased to \$241.2 million. The majority of the growth can be attributed to work performed on hotels and guest houses throughout the year. Work on roads, bridges and the airport also contributed to the overall construction output.

### **E. Transport and communications**

27. With a network of some 200 km of paved public roads and 400 km of private roads, Bermuda has a high road traffic density, with approximately 79 vehicles per km in 2016. Restrictions on car ownership to one per household, coupled with a policy of allowing no rental cars, have resulted in the development of a public transportation system of buses and ferries. In 2016, Bermuda amended its legislation (Motor Car

Act 1951) to allow the rental of mini cars for the first time. On 20 April 2017, the Motor Car (Minicar) Regulations 2017 came into effect. In 2019, a total of 49,647 road vehicles were registered, compared with 49,087 in the previous year, representing an increase for the fourth year in a row.

28. Regular commercial flights connect Bermuda to a number of destinations in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Bermuda has its own air and ship regulatory agencies, with registries maintained by the Civil Aviation Authority and the Bermuda Shipping and Maritime Authority.

29. According to the administering Power, there are four international submarine cables linking Bermuda to mainland North America. Approximately 98 per cent of individuals in Bermuda have Internet access. The number of telephone subscribers in 2019/20 was 21,970, a decrease from 32,810 in 2016/17. Bermuda has eight radio stations, two television broadcast stations, three subscription television service providers, two mobile service providers and one daily newspaper.

## **IV. Social conditions**

### **A. General**

30. According to the 2020/21 budget statement, the Ministry of Education is to be allocated a budget of \$137.6 million, equivalent to 12 per cent of the total government expenditure estimated for 2020/21. In addition, the Ministry of Labour, Community Affairs and Sports is to receive an estimated budget of \$18.7 million, out of which \$4.3 million will be dedicated to workforce development.

### **B. Labour**

31. The total number of jobs in Bermuda increased by 1.5 per cent, from 33,855 in 2018 to 34,378 in 2019, representing the highest year-over-year increase since 2006. The number of Bermudian job holders increased by 1 per cent from 23,615 in 2018 to 23,841 in 2019 but decreased by 1 per cent in terms of the percentage distribution between Bermudians and others. The unemployment rate stood at 3.8 per cent in November 2019, the same level as in the previous year. Among Bermudians, the unemployment rate was slightly higher, indicated at 4.4 per cent in November 2019, whereas it amounted to 1.6 per cent among non-Bermudians, including permanent resident certificate holders, non-Bermudian spouses of Bermudians and other non-Bermudians, at the same point in time. The median gross annual income of job holders was \$62,557 in November 2019, down from \$64,234 in May 2019. The median income of Bermudian job holders was \$61,130, while non-Bermudians, including permanent resident certificate holders, non-Bermudian spouses of Bermudians and other non-Bermudians, had a higher median income of \$67,750.

32. The Bermuda Job Board, an online national employment database operated by the Department of Workforce Development since November 2013, is available to Bermudians who are seeking employment, with the main objective of consolidating and centralizing the jobs available in Bermuda so as to help to connect workers and employers, allow more opportunities for qualified Bermudians to find employment and ultimately reduce the need for work permit applications.

33. Since 1968, Bermuda has had an ad hoc Law Reform Committee, which was established by the then Minister of Home Affairs and tasked to review, update and improve the legislative framework for labour. The Committee concluded its work on the consolidation of labour laws and amendments to the Employment Act 2000 in



2018. Other recent labour legislation includes the Employment (Wage Commission) Act 2019, which became operative in October 2019 with the aim of advancing work on the introduction of a minimum wage. In addition, the Employment (Maternity Leave Extension and Paternity Leave) Amendment Act 2019 took effect in January 2020, which extended maternity leave and introduced paternity leave.

### **C. Education**

34. The 2020/21 budget statement indicated that, for that fiscal year, about \$137.6 million (up by \$512,000 from 2019) would be provided to the Ministry of Education. Education in Bermuda is compulsory for children from 5 to 16 years of age, and it is free in public schools for all children up to 19 years of age. There are 10 preschools, 18 primary schools, 5 middle schools, 1 special-needs school and 2 senior secondary schools as well as 2 alternative schools in the public school system, which, according to the administering Power, had a student population of 4,630 in September 2019. There are a number of private schools, including six offering early primary education, serving some 40 per cent of the pupils of compulsory school age. Those institutions receive no government funding. The total school enrolment in 2019, which included public and private schools and Bermuda College, was 9,361.

35. Students from overseas territories benefit from the home student rate for tuition fees at British universities, provided that they have lived in a British overseas territory, the European Economic Area or Switzerland for the three years prior to the first academic year of their course of study. In addition, those students have access to funding provided by the European Union for higher or vocational education.

### **D. Public health**

36. According to the 2020/21 budget statement, the budget allocated to the Ministry of Health was \$243.3 million (21.3 per cent of the total estimated expenditure), which is an increase of \$1.9 million from its budget for 2019/20. The Ministry of Health represented the largest share of the government budget for 2020/21. In addition to regulation, the Ministry provides policy direction for the health sector. It also provides public health services, services for older persons and persons with disabilities, an acute care hospital, a psychiatric hospital, affordable health insurance plans and regulatory bodies for health professionals and health insurance. The Territory currently has a hybrid health financing system consisting of direct public funding and social health insurance, supported by government subsidies. A health financing reform initiative led by the Ministry was introduced in 2018 with the aim of achieving universal coverage of essential health services through a single payer system. Public consultations were held in the second half of 2019.

37. According to the administering Power, Bermuda has the third most expensive health system in the world, while it ranks thirteenth in life expectancy. Health costs consume 11.5 per cent of GDP. Three quarters of the population are overweight or obese and 12 per cent of adults have diabetes.

38. Bermuda has an ageing population and a low fertility rate. According to the data provided by the administering Power, the 2019 population projection indicated that 19.6 per cent of the population was 65 years of age or older in 2019, compared with 17 per cent in 2016. In 2016, the total fertility rate was 1.5 births per woman, which is below the replacement level of 2.1 births per woman. According to the administering Power, in 2020, life expectancy at birth was projected at 82.8 years, with men at 79.8 years and women at 85.8 years. Life expectancy is reported as being four years greater for the white population than for the remainder of the population.

39. According to the administering Power, the Government of the United Kingdom has been supporting the overseas territories throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The support has included the funding and supply of testing kits, laboratory consumables, medical equipment and medical supplies and the provision of public health expertise. In addition, the Government of the United Kingdom has committed itself to supplying the overseas territories with a share of the COVID-19 vaccines that it procures. According to the administering Power, its support is in line with its enduring commitment to the peoples of its overseas territories.

## **E. Crime and public safety**

40. The Ministry of National Security holds administrative responsibility for the Royal Bermuda Regiment, the Bermuda Police Service, the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service, Border Control and the Department for National Drug Control. The Ministry works to ensure that the agencies and departments under its authority work in tandem to promote all aspects of safety in Bermuda.

41. The Bermuda Police Service remains committed to ensuring public safety through strong enforcement, community engagement and rigorous investigations leading to convictions. The Service continues to focus on five operational policing priorities, namely to: (a) enhance public confidence; (b) provide highly visible front-line policing; (c) respond quickly to emergencies; (d) conduct timely, quality-focused investigations; and (e) protect vulnerable people. The inter-agency gang task force continues to provide programmes aimed at intercepting and curbing gang-related crime.

42. In 2020, HMS *Medway* and RFA *Argus* were stationed in the Caribbean as part of the North Atlantic patrol tasking of the Royal Navy, ensuring a year-round maritime presence of the United Kingdom to support the overseas territories to prepare for and respond to the threat of hurricanes and other disasters and to provide humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and crisis communications support in the region. The Government of the United Kingdom indicated its commitment to providing assistance to the overseas territories to deal with major storms and other disasters in the future.

43. According to the administering Power, after Bermuda was hit by Hurricane Paulette in September 2020, the Royal Bermuda Regiment and emergency services worked together under the Ministry of National Security to ensure timely and accurate sharing of information and a restoration of normal services.

## **F. Human rights and related issues**

44. Core international and European human rights instruments are applied in Bermuda, including the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the United Kingdom was formally extended to Bermuda in March 2017, with two reservations relating to articles 1 and 15 (4) of the Convention. According to the administering Power, the first reservation was withdrawn following the ending of conscription under the Defence Amendment Act of July 2018. The second reservation took account of the constitutional and immigration provisions that had the effect of discriminating

against a Bermudian woman married to a non-Bermudian man, owing to the lesser rights granted to a non-Bermudian man married to a Bermudian woman compared with a non-Bermudian woman married to a Bermudian man.

45. The Human Rights Commission of Bermuda was established in 1982 to administer the 1981 Human Rights Act. According to the territorial Government, the three main aspects of the work of the Commission pertain to providing effective and timely means for resolving individual complaints involving human rights, sexual harassment and disability, promoting knowledge of human rights in Bermuda and encouraging people to follow principles of equality, and helping to reduce barriers to equality in employment and access to services.

46. According to the administering Power, the Government of Bermuda has lodged a notice to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council against the 2018 rulings of the Bermudian Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal, which found provisions in Bermuda's 2018 Domestic Partnership Act to be unconstitutional in their restriction of marriage to opposite sex couples. The Government's appeal is expected to be heard by the Privy Council in February 2021.

## V. Environment

47. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is responsible for supporting the local agriculture and fishing industries, marine heritage, pollution control, water rights management, the management of terrestrial nature reserves, the conservation of endangered species, domestic animal control, the control of invasive pests and the operation of the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo.

48. According to the administering Power, the Ministry of Home Affairs has prioritized the advancement and expansion of the Sargasso Sea Commission, established pursuant to the Hamilton Declaration on Collaboration for the Conservation of the Sargasso Sea, to better manage the wider Sargasso Sea, which is recognized in the Hamilton Declaration as an important open ocean ecosystem. In September 2020, the Cabinet of Bermuda approved the appointment of three international experts to the Sargasso Sea Commission.

49. Bermuda continues its efforts to ensure the sustainable management of its fisheries and improve its food security. According to the administering Power, observations by fishers and government officials indicated that fish were aggregating to spawn earlier in the year, likely owing to increased water temperatures.

50. About 98 per cent of the electric power in the Territory is provided by a single private entity, which relies exclusively on fossil fuels to generate electricity. The remaining 2 per cent of electric power is provided by the Tynes Bay waste-to-energy plant, which is owned and operated by the Ministry of Public Works.

51. According to the administering Power, the amendments made in December 2017 to the Bermuda National Parks Act 1986 created 16 new protected areas (90 acres) of the national parks system. With the reclassification of seven existing parks as nature reserves, the total number of areas protected under the national park system stood at 112 (total area of 1,129 acres).

## VI. Military issues

52. Bermuda maintains a defence regiment of some 320 soldiers, namely the Royal Bermuda Regiment, which includes 39 full-time soldiers, with the remainder being part-time reservists. The Regiment is organized in two operational companies of about 100

soldiers each, supported by a logistics company and a training wing. The Regiment had consisted of both conscripted and volunteer members until conscription was suspended in 2015. Under the Defence Amendment Act, which became operative on 1 July 2018, voluntary enlistment is the only means by which a man or woman can enlist in the Regiment. The Regiment conducted a strategic review in the first half of 2018, which was updated in 2020 with a revised target strength of 420 personnel. Its two main objectives are force protection and provision of humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

53. The Regiment regularly cooperates with foreign Governments and militaries, including those of Canada, Jamaica and the United States, and assists in disaster relief operations in other territories administered by the United Kingdom. In 2020, the Regiment saw its longest operational period, of 175 days, owing to the COVID-19 response.

54. In February 2020, the Royal Bermuda Regiment Coast Guard was formed through an amalgamation of the Bermuda Police Service Maritime Unit and the Royal Bermuda Regiment Boat Troop. Its responsibilities are inshore maritime patrolling and policing in line with the Defence (Coast Guard Unit) Amendment Act 2018.

## **VII. Relations with international organizations and partners**

55. Bermuda is an associate member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Caribbean Community and the Caribbean Common Market, and a member of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, which was set up to combat money-laundering. The Financial Intelligence Agency of Bermuda is a member of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, and the Bermuda Monetary Authority is a member of regional and international financial regulatory bodies, including the International Association of Insurance Supervisors, the International Organization of Securities Commissions and the Group of International Finance Centre Supervisors. Bermuda also plays a key role in the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes of OECD as a member of its peer review group. In addition, Bermuda participates in the Sea Turtle Conservancy, the Caribbean-United States Security Cooperation Dialogue, the International Trade Union Confederation, the International Criminal Police Organization and the International Olympic Committee.

## **VIII. Future status of the Territory**

### **A. Position of the territorial Government**

56. Information regarding developments on the future status of Bermuda is reflected in section I above.

### **B. Position of the administering Power**

57. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the eighth meeting of the United Kingdom-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council was held virtually from 23 to 26 November 2020, when the administering Power hosted the representatives of the Governments of its overseas territories. With the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in attendance, the participants held wide-ranging discussions on such topics as economic issues, COVID-19 response and recovery, the protection of vulnerable groups and environmental matters. According to the administering Power, the statement made by the Prince of Wales at the meeting, ahead of discussions on the

environment and the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be hosted in 2021 by the United Kingdom, showed the importance placed by the United Kingdom on its relationship with the overseas territories and its recognition of their significant contribution to its biodiversity.

58. In the communiqué adopted at the eighth meeting of the Joint Ministerial Council, the Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories indicated that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, applied to the peoples of the overseas territories. They reaffirmed the importance of promoting the right of those peoples to self-determination, a collective responsibility of all parts of the Government of the United Kingdom.

59. The Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories committed themselves to exploring ways in which the overseas territories could maintain international support in countering hostile sovereignty claims. It was also stated that for those Territories with permanent populations that wished so, the United Kingdom would continue to support their requests for removal of the Territory from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

60. At the 3rd meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), on 15 October 2020, during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the relationship of his Government with its overseas territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to choose to remain British.

61. He stated that his Government's responsibility was to ensure the security and good governance of the territories and their peoples and that territorial Governments were expected to meet the same high standards as the Government of the United Kingdom in maintaining the rule of law, respect for human rights and integrity in public life, delivering efficient public services and building strong and successful communities. He explained that his Government was committed to involving all overseas territories in the negotiations on its future relationship with the European Union, in order to ensure that their priorities were taken into account at every stage of the process.

62. He added that, while the United Kingdom would carry out all the responsibilities of the sovereign Power, the Governments of the United Kingdom and its overseas territories were in agreement that the overseas territories were internally self-governing, subject only to the United Kingdom retaining powers to enable it to carry out its obligations under international law. He also added that the Joint Ministerial Council met annually to monitor and drive forward collective priorities.

## **IX. Action taken by the General Assembly**

63. On 10 December 2020, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution [75/109](#), on the basis of the report 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 for 2020 ([A/75/23](#)) and the subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Bermuda to self-determination, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with Assembly resolution [1514 \(XV\)](#), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

(b) Also reaffirmed that, in the process of decolonization of Bermuda, there was no alternative to the principle of self-determination, which was also a fundamental human right, as recognized under the relevant human rights conventions;

(c) Further reaffirmed that it was ultimately for the people of Bermuda to determine freely their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions of the Assembly, and in that connection called upon the administering Power, in cooperation with the territorial Government and appropriate bodies of the United Nations system, to develop political education programmes for the Territory in order to foster an awareness among the people of their right to self-determination in conformity with the legitimate political status options, based on the principles clearly defined in Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) and other relevant resolutions and decisions;

(d) Stressed the importance of the 2005 report of the Bermuda Independence Commission, which provided a thorough examination of the facts surrounding independence, and continued to regret that the plans for public meetings and the presentation of a Green Paper to the House of Assembly followed by a White Paper outlining the policy proposals for an independent Bermuda had so far not materialized;

(e) Underlined the need further to strengthen good governance, transparency and accountability in government for the benefit of the Territory;

(f) Requested the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public educational outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter, and in that regard called upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

(g) Welcomed the active participation of the Territory in the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;

(h) Stressed that the Territory should continue to participate in the activities of the Special Committee, including regional seminars, in order to provide the Committee with up-to-date information regarding the decolonization process;

(i) Also stressed the importance of the Special Committee being apprised of the views and wishes of the people of Bermuda and enhancing its understanding of their conditions, including the nature and scope of the existing political and constitutional arrangements between Bermuda and the administering Power;

(j) Called upon the administering Power to participate in and cooperate fully with the work of the Special Committee in order to implement the provisions of Article 73 *e* of the Charter and the Declaration and in order to advise the Committee on the implementation of the provisions under Article 73 *b* of the Charter on efforts to promote self-government in Bermuda, and encouraged the administering Power to facilitate visiting and special missions to the Territory;

(k) Reaffirmed the responsibility of the administering Power under the Charter to promote the economic and social development and to preserve the cultural identity of the Territory, and requested the administering Power to take steps to enlist and make effective use of all possible assistance, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, in the strengthening of the economy of the Territory;

(l) Took into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, stressed the importance of fostering the economic and social sustainable development of the Territory by promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion and promoting the integrated and sustainable management

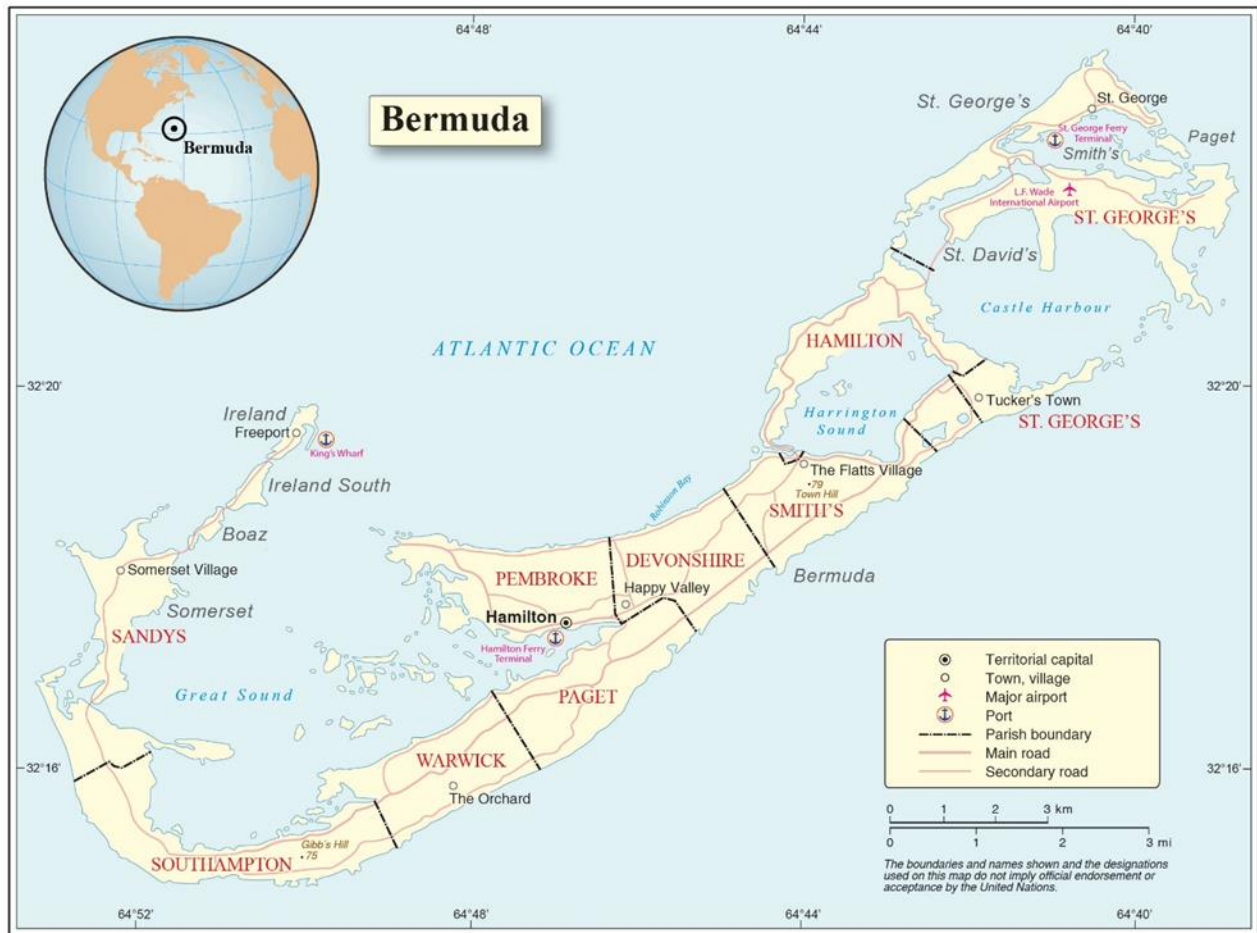
of natural resources and ecosystems that supported, inter alia, economic, social and human development, while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration, restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges, and strongly urged the administering Power to refrain from undertaking any kind of illicit, harmful and unproductive activities, including the use of the Territory as an international financial centre, that were not aligned with the interest of the people of the Territory;

(m) Requested the Territory and the administering Power to take all measures necessary to protect and conserve the environment of the Territory against any degradation, and once again requested the specialized agencies concerned to monitor environmental conditions in the Territory and to provide assistance to the Territory, consistent with their prevailing rules of procedure;

(n) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of Bermuda and to report thereon to the Assembly at its seventy-sixth session and on the implementation of resolution [75/109](#).

Annex

Map of Bermuda



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June 2016

Department of Field Support  
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)