



# General Assembly

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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

### Pitcairn

#### Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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*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 4 December 2023. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from [www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/documents/workingpapers](http://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/documents/workingpapers).



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**The Territory at a glance**

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

*Representative of administering Power:* Governor Iona Thomas (since August 2022).

*Geography:* Pitcairn is located midway between New Zealand and the continent of South America at 25°S and 130°W. It comprises four islands: Pitcairn (the only inhabited island), Henderson, Ducie and Oeno.

*Land area:* 35.5 km<sup>2</sup> (Pitcairn Island: 4.35 km<sup>2</sup>).

*Exclusive economic zone (now a maritime protected area):* 842,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

*Population:* 42 (2022); this figure includes individuals temporarily abroad.

*Life expectancy at birth:* Not available.

*Languages:* The official languages are English and Pitkern, a mixture of eighteenth-century English and Tahitian.

*Capital:* Adamstown, the only settlement.

*Mayor:* Simon Young (since January 2023).

*Main political parties:* None.

*Elections:* Elections for the Island Council and Deputy Mayor are held every two years in November (most recent election: 8 November 2023); elections for the Mayor, the head of the Council, are held in November every three years. The most recent mayoral election was held on 9 November 2022.

*Economy:* There is limited economic activity in Pitcairn. The incomes of Pitcairn Islanders are largely based on tourism, the sale of stamps and coins, handicrafts and honey production. Pitcairn receives budgetary aid from the United Kingdom.

*Monetary unit:* New Zealand dollar (\$NZ).

*Brief history:* Pitcairn is named after Robert Pitcairn, a British midshipman who sighted it in 1767. The island was uninhabited when castaways from HMS *Bounty* (9 mutineers and 18 Polynesians) arrived there in 1790. Most of the inhabitants of Pitcairn today can trace their ancestry back to those mutineers and their Tahitian companions.

## I. Constitutional, legal and political issues

1. A new constitution came into effect in March 2010, replacing the Pitcairn Order 1970 and the Pitcairn Royal Instructions 1970. The Governor is appointed by the British Crown. In practice, the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to New Zealand is appointed concurrently as Governor of Pitcairn, and overall responsibility for the administration of the island is accordingly vested in this function.

2. Under the Constitution, the Governor may make laws for the peace, order and good government of Pitcairn after consultation with the Island Council. Laws enacted by the Governor are styled ordinances. All ordinances are subject to disallowance by the British monarch, on the advice of the Secretary of State. The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland retains the general power to legislate directly for Pitcairn by an Act of Parliament or an Order in Council.

3. Islanders manage their internal affairs through the Island Council, the existence of which is enshrined in the Constitution and the composition and functions of which are established by the Local Government Ordinance (Laws of Pitcairn Revised Edition 2017). The Ordinance confers upon the Council the duty, subject to orders and directions of the Governor, to provide for the enforcement of the laws of Pitcairn and empowers it to make regulations for the good administration of Pitcairn, the maintenance of peace, order and public safety and the social and economic advancement of the islanders. According to the 2017 revised edition of the Ordinance, the Council consists of seven voting members (the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and five Councillors, all elected) and three non-voting ex officio members (the Governor, the Deputy Governor and the Administrator (a role created in December 2014)). In 2019, Charlene Warren-Peu became the first woman to be elected as Mayor of Pitcairn for the term from November 2019 to November 2022. She was succeeded by Simon Young upon his election in November 2022. Mr. Young is the first islander not born on Pitcairn to secure the post. The former Mayor, Ms. Warren-Peu, was elected as Deputy Mayor in November 2023. The current Administrators are performing the role on a job-share basis, rotating each month. They are based in Pitcairn. The Deputy Governor is based in Auckland, New Zealand.

4. In May 2018, the previous Governor of Pitcairn made her first visit to the Territory. At a meeting with the Island Council on 25 May 2018, the Governor praised the steps taken by the Council on important issues, such as child safety, and the holding of workshops on the future of Pitcairn. At a special public meeting with the community, also held on 25 May 2018, the Governor noted that communication between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Council had been excellent. That was reflected in the progress made on child safety, the future of Pitcairn and other issues. The Governor and the community discussed a number of matters related to the future of Pitcairn, such as how to help people originally from Pitcairn to return to the Territory and how to attract new settlers, the possibility of building an airport, and the economy. According to the Island Council, public workshops on the future of Pitcairn were held on 16, 18 and 20 April 2019 (specific outcomes are not known). The Governor visited the territory again in August 2019 and held numerous discussions with members of the community on issues, including the decision by the United Kingdom to leave the European Union (“Brexit”) and the future of Pitcairn. The Deputy Governor visited Pitcairn in March 2022. The new Governor had a virtual town hall meeting with Pitcairners in mid-August 2022. In September 2023, the new Governor made her first visit to the island, during which she discussed the strategic plan to ensure the sustainable future of the island with the Island Council. She also discussed issues such as the future of the shipping service and the challenges facing the small and ageing population. She also opened the new Marine Science Base,

which the island hopes will attract researchers to take advantage of the pristine marine environment in the marine protected area.

5. Two inquiries were launched in the Parliament of the United Kingdom in April and June 2023, respectively, one, by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, to explore the constitutional arrangements of the overseas territories and whether the relationship is fit for purpose in the twenty-first century; and the other, by the House of Commons Procedure Committee, to examine options for the representation of overseas territories within the House of Commons.

### **A. Electoral qualifications**

6. In order to vote for Island Officers, persons must be at least 18 years old, intend to remain on Pitcairn indefinitely and have been resident there for a specified period: one year if the person has a right of abode on Pitcairn or is a spouse of someone otherwise entitled to vote; two years if the person is a de facto marital partner of a person otherwise entitled to vote; or three years if the person is a non-islander normally resident on Pitcairn. Anyone who is eligible to vote may also stand for election to any of the island offices, so long as he or she has not been sentenced to imprisonment for three months or more in the past five years. The Island Secretary prepares the register of voters in September or October of each election year, and elections are held between the first and fifteenth days in November (inclusive).

### **B. Judicial system and human rights**

7. The Island Magistrate is appointed by the Governor from among the residents of Pitcairn. Other magistrates, legally qualified in a Commonwealth country, are appointed to preside over the Magistrate's Court in matters beyond the powers of the Island Magistrate. The Magistrate's Court sits with two Assessors, except in specified circumstances. The criminal jurisdiction of the Magistrate's Court is limited to offences triable summarily, committal proceedings and certain inquiries; and the magistrates have prescribed limits on their sentencing powers. The Magistrate's Court has jurisdiction in civil litigation up to a prescribed level. There is a right of appeal to the Supreme Court of Pitcairn, which is a superior court of record and has jurisdiction in criminal and civil cases beyond the competence of the Magistrate's Court. The Supreme Court is constituted by a judge sitting alone. The judges of the Supreme Court are the Chief Justice and up to four other judges. The Supreme Court may sit with assessors if it thinks it expedient or practical to do so. There are further rights of appeal to the Pitcairn Court of Appeal, which is composed of a President, two or more Justices of Appeal and the Chief Justice, and to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

8. The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction over alleged breaches of the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution. It has the power to make such declarations and orders as it considers appropriate for the purpose of upholding the rights and may award damages. The Governor, as holder of the highest executive office, and the Chief Justice, as head of the judiciary, are responsible within their respective spheres of authority for overseeing the implementation of human rights on Pitcairn.

## **II. Budget**

9. According to the United Kingdom, the budget for Pitcairn in 2023/24, supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, is £4.52 million, an increase

of 4 per cent from 2022/23. According to the Office, the financial aid covers citizens' reasonable assistance needs, including health care, education and securing sea access. The majority of this financial aid is spent on the shipping service for both freight and passengers, which is a vital lifeline for the community. The budget also covers payment for the expatriate professionals on the island: a doctor, a social worker and a police officer. Self-sufficiency is currently not a viable option in the case of Pitcairn, because of its size and remoteness. Pitcairn has required development assistance (90 to 95 per cent of its budget requirements) since 2004.

### **III. Economic and social conditions**

10. The principal source of income for the public economy had traditionally been the sale of stamps. Owing largely to a downturn in the stamp market, however, this market has been greatly reduced. The island still sells its stamps and coins to visitors and collectors. Recently, however, it has been reported that sales of stamps and coins are rising with the increase in the number of cruise ships that visited in 2023, including the increased number of bookings from now until the end of 2025. Revenue is also generated from landing fees for tourist arrivals.

11. The Territory's income is supplemented by the sale of Internet domain names. Internet users worldwide can acquire a ".pn" suffix that is permanently awarded to Pitcairn for, according to the territorial Government, a fee of \$100 annually, or \$10 per month. Also available for purchase are the subdomains ".co.pn", ".net.pn" and ".org.pn", which cost \$50 per year.

12. The private incomes of Pitcairn Islanders are based on the manufacture of handicrafts and their sale either directly to passengers on visiting ships or online. In 2023, steady income from the sale of handicrafts was reported. The island's fertile soil produces a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. Some islanders also provide a homestay service to tourists.

13. According to the administering Power, the Government of Pitcairn is developing a new strategic plan to address the challenges facing the small and ageing population. The Government of the United Kingdom is willing to help develop the plan and has indicated that it is important that it belong to the islanders. The administering Power also noted that the main challenges are how to attract new settlers to the island and how to grow the economy.

14. There are about 40 people on Pitcairn. According to the administering Power, most of them are elderly – and unless there is an influx of new settlers within the next five years, 85 per cent of the island community will be over 65. The administering Power has further indicated that the three remaining Pitcairn children are being educated at boarding school in New Zealand, coming back to the island for holidays, and the that local school has closed. Three new settlers have arrived in the past 12 months, and Pitcairn is beginning to see more substantive enquiries about moving to the island.

15. According to the report of the Administrator to the Island Council for February 2023, efforts to attract migration were under way, including updating the immigration website. There has also been an increase in subscribers to the local online journal, the *Miscellany*.

16. Concerns have been raised about the present lack of integrated banking services in Pitcairn and about how these services are handled off-island. The Governor has conveyed her commitment to improving the banking situation in Pitcairn and is cognizant of the issues raised during her visit to Pitcairn in September 2023.

17. Access and shipping costs have risen in recent years and account for the largest share of financial aid. The limited access remains an obstacle to the socioeconomic development of the island. According to the administering Power, the MV *Silver Supporter*, the sole supply vessel, now makes 4 trips per year to New Zealand to collect supplies and 31 trips per year to Mangareva, in the Gambier Islands, to allow people to arrive and leave. There is a weekly flight between Mangareva and Tahiti.

18. According to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, when designing the Pitcairn financial aid intervention, it had considered the likely impact on gender inequality and whether it would lead to sustained improvements in that regard. As of November 2023, three of the seven Council members were women. In 2019, for the first time in the island's history, a woman was elected as Mayor. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has yet to be extended to Pitcairn. The key gender-related issue on Pitcairn, which is the legacy of child abuse, is being actively managed, and a revised child safety policy is being drafted. Child safeguarding remains a primary focus of the efforts of the Government of the United Kingdom on Pitcairn Island. The financial aid intervention also ensures that services are provided equally for all islanders.

## A. Transport

19. Access to Pitcairn is possible only by sea. The MV *Silver Supporter*, contracted by the Government, has been providing the shipping service since early 2019. Maritime law limits the number of fare-paying passengers to 12, which matches the number of berths on the *Silver Supporter*. The shipping service accounts for the largest item of expenditure, representing approximately 60 per cent of the overall budget. According to the administering Power, a new contract is being signed with the *Silver Supporter*, which will provide certainty for the next few years. The Council has agreed a programme of marine infrastructure to ensure that the harbour and the boats used to offload the *Silver Supporter* are in good functional condition to serve the island.

20. In the minutes of the Island Council meeting dated 18 January 2023, it is indicated that critical risks in the crewing of the longboats by a small and ageing population may arise by March 2024. The Council is seeking to enter into a shipping contract in the future whereby cargo will be offloaded by the contractor, with no assistance needed from islanders. The current shipping contract ends on 15 March 2024.

21. The roads in Adamstown are paved, but much of the rest of the road network is not. This is being addressed slowly, in accordance with the list of priority works agreed by the Council. The main mode of transport is quad bikes, and all users must have a licence.

## B. Communications and power supply

22. The island currently has a satellite-based Wi-Fi communications system and is trialling the introduction of a new Internet service.

23. Currently, diesel-powered generators provide 240-volt electric power for 15 hours per day (7 a.m.–10 p.m.). Most private residences, and six government buildings, now have solar power installed, which significantly reduced the generator load. In July 2021, the Pacific Community reported that the authorities of Pitcairn had launched a renewable energy project designed to replace fossil fuels with solar energy. The goal is to replace 95 per cent of the current diesel consumption on Pitcairn Island

(75,000 litres per year) with a combination of energy-saving and solar electricity through the installation of a hybrid photovoltaic solar energy system. According to the administering Power, the project is funded by the European Union, has a budget of €480,000 and is due to be completed by June 2024.

24. The postal service experienced delays in 2023, with external mail not being delivered to the supply ship because of communication problems in New Zealand. Safeguards have reportedly been put in place to avoid a recurrence of such delays. Pitcairn is awaiting response from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office regarding its request to join the Universal Postal Union, which it is hoped will provide access to appropriate mail tracking systems in line with the rest of the world.

### **C. Land tenure**

25. A land tenure reform ordinance was enacted at the end of 2006 to ensure that every islander was entitled to an allocation of house, garden, orchard and forestry land. According to the administering Power, work is ongoing to ensure that records are complete, after which further reforms may be identified as necessary and/or desirable. More detailed information on land distribution issues is provided in the 2005 working paper ([A/AC.109/2005/10](#)).

### **D. Employment**

26. There is a mixture of government employment and self-employment. According to the administering Power, there are currently 25 people in paid employment on Pitcairn, who between them carry out the functions of a variety of tasks for the Government of Pitcairn on a part-time basis. These range from running the general store, to constructing buildings, to staffing the longboats, to clearing vegetation, to producing a local magazine. There are also various administrative roles. Most people have multiple jobs. On 25 May 2022, the Council approved the updated Government of the Pitcairn Islands employee contract. The two main areas updated were those concerning hours of work and leave entitlements.

27. According to the administering Power, private enterprise is increasing and is encouraged by the Government of Pitcairn. Most of this is comprised of the sale of local crafts and honey and the provision of rental accommodation. There are no banks on the island, but cash may be drawn against credit cards and foreign currency may be exchanged at the office of the Government Treasurer.

### **E. Education**

28. Education is free and compulsory for all children between 5 and 15 years of age. The school was completely rebuilt in 2006. Instruction is in English and based on the New Zealand standard curriculum. However, there are currently no children being educated in the school, which has closed because the remaining three students have left for secondary education in New Zealand. The Education Officer (withdrawn since the closure of the school) was a qualified teacher recruited for a one-year term. For practical reasons, most children attended post-primary education at schools in New Zealand. Overseas secondary education is encouraged through the granting of bursaries, and a number of pupils have received secondary education in New Zealand at the expense of the Government of Pitcairn.

29. 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. Students will be eligible for tuition fee loans in England provided that they have settled status upon arrival in the United Kingdom and are starting full-time or part-time undergraduate courses in the 2023/24 academic year. Eligible students are encouraged to ensure that they hold a British passport before applying for home fee status to study in the United Kingdom.

30. Pitcairn has a museum, which was built using funds from a grant from the Government of the United Kingdom. Artefacts on display include stone tools made by Polynesians before the arrival of the mutineers, together with cannonballs, an anchor and a swivel gun from HMS *Bounty*. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church is the only church on the island.

## F. Health care

31. A general practitioner is stationed on the island and is assisted by a nurse. The Government of the United Kingdom has also funded a social welfare programme, which includes a family and community adviser (social worker). As on other Pacific islands, the levels of obesity and diabetes are health problems of concern.

32. Pitcairn actively participates in the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network and closely monitors communicable diseases. Primary health care is available and accessible to all residents. Health care is financed by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The health centre currently provides general practice and nursing services, dental X-rays and ultrasounds. Emergency evacuation is by sea to Mangareva in French Polynesia, and then by air to Tahiti in French Polynesia or to New Zealand. Pitcairn was represented during fifteenth Pacific Health Ministers Meeting in Nuku'alofa, held from 20 to 23 September 2023. The latest World Health Organization country cooperation strategy for the Pitcairn Islands is that for 2018–2022.

33. The borders of Pitcairn reopened after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in March 2022. Visitors began arriving again soon after the reopening of the borders. The island's supply ship resumed a full schedule of trips to and from French Polynesia and New Zealand, and cruise ships also resumed their visits to the island from October 2022 onwards. The tourism website was migrated to a new platform and went live in December 2023. The site provides more information for prospective visitors, including a timetable for cruise ships scheduled to arrive in Pitcairn until early 2025.

34. The Government of the United Kingdom supported the overseas territories throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The support included the funding and supply of testing kits, laboratory consumables, medical equipment, medical supplies and COVID-19 vaccines, including booster doses, and the provision of public health expertise. According to the administering Power, its support was in line with its enduring commitment to the peoples of its overseas territories.

35. Issues related to the ageing population include challenges anticipated by March 2024 with regard to staffing the longboats, and increasing debt incurred by an older population for health care. A draft health-care policy is under review according to the public service report of August 2023. The option to arrange a visit by an occupational therapist and physiotherapist of the World Health Organization to help address elder care needs is also being pursued, as recorded in the public service report to the Council dated September 2023 and the minutes of the Council meeting of 23 August 2023.

## **G. Criminal justice**

36. According to the United Kingdom, the criminal justice system on Pitcairn is administered through a combination of on-island and off-island processes. Criminal law is contained in local ordinances and regulations, as well as in English law of general application. Charges are laid by a police officer or the public prosecutor. Pitcairn has two police officers: a community police officer appointed from among the island residents and a New Zealand Police Officer who is seconded from New Zealand, usually for a period of 12 months. The public prosecutor is a lawyer qualified in a Commonwealth country.

37. A public defender is appointed by the Governor to represent defendants in criminal cases, and legal aid is available to any person who has insufficient means to obtain legal representation. A publicly funded community lawyer has also been appointed.

38. An amendment to the Justice Ordinance called the Summary Offences (Penalties) Amendment Ordinance 2022 was published on 31 May 2023 and effective from the day after publication. The amendment increases the maximum fines applicable to summary offences under the Summary Offences Ordinance, as a majority of such fines under the Summary Offences Ordinance have been unchanged since 1985. As explained in the amendment: “The amounts no longer provide an effective deterrent, and do not allow room for escalation for repeat offending. Further, it is recognised that on Pitcairn, there may be a greater reliance on fines to provide an effective deterrent for lower-level offending, rather than imprisonment.”

39. More minor criminal matters involving breaches of local ordinances or regulations can be heard before the Island Magistrate. Other summary offences and committal proceedings may be heard before the off-island magistrates in the Magistrate’s Court. Magistrates must sit with assessors, selected randomly from among the island residents, for all criminal cases with penalties of more than \$NZ5,000 (previously \$NZ400) unless the defendant has admitted guilt or there are no eligible assessors. Indictable offences must be heard in the Supreme Court.

40. The Magistrate’s Court and the Supreme Court may sit in Pitcairn, New Zealand or the United Kingdom. To allow for the distances and difficulty of travel to and from Pitcairn, a judge may order that a person involved in a proceeding participate by live video link. In making such an order, the judge is required to give particular consideration to the impact of this on the defendant’s right to a fair trial. Appeals can be made to the Court of Appeal and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

## **IV. Environment**

41. Water-quality testing is carried out in all residential and government buildings, and data are recorded. Leaf catchers, first flush diverters and gutter guards have been installed at all residential and government buildings to reduce contaminants. Water flow measurement data are collected from various springs, and the Pacific Community is assisting in collating the data and providing technical assistance. A total of 240 water tanks, with a total storage capacity of 1.4 million litres, have been provided, for an overall increase of 268,000 litres. Weather observations are collected on a daily basis, and weather data have been collected since 1945.

42. As part of the Blue Belt initiative, on 15 September 2016, the Minister of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (now the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) announced that a law designating a marine protected area around Pitcairn had been brought into force. The administering Power indicated that

the law prohibited fishing across more than 99 per cent of the 842,000 km<sup>2</sup> of ocean surrounding the islands, while sustainable local fishing by Pitcairn residents would be preserved. According to the administering Power, it is the third largest marine protected area in the world.

43. According to the administering Power, Pitcairn has launched a management plan and a research and monitoring plan for the marine protected area. All environmental work is linked to the objectives set out in these plans, and the island has continued to benefit from funding under the Blue Belt initiative. This has allowed for scientific expeditions in 2022 and 2023, with a further expedition planned for early 2024. Research is also being conducted on the increasing number of humpback whales and sharks in Pitcairn waters. The marine protected area is monitored by satellite to identify any vessels fishing illegally. In September 2023, the Pitcairn Island Marine Research Base was opened by the Governor to attract researchers.

44. The Pitcairn Islands marine protected area was awarded the platinum-level Blue Park Award for exceptional marine wildlife conservation during the fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress in February 2023 by the Blue Parks Science Council, an international council of marine conservation experts.

45. The uninhabited island of Henderson, designated a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1988, is the largest of the group and the richest in natural resources of the three satellite islands. Environmentalists visit Henderson from time to time, given that it is known for its endemic species of birds and plants in a near-pristine system. On 19 March 2019, the Pitcairn Island group was designated an International Dark Sky Sanctuary by the International Dark-Sky Association.

46. An expedition to the island was undertaken in June 2019 to examine the impact of plastic pollution on Henderson from rubbish collected by the Southern Pacific Gyre current. Members of the expedition gathered and secured 6.25 tons of plastic and other marine debris on the island's 2.25-km East Beach and also performed terrestrial and maritime scientific work. An embedded team of journalists from a news website in New Zealand, Stuff, produced extensive film and video footage, which was disseminated worldwide. A dive team explored the sea area, and a scientist from the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science performed telemetry and biodiversity mapping work. An artist whose work involves plastic debris, Mandy Barker, also took part in the expedition and featured "Henderson Island's everlasting plastics" in a virtual exhibition launched on 7 October 2020. In October 2021, an environmental science expedition, comprising mostly local residents, recorded marine and bird data from all four islands in the Territory. The bulk of the data was underwater camera footage taken using baited underwater remote video systems funded under the Blue Belt initiative. A visit is planned for early 2024 to remove some of the plastic pollution from Henderson Island. The last visit was in October 2023, to conduct reconnaissance for the rat eradication programme. According to the administering Power, a major rat eradication programme (funded by the Darwin Initiative of the United Kingdom) is planned for Henderson and Pitcairn Islands in 2026.

## V. Relations with international organizations and partners

47. Pitcairn is a member of the Pacific Community, which is the oldest and largest organization in the 10-member Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific, a consultative process that is headed at the political level by the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat. The Pacific Community provides technical assistance, policy advice, training and research services to 22 Pacific Island countries and territories in such

areas as health, human development, agriculture, forestry and fisheries. According to the administering Power, Pitcairn is investigating joining the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme. The following international conventions have been extended to Pitcairn: the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In May 2016, the Island Council formally requested the extension of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to Pitcairn. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Government Equalities Office are liaising with Pitcairn as part of the extension process.

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

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

48. The most recent statement by a representative of the island's Mayor was made during the Pacific regional seminar on advancing the decolonization process in the Pacific region, held in Madang, Papua New Guinea, from 18 to 20 May 2004. The statement is summarized in 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 2004 ([A/59/23](#)).

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

49. In 2023, two meetings of the United Kingdom-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council were held in London, on 11 and 12 May and on 14 and 15 November 2023, when the administering Power hosted the representatives of the Governments of its overseas territories.

50. In the communiqué adopted at the meeting held in May, 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.

51. The Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories stated that they would continue to explore 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 so wished, the United Kingdom would continue to support their requests for removal from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

52. In the joint declaration issued on 14 December 2023, following the meeting held in November, the Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories stated that the United Kingdom would support the democratically elected Governments of the overseas territories, if they so wished, in accepting additional responsibilities and greater autonomy, alongside accountability. The United Kingdom would take such steps in line with its sovereign responsibilities and international law, while ensuring that obligations were met under the Charter of the United Nations and relevant international conventions, as well as under the constitution of each overseas territory.

53. At the 8th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), on 10 October 2023, during the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the United Kingdom had a modern relationship with all its overseas territories based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to choose to remain British.

54. He added that the overseas territories had a large measure of internal self-government, subject only to the United Kingdom retaining powers that enabled it to carry out its obligations under international law. The United Kingdom Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council met annually to monitor and drive forward collective priorities for action, and the United Kingdom was committed to supporting the territories in achieving those collective priorities, including environmental protection, and to carrying out its responsibilities, including ensuring security. His Government provided financial and practical support to build local capacity and resilience, and various infrastructure projects were under way (see [A/C.4/78/SR.8](#)).

## VII. Action taken by the General Assembly

55. On 7 December 2023, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution [78/95](#) 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 2022 ([A/78/101](#)) and on the subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Pitcairn to self-determination, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with General 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 Pitcairn, 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 Pitcairn to determine freely their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions of the General 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) Welcomed all efforts by the administering Power and the territorial Government that would further devolve operational responsibilities to the Territory, with a view to gradually expanding self-government, including through the training of local personnel;

(e) 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;

(f) Also requested the administering Power to continue its assistance for the improvement of the economic, social, educational and other conditions of the population of the Territory and to continue its discussions with the territorial

Government on how best to support socioeconomic and environmental security in Pitcairn, including as regards demographic matters;

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

(h) Noted the development of a new strategy for repopulation and the creation of a child safeguarding framework in place in Pitcairn;

(i) Stressed the importance of the Special Committee being apprised of the views and wishes of the people of Pitcairn and enhancing its understanding of their conditions, including the nature and scope of the existing political and constitutional arrangements between Pitcairn 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 Pitcairn, 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 Pitcairn and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session and on the implementation of the resolution.

# Annex

## Map of Pitcairn

