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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

United States Virgin Islands

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
The Territory at a glance	3
I. Constitutional, political and legal issues	4
II. Budget	5
III. Economic conditions	6
A. General	6
B. Tourism	6
C. Manufacturing and construction	7
D. Trade, transportation and utilities	7
E. Agriculture and fisheries	7
IV. Social conditions	8
A. Labour	8
B. Education	8
C. Public health	8
D. Crime and crime prevention	9
V. Environmental protection and disaster preparedness	9

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 11 December 2024. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available at www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/documents/workingpapers.



VI.	Relations with international organizations and partners.	9
VII.	Future status of the Territory	10
A.	Position of the territorial Government.	10
B.	Position of the administering Power	10
VIII.	Action taken by the General Assembly	11
Annex		
	Map of the United States Virgin Islands	14

The Territory at a glance

Territory: The United States Virgin Islands is a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations. As an unincorporated, organized territory of the United States of America, it is administered by the Office of Insular Affairs of the United States Department of the Interior.

Geography: The Territory is located in the eastern part of the Caribbean Sea, 1,075 miles south-east of the south-eastern tip of the contiguous United States and 60 miles east of Puerto Rico. It is made up of four main islands: Saint Croix, Saint John, Saint Thomas and Water Island. The capital, Charlotte Amalie, is located on Saint Thomas.

Land area: 352 km²

Exclusive economic zone: 33,744 km²

Population: 104,917 (2023 estimate)

Life expectancy at birth: 80 years (women: 84 years; men: 77 years (2022 estimate))

Languages: English or English Creole (74.70 per cent); Spanish or Spanish Creole (16.78 per cent); French or French Creole (6.57 per cent); and other (1.95 per cent)

Capital: Charlotte Amalie

Head of territorial Government: Governor Albert Bryan Jr. (since January 2019)

Territory's delegate to the United States Congress: Stacey Plaskett (since November 2018)

Main political parties: Democratic Party; Independent Citizens' Movement; Republican Party

Elections: The most recent general elections were held in November 2024.

Legislature: Unicameral (15 senators)

Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita: \$36,983 (2022, constant (2015) dollars)

Economy: Tourism is the primary economic activity, accounting for 80 per cent of GDP and employment. The manufacturing sector consists of petroleum refining, rum distilling, textiles, electronics, pharmaceuticals and watch assembly.

Monetary unit: United States dollar

Unemployment rate: 3.7 per cent (October 2024)

Brief history: The islands belonged to Denmark from 1754 to 1917 (Danish West Indies). On 31 March 1917, the Government of Denmark transferred ownership to the United States. The United States Virgin Islands has since been an organized, unincorporated territory of the United States.

I. Constitutional, political and legal issues

1. The United States Virgin Islands is an organized, unincorporated territory of the United States of America. Under the Organic Act of the Virgin Islands (1936), its revision in 1954 and subsequent amendments to the Revised Organic Act of 1954, the Territory has a legislature, known as the Senate, which is a unicameral body comprising 15 senators elected to a two-year term by popular vote. Executive power is vested in the Governor, who, since 1970, has been elected by popular vote to a four-year term on the same ticket as the Lieutenant Governor. The Governor is limited to two consecutive terms. With the advice and consent of the Legislature, the Governor appoints the heads of the executive departments and has the power to approve or veto legislation and issue executive orders.

2. In November 2018, Albert Bryan Jr. was elected Governor, and Tregenza Roach was elected Lieutenant Governor for a four-year term. Both were re-elected for a second four-year term in November 2022. The Territory also elects a delegate to the United States House of Representatives, who is able to vote in committees. Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett won the election held on 5 November 2024 and was elected to her sixth term as delegate. The Territory's senatorial elections were also held on 5 November 2024.

3. The Territory's judicial system has a district court, a superior court and a supreme court. The supreme court, which became operational in January 2007, is the appellate court that hears appeals decided by the superior court. Its establishment eliminated federal judicial involvement in purely local legal matters. In December 2012, the President of the United States signed House of Representatives bill No. 6116 authorizing direct review by the United States Supreme Court of decisions made by the Supreme Court of the United States Virgin Islands. The legislation was sponsored by the Territory's congressional delegate.

4. Since the revision of the Organic Act of the Virgin Islands by the Government of the United States in 1954, there have been five attempts to replace it with a local constitution approved by the people of the Territory that would organize the internal mechanisms of the Government. Although the United States Congress authorized the adoption of a local constitution in 1976 under United States Public Law 94-584, none of the five attempts made was successful.

5. On 7 May 2020, the territorial Legislature adopted an Act providing for a referendum vote on convening a constitutional convention to consider adopting the Revised Organic Act of the United States Virgin Islands or portions of it as the Constitution of the Territory. The bill was signed by the Governor on 19 May 2020. At the general election held on 3 November 2020, voters were asked whether they were in favour of the Legislature enacting legislation to convene a constitutional convention to adopt the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands, 68 Stat. 497, or portions of it as the Constitution of the Virgin Islands. A majority of 72 per cent voted in favour.

6. On 20 January 2022, the Committee on Government Operations and Consumer Protection of the territorial Legislature approved and forwarded for further processing Bill No. 34-0153, entitled "An Act establishing the Sixth Constitutional Convention of the Virgin Islands; and providing for an appropriation to cover convention-related expenses". According to a press release of the territorial Government dated 2 February 2023, the Governor of the Territory approved Bill No. 34-0153, which established and provided an appropriation to fund the Sixth Constitutional Convention, although he pointed out that the measure did not have an identified adequate funding source.

7. On 19 January 2023, the Governor of the Virgin Islands signed Act No. 8681 to establish the Sixth Constitutional Convention. On 24 July 2023, he signed Act No. 8734 to amend Act No. 8681. According to Act No. 8681, as amended by Act No. 8734, the Sixth Constitutional Convention would convene on 27 January 2025 and submit a proposed Constitution to the Governor by 31 October 2025, for transmission to the President of the United States. If approved by Congress, the draft Constitution will be voted on by eligible Virgin Islands voters in a binding referendum during the general election of 2026. If approved by a majority of voters, the proposed Constitution of the Virgin Islands will become the fundamental law of the United States Virgin Islands as from 31 March 2027.

8. On 5 November 2024, voters elected 15 delegates to the Sixth Constitutional Convention, 7 from each district and 1 at-large delegate, including 5 women and 10 men. According to media reports, the elected members took their oaths of office on 28 January 2025 in order to organize and begin the work of the Sixth Constitution Convention, in accordance with Act No. 8681, as amended.

9. The Interagency Group on Insular Areas, established through Executive Order 13537 of 14 April 2010, advises the President of the United States on the establishment or implementation of policies concerning the insular areas, solicits information and advice concerning those areas from the Governors of, and other elected officials in, the insular areas and from representatives of entities or other individuals, and solicits information from executive departments or agencies for purposes of carrying out its missions, in order to help to ensure coordination and collaboration among federal agencies in addressing issues of concern to, among others, American Samoa, Guam and the United States Virgin Islands. On 21 February 2024, the Interagency Group convened its annual plenary session with the Governors of the Territories.

10. The Governor of the Territory attended the plenary session of the Interagency Group on Insular Areas on 21 February 2024, during which he emphasized the importance of reducing the local cost-share for hurricane recovery and infrastructure projects, which would increase the Territory's resilience to climate-related disasters. The Governor also stressed the need for congressional support for key initiatives, such as the rum cover-over legislation, and highlighted the ongoing challenges faced by the Territory in reopening its oil refinery on Saint Croix. He called for fair treatment from the Environmental Protection Agency to facilitate economic recovery.

II. Budget

11. The fiscal year begins on 1 October and ends on 30 September. Major sources of revenue include individual income tax, corporate income tax, real property tax and gross receipts tax. On 30 May 2024, the Governor submitted the proposed executive budget for the fiscal year 2024/25 to the Thirty-fifth Legislature. In his message to the Legislature, the Governor highlighted that the proposed fiscal year 2024/25 executive budget marked a continuation of the conservative approach to controlling government expenditure. He proposed reducing budgeted General Fund appropriations from \$974,062,924 in fiscal year 2024/25 to \$896,803,010 in fiscal year 2025/26, a reduction of approximately 8 per cent. However, he gave assurance that the budget still provided adequate funding for all essential government obligations.

III. Economic conditions

A. General

12. According to the administering Power, in his testimony before the Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance of the Legislature on 3 September 2024, the Commissioner of the Department of Finance noted that the economy had been on a positive trajectory, with output showing steady growth since the closure of the Hovensa oil refinery. It was noted that this growth had matched pre-closure levels in 2022. In addition, it was mentioned that real gross domestic product (GDP) had returned to a growth trend since 2019, after the passage of hurricanes in 2017, and that visitor arrivals had been sustained by solid demand across all major visitor markets. The labour market was showing its strongest performance in two years, with unemployment rates below pre-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic levels and more workers employed than before the pandemic first struck, in March 2020.

13. On 17 June 2024, the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the United States released a report containing GDP estimates for the United States Virgin Islands for 2022, in addition to GDP estimates by industry and compensation by industry for 2021. The Bureau noted that the real GDP for the Territory had decreased by 1.3 per cent in 2022, after increasing by 3.7 per cent in 2021. The decrease in real GDP reflected declines in exports, private fixed investment, government spending and personal consumption expenditures, which were partly offset by an increase in inventory investment. Imports, a subtraction item in the calculation of GDP, also decreased. The Bureau also noted that the Office of Insular Affairs had announced a pause in funding for the Bureau's production of GDP statistics for the Territory. The purpose of this pause was to allow for an assessment of the Territory's source data, with the aim of better supporting and investing in its economic statistics in the future. As a result, the Bureau stated that it was temporarily suspending the production of GDP statistics until funding and improved data sources became available.

B. Tourism

14. According to the proposed executive budget book for the fiscal year 2024/25, visitor arrivals reached approximately 2.4 million in the fiscal year 2023/24, marking an increase of about 677,386, or 40.2 per cent, over 2022. Moreover, visitor arrivals surpassed pre-pandemic levels in 2019 by 11.4 per cent.

15. According to the administering Power, in his testimony before the Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance on 25 June 2024, the Commissioner of the Department of Tourism said that the cruise market had grown by 13 per cent between 2019 and 2023. Saint Thomas welcomed 1,613,554 passengers in 2023, a 12.5 per cent increase over pre-pandemic numbers in 2019. Passenger arrivals in Saint Croix showed a 191 per cent increase, going from 54,827 in 2019 to 159,658 in 2023. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent shutdown of the cruise industry, the Department of Tourism has shifted its strategic focus to bolster air traffic in the Territory. In the 2023/24 winter season, spanning from December to March, there were 374,420 overnight guests, marking a 25 per cent increase from the previous year. In March 2024, the Territory achieved a new milestone by welcoming over 100,000 passengers in a single month. The hotel occupancy rate rose to 88.2 per cent in December 2023, the highest rate since May 2021. In January 2024, the hotel occupancy rate continued to rise, registering 74.5 per cent, up 10 percentage points from the previous year's rate of 64.9 per cent.

C. Manufacturing and construction

16. According to the Government Accountability Office of the United States, the closed oil refinery in the Territory (see [A/AC.109/2023/16](#), para. 20) would require a significant amount of capital investment and environmental modifications to reopen. On 16 November 2022, the Environmental Protection Agency determined that the owners and operators of the closed refinery on Saint Croix must apply for and obtain a new air pollution permit before operating the refinery. On 25 July 2023, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit ruled that the Agency had exceeded its authority under the Clean Air Act when it had told the owner of that refinery that it needed the permit.

17. According to the Division of Economic Research of the Office of Management and Budget of the United States Virgin Islands, the rum industry consists of two companies. Both distilleries have a combined production capacity of 29 million proof gallons of rum per year. Rum produced in the Territory is exported to the United States primarily in bulk and sold to local and regional bottlers for sale under a variety of brands.

18. According to the latest construction permit report of the Bureau of Economic Research, the total construction permit value in the Territory for January to September 2024 amounted to \$175,084,000. Of that figure, \$130,963,000 is attributed to private residential construction permits, \$16,442,000 to private non-residential construction permits and \$58,885,000 to public construction permits.

D. Trade, transportation and utilities

19. The United States Virgin Islands has some 1,250 km of roadways. The Territory also enjoys one of the deepest natural harbours in the Caribbean and is strategically located along the Anegada Passage, a key route for ships bound for the Panama Canal. The Territory has five major docking facilities, which can accommodate cruise ships and some naval vessels. Three of the docks are on Saint Croix: South Shore, Gallows Bay and Frederiksted. The other two are on Saint Thomas: the facilities operated in Crown Bay by the Virgin Islands Port Authority, a semi-autonomous government agency, and the West Indian Company, which is owned by the United States Virgin Islands.

E. Agriculture and fisheries

20. The Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture provides basic agricultural services and technical support to the Territory's farming community. The Department is primarily responsible for expanding the production and marketing of agricultural commodities, as well as the processing of agricultural products throughout the Territory, and for enforcing environmental protection laws relating to land, water and soil and regulatory practices relating to veterinary services.

21. The Virgin Islands Agricultural Plan was published in May 2022. The goal of the Plan is to increase agricultural productivity locally to make food security and sovereignty a reality for people living in the Territory. According to the Plan, 97 per cent of the food supply is imported. Importing food not only puts the local food supply at risk of shortages but also affects the quality of the food by reducing its freshness and nutritional value while adding extra transportation costs. Moreover, importing food has significant environmental implications, as it contributes to increased carbon emissions and pollution.

IV. Social conditions

A. Labour

22. According to the Bureau of Economic Research, 39,822 persons were employed in civilian jobs in November 2024, a decrease of 0.8 per cent from November 2023. As of November 2024, the unemployment rate was 3.5 per cent, an increase of 0.3 per cent from November 2023. According to the executive budget for the fiscal year 2024/25, the labour supply in the Territory is the most significant headwind for economic growth or lack thereof.

B. Education

23. Education in the United States Virgin Islands is compulsory and free for all children between 5 and 16 years of age. The Territory's Department of Education comprises a State-level education agency and two local education agencies, one for the Saint Thomas-Saint John district and the other for the Saint Croix district. The University of the Virgin Islands has campuses on Saint Thomas and Saint Croix and a combined full-time and part-time body of some 2,500 students.

24. According to the administering Power, during her testimony before the territorial Legislature on 2 June 2024, the Commissioner of Education reported that the Department of Education had experienced a decline in enrolment over the previous 10 years. She noted that total public school enrolment in the Territory had decreased from 14,953 in the 2013/14 school year to 10,312 in the 2023/24 school year, a drop of 4,641 students. She highlighted that the most significant decline had occurred between the 2016/17 and 2017/18 school years, with a decrease of 1,995 students, possibly due to the impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. In addition, she mentioned that enrolment in the Saint Thomas-Saint John district had stood at 5,094 in the 2022/23 school year and had increased by 136 students to 5,230 in the 2023/24 school year. In the Saint Croix district, enrolment had stood at 5,072 in the 2022/23 school year and had increased by 10 to 5,082 in the 2023/24 school year.

C. Public health

25. The Territory's Department of Health maintains facilities on Saint Thomas, Saint John and Saint Croix, as well as a long-term care facility on Saint Thomas. Outreach efforts include educational, preventive and treatment services using clinics and subdivisions to address maternal and child health, family planning, environmental health, sexually transmitted infections, HIV, tuberculosis, mental health and substance abuse. The Department administers 33 activity centres and 16 federal programmes.

26. According to the Pan American Health Organization, life expectancy at birth in 2024 was 75.7 years, lower than the average for the region of the Americas and an increase of 3.9 years over the 2000 figure. In 2024, people over 65 years of age accounted for 22.7 per cent of the total population, an increase of 14.2 percentage points compared with the year 2000. There were 110.1 women per 100 men and 137.5 older people (65 years or older) per 100 children under 15 years of age in 2024. Assuming that the population between the ages of 15 and 64 is potentially active (i.e. likely participants in the labour force), this group accounted for 60.8 per cent of the total population of the Territory in 2024 (51,634 individuals). When these figures are combined with the potentially passive population (14,007 individuals under the age of 15 and 19,265 individuals over the age of 65), the dependency ratio results in 64.4

potentially passive individuals per 100 potentially active individuals. This ratio stood at 52.8 in 2000.

27. The Healthy Virgin Islands 2030 Community Health Improvement Plan is aimed at improving the health and well-being of residents by 2030. The Plan consists of six health priorities: improve access to healthcare, including by increasing immunization rates and reducing disparities in access to care; prevent and manage chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer; improve mental health infrastructure, increase access to mental health services and address mental health comorbidities; increase the capacity to prevent oral disease and reduce the burden of dental disease; prevent accidents and reduce fatal and non-fatal unintentional injuries; and develop and sustain a robust public health infrastructure and service capacity. The Plan includes specific goals, objectives and strategies for each priority area, with measurable targets to be achieved by 2030.

28. The 2024–2029 United States Virgin Islands Cancer Plan is a comprehensive road map that is designed to guide cancer prevention and control efforts in the Territory. It outlines generalized goals, measurable objectives and evidence-based strategies for addressing the burden of cancer in the Territory. The plan is focused on four main areas: prevention; early detection; diagnosis and treatment; and survivorship, quality of life and palliative care. It serves to emphasize a collaborative approach involving healthcare providers, policymakers, community organizations and individuals to reducing cancer incidence, morbidity and mortality and to improving health outcomes for all residents of the Territory. The Plan also serves to highlight the importance of health equity, data, policy change and emergency preparedness for achieving its goals.

D. Crime and crime prevention

29. According to the proposed executive budget for the fiscal year 2024/25, the Virgin Islands Police Department is charged primarily with the enforcement of laws. The Department comprises seven divisions: the Office of the Commissioner, the Division of Police Operations – Saint Thomas – Water Island, the Division of Administration Support and Logistics, the Division of Police Operations – Saint Croix, the Division of Highway Safety, the Division of Training and the Division of Police Operations – Saint John.

V. Environmental protection and disaster preparedness

30. Responsibility for ensuring the Territory's resilience to disasters lies with the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency. The Agency ensures the Territory's ability to recover rapidly from large and small disasters by assessing and mitigating hazards, enhancing preparedness, ensuring an effective response and building the capacity to recover.

VI. Relations with international organizations and partners

31. The United States Virgin Islands is an associate member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. The Territory has observer status with the Association of Caribbean States and the Alliance of Small Island States, which serves as a platform to promote action on environmental issues, including climate change. According to information provided by the administering Power, the United States Virgin Islands received acceptance as a territorial Government with observer status at the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States in 2009.

VII. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

32. Developments regarding discussions on the future status of the United States Virgin Islands are reflected in section I.

B. Position of the administering Power

33. In a letter dated 2 November 2006 addressed to the delegate of American Samoa to the United States House of Representatives, the Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs elaborated on the position of the Government of the United States. He indicated that the status of the insular areas regarding their political relations with the federal Government was an internal United States issue and not one that came within the purview 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. He said that the Special Committee had no authority to alter in any way the relationship between the United States and those territories and had no mandate to engage the United States in negotiations on their status. He also said that, at the same time, in accordance with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations to provide regularly to the United Nations statistical and other information of a technical nature relating to the economic, social and educational conditions in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, the federal Government submitted annual updates on the Territories under its administration to the Special Committee as a demonstration of its cooperation as an administering Power and as a way of correcting any errors in information that the Special Committee might have received from other sources.

34. At the 7th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), on 14 October 2024, during the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United States said that his Government proudly supported the right to self-determination and would continue to fully uphold Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations and article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. His Government recognized the challenges faced by American Samoa, Guam and the United States Virgin Islands owing to their size, geography and limited natural resources, as well as the impact of years of slavery, colonialism and wars on Indigenous Peoples and residents. His Government's administration of American Samoa, Guam and the United States Virgin Islands had enabled the peoples of those Territories to attain a high level of political, social and economic development. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, federal COVID-19 pandemic relief and the Build Back Better Act all demonstrated the strong ties between the Territories and the rest of the United States. The current Administration, as part of its policies aimed at recognizing and remediating racial and ethnic injustice, had acknowledged federal actions that had been inconsistent with the protection of equal rights and opportunities for United States citizens and nationals who were Indigenous Peoples of the Territories.

35. He added that the United States recognized its obligations to promote self-determination for the peoples of American Samoa, Guam and the United States Virgin Islands. Although they had the status of Non-Self-Governing Territories, they were locally self-governing, with residents free to decide on their priorities and how resources were spent. The Territories also enjoyed federal political representation. Their elected representatives to the House of Representatives served on several important committees, where they participated in debates on national legislation. The Governors of the Territories were regularly invited to meetings of the Senate and House

committees of jurisdiction to report on territorial status and to advocate federal policy initiatives. The Interagency Group on Insular Areas hosted the Governors and United States representatives from each Territory at an annual senior plenary session, where they had an audience with representatives of the Administration and could register priorities and concerns related to the execution of federal policies and initiatives in the Territories. The United States would continue to support American Samoa, Guam and the United States Virgin Islands to improve the quality of life of their peoples (see [A/C.4/79/SR.7](#)).

36. At the 10th meeting, on 17 October 2024, the representative reiterated his delegation's concern that the draft resolutions to be adopted at the meeting placed too much weight on independence as a one-size-fits-all status option for Territories. He said that, as stated in the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the people of a Non-Self-Governing Territory could validly opt for free association as an alternative to independence or any other political status, including integration with the administering State, provided that that status was freely determined by the people. He stated that Territories could speak for themselves and that the General Assembly should therefore not press for any particular outcome, but respect the free will of the people (see [A/C.4/79/SR.10](#)).

VIII. Action taken by the General Assembly

37. On 4 December 2024, the General Assembly adopted its resolution [79/112](#) without a vote on the basis of the report of the Special Committee for 2024 ([A/79/23](#)) and the subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. In the resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of the United States Virgin Islands 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 the United States Virgin Islands, 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 the United States Virgin Islands 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) Requested the administering Power to regularly provide the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples with relevant updates on the work of the Sixth Constitutional Convention, established following the referendum held in November 2020, and to assist the Territory in this process;

(e) Also 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) Welcomed the establishment of the Office of Self-Determination and Constitutional Development in the University of the Virgin Islands, with funding from the administering Power, to address the issue of self-determination, including political status and constitutional education;

(g) Reiterated its call for the inclusion of the Territory in regional programmes of the United Nations Development Programme, consistent with the participation of other Non-Self-Governing Territories;

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

(i) 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;

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

(k) 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 the United States Virgin Islands, and encouraged the administering Power to facilitate visiting and special missions to the Territory;

(l) 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;

(m) 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 supports, 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;

(n) 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;

(o) Reiterated its call upon the administering Power, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and regional organizations to provide all the assistance necessary to the Territory, support the recovery and

rebuilding efforts and enhance capabilities for emergency preparedness and risk reduction, in particular in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria that impacted the Territory in 2017;

(p) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of the United States Virgin Islands and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its eightieth session and on the implementation of the present resolution.

Map of the United States Virgin Islands

