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Bermuda

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 9 December 2019. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available at <http://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/documents/workingpapers>.



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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 John Rankin (since December 2016)

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 km²

Exclusive economic zone: 450,370 km²

Population: 63,921 (2017 estimate)

Life expectancy at birth: 81.5 years (men: 78.4 years; women: 84.8 years (2019 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)

Main political parties: Progressive Labour Party; One Bermuda Alliance

Elections: Most recent: 18 July 2017; next: due to be held by July 2022

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: \$98,125 (2017)

Economy: Financial services, tourism

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

Unemployment rate: 5.2 per cent (May 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.

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. The general elections were held in the Territory to elect 36 members to the House of Assembly on 18 July 2017, and the Progressive Labour Party won 24 seats. David Burt of the Progressive Labour Party took office as Premier the next day, succeeding Michael Dunkley of One Bermuda Alliance, who had been the Premier since 20 May 2014. At the age of 38, Mr. Burt became the youngest Premier of Bermuda. As a result of the by-elections held on 7 June 2018 and 21 November 2019, the Progressive Labour Party holds 25 out of the 36 seats in the House of Assembly.

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 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 current 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, underscored that, with regard to the public beneficial ownership register, the constitutional arrangement of Bermuda did not allow the United Kingdom to legislate on behalf of the Territory. The territorial Government would hence resist every effort of the administering Power to do so. He added 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. Given the lack of clarity around "Brexit", he explained that the relationship of Bermuda with the United Kingdom remained fraught with uncertainty. He 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 2019/20 budget statement of the territorial Government, delivered on 22 February 2019, for the 2018/19 fiscal year, the revenue was forecast at \$1.079 billion. The operating expenses of the Government for the same year were projected at \$932 million. The revised capital expenditure was predicted at \$61.7 million. Debt service costs were expected to be in line with the original budget estimate of \$188 million. Accordingly, the revised estimate of the overall deficit was \$102.6 million. The total debt at the end of the 2018/19 fiscal year net of sinking fund payments was \$2.461 billion.

III. Economic conditions

A. General

10. 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 industry shared 0.8 per cent of the nominal gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017.

11. As indicated in the 2019/20 budget statement, the territorial Government lowered its GDP growth estimate for 2018 by 1 per cent, to 0.5–1 per cent. This reduction followed an increase in GDP of 2.5 per cent in 2017, to \$4.7 billion. According to the territorial Government, the 2018 GDP estimate highlighted the

urgency of the need to invest in creating a more diversified economy to create stronger economic growth for the island and to reduce the Territory's debt.

12. According to the administering Power, the territorial Government is continuing its two-track strategy to improve the economy while simultaneously reigning in government expenditure and public debt.

B. Financial services

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. According to the 2019/20 budget statement, 827 new international companies and partnerships were registered in 2018, representing a 5.5 per cent increase compared with the 784 registrations in 2017.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. 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. According to the information provided by the administering Power, at the end of 2016, Bermuda had 106 tax information exchange multilateral agreement partners through its participation in the Convention with the Group of 20 countries, members of OECD and all States members of the European Union and other countries. The ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption by the United Kingdom was extended to Bermuda on 4 June 2018.

C. Tourism

21. Government statistics indicated that, in 2018, 770,700 travellers visited Bermuda (up by 77,753, or 10 per cent, from 2017), 63 per cent of whom arrived by cruise ship (484,339 visitors). The estimated total visitor spending amounted to \$505.3 million, up from \$431 million in 2017. Also in 2018, the direct contribution of the tourism sector to the Territory's GDP grew to \$386 million, up by 12.5 per cent from 2017. The largest nominal increases in value added were recorded for passenger transport services, accommodation services and retail trade. The 3,762 tourism-related jobs in Bermuda represented 11.1 per cent of the total number of jobs in the Territory in 2018, up from 2,996 in 2017.

22. The official statistics of the territorial Government indicated that, in the first three quarters of 2019, approximately 605,000 visitors had come to Bermuda, including approximately 447,000 cruise passengers.

D. Construction

23. Government statistics indicated that the total value of new construction projects that had started in the first six months of 2018 fell by 89.5 per cent, from \$564.5 million to \$59.4 million. This significant decrease was due to the redevelopment of the airport and a hotel development project, both of which had started in the second quarter of 2017, with a total value of over \$500 million. The estimated value of construction work implemented in 2018 was \$93.6 million. The majority of the growth can be attributed to work performed on the airport redevelopment project.

E. Transport and communications

24. 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 2017, a total of 49,019 road vehicles were registered, compared with 47,482 in the previous year, representing an increase for the third year in a row; 2015 had marked the first increase in six years.

25. 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.

26. According to statistics from the territorial Government, in 2016, 83 per cent of households owned landline phones (compared with 87 per cent in 2014/15), mobile telephone ownership was at 89 per cent (up from 86 per cent in 2014/15), and 92 per cent of households and 100 per cent of businesses had access to the Internet. The number of telephone subscribers in 2016/17 was 32,810, a decrease from 33,534 in 2015/16.

IV. Social conditions

A. General

27. According to the 2019/20 budget statement, the Ministry of Education is to be allocated a budget of \$136.9 million, equivalent to 12.3 per cent of the total government expenditure estimated for 2019/20. In addition, the Ministry of Labour, Community Affairs and Sports is to receive an estimated budget of \$18.9 million, out of which \$4.3 million are earmarked for workforce development.

B. Labour

28. Data from the 2018 employment survey by the territorial Government indicate that the total number of jobs in Bermuda increased slightly, from 33,653 in 2017 to 33,810 in 2018, a significantly lower level than during the peak of 40,213 witnessed in 2008. The number of Bermudian job holders decreased by 0.4 per cent, from 23,671 in 2017 to 23,579 in 2018. According to the labour force survey report of the territorial Government, the unemployment rate stood at 5.2 per cent in May 2019, the same level as in the previous year. Among Bermudians, the unemployment rate was slightly higher, indicated at 5.6 per cent in May 2019, whereas it amounted to 3.8 per cent among non-Bermudians at the same point in time. The median gross annual income of job holders was \$65,338 in 2018, up by 2 per cent from \$64,250 in 2017. The median income of Bermudian job holders was \$61,500, while permanent resident certificate holders, non-Bermudian spouses of Bermudians and other non-Bermudians had higher median incomes of \$69,783, \$78,417 and \$80,328, respectively.

29. In 2018, the Department of Workforce Development, which was then part of the Ministry of Education and Workforce Development and has since been moved to the Ministry of Labour, Community Affairs and Sports, developed a national strategic workforce development plan. At the time of reporting, the corresponding legislation was being drafted to create a national workforce development board, which will replace the national training board and provide strategic direction for the workforce development programmes for the Territory.

30. 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.

31. 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

32. The 2019/20 budget statement indicated that, for that fiscal year, about \$114 million would be provided to the Department of Education to support its overall objective of providing strategic leadership, supervision and policy direction for the delivery of a high-quality educational curriculum.

33. Education in Bermuda is compulsory, and it is free in public schools for all children from 5 to 18 years of age. There are 10 preschools, 18 primary schools, 5 middle schools, 1 special-needs school and 2 senior secondary schools in the public school system, which, according to the administering Power, had a student population of 4,945 in September 2017. 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 2017, which included public and private schools and Bermuda College, was 8,718.

34. 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

35. According to the 2019/20 budget statement, the budget allocated to the Ministry of Health was \$241.6 million (21.7 per cent of the total estimated government expenditure), a significant increase from its budget for 2018/19 of \$190 million, representing 16.1 per cent of the total government expenditure. 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 and the launch of the Bermuda Health Plan is expected for the third quarter of 2020.

36. According to the administering Power, Bermuda is 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.

37. Bermuda has an ageing population and a low fertility rate. The 2016 population census data indicated that 17 per cent of the population was 65 years or older in 2016, compared with 13.5 per cent in 2010. 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 2019, life expectancy at birth was projected at 81.5 years, with men at 78.4 years and women at 84.8 years. Life expectancy is

reported as being four years greater for the white population than for the remainder of the population.

E. Crime and public safety

38. 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.

39. 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.

40. In 2019, the work of the United Kingdom-funded office of the law enforcement adviser was affected by the retirement of the post holder and the process of hiring a successor. RFA *Mounts Bay* has been stationed in the Caribbean since January 2017, 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.

41. In September 2019, Bermuda was hit by Hurricane Humberto. According to the administering Power, 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

42. 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.

43. 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.

V. Environment

44. 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.

45. 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. The fourth joint meeting of the Commission and the signatories to the Hamilton Declaration was hosted by the Government of Bermuda and the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences in Saint George's, Bermuda, on 15 March 2019.

46. 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.

47. 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.

48. 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

49. Bermuda maintains a defence regiment of some 340 soldiers, namely the Royal Bermuda Regiment, which includes 30 full-time soldiers, with the remainder being part-time. 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 proposing a reduced size of 327 soldiers and officers in total, approximately 70 fewer soldiers than prior to the review, with two main objectives, namely to support military aid to the civil authority and to provide humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

50. 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 May and June 2019, for the first time in 13 years, the Regiment participated in “Trade Winds”, a training exercise designed to build training capacity, enhance relationships and support cooperation to better respond to natural disasters and land and maritime threats in the Caribbean.

51. In addition, according to the administering Power, the Royal Bermuda Regiment Boat Troop assists the Bermuda Police Service with inshore maritime patrolling and policing requirements. According to the administering Power, at the time of writing, the creation of a Bermuda Coast Guard was under way, with the Regiment working together with the Police Service to protect the Territory’s inshore maritime area.

VII. Relations with international organizations and partners

52. 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.

53. The representative of Bermuda attended the fortieth regular meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, held in Gros Islet, Saint Lucia, from 3 to 5 July 2019. The Conference issued a communiqué in which the Heads of Government expressed their deep concern at the continued blacklisting of some of the member States and associate members and viewed such action as a clear and direct threat to the economic well-being of those countries and the region.

54. As a Non-Self-Governing Territory of the United Kingdom, Bermuda is associated with the European Union but is not a part of it. According to the administering Power, the United Kingdom and its overseas territories have continued their dialogue on the implications for the latter of the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union. The administering Power reiterated its commitment to achieving an outcome that worked for all parts of the British family.

VIII. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

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

B. Position of the administering Power

56. According to the administering Power, owing to the general election held in the United Kingdom on 12 December 2019, the seventh meeting of the United Kingdom-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council was postponed until the first quarter of 2020, when the administering Power will host the representatives of the Governments of its overseas territories to discuss a wide range of policy issues, among them the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union, environmental matters and other pressing issues.

57. At the 7th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), on 15 October 2019, during the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the relationship of the United Kingdom 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. She added that the Joint Ministerial Council was the primary forum for annual high-level political dialogue between the United Kingdom and the overseas territories and had a mandate to monitor and advance collective priorities, in the spirit of partnership.

58. She went on to say that, in the communiqué adopted at the sixth meeting of the Joint Ministerial Council, the Governments of the United Kingdom and the overseas territories had reiterated their commitment to a modern political partnership and their continued support for the constitutional arrangements in the territories, under which powers were devolved to the maximum extent possible consistent with British sovereignty.

59. She stated that her Government's fundamental responsibility and objective under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, 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 and were being supported by her Government in those areas. She explained that her Government was fully committed to involving all overseas territories in the negotiations on leaving the European Union. To that end, the administering Power had established a joint ministerial committee on European Union negotiations to discuss the priorities of overseas territories.

IX. Action taken by the General Assembly

60. On 13 December 2019, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution [74/100](#), 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 2019 ([A/74/23](#)) 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 Bermuda 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-fifth session and on the implementation of resolution [74/100](#).

