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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 23 December 2021. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available at 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 Rena Lalgie (since December 2020)

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

Land area: 53.35 km²

Exclusive economic zone: 450,370 km²

Population: 64,055 (August 2021)

Life expectancy at birth: 82.9 years (men: 80.0 years; women: 85.9 years (2020))

Ethnic composition: Approximately 52 per cent black, 31 per cent white, 9 per cent mixed races and 8 per cent other races (2016 census)

Language: English

Capital: Hamilton

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

Main political parties: Progressive Labour Party; One Bermuda Alliance

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

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

Gross domestic product per capita: \$107,435 (2020)

Economy: Financial services, tourism

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

Unemployment rate: 7.9 per cent (November 2020)

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

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

I. Constitutional, legal and political issues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the Territory. In an interview in June 2018, the Premier, reiterating the above-mentioned position, stated that, while independence was an ultimate aim and objective of the Progressive Labour Party, it was not part of the current mandate of the Party and that Bermuda would not pursue independence during the term of his office in order to address more important issues.

8. At the Caribbean regional seminar held by the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in the Parish of St. John, Dominica, from 25 to 27 August 2021, a representative of the territorial Government, Thomas Christopher Famous, stated that, although others had spoken on behalf of overseas territories and painted a picture that all was well, world events in the past four years had shown otherwise, citing Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. He also stated that, in February 2019, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament of the United Kingdom had attempted to dictate to the peoples of the overseas territories, with recommendations that would adversely affect them economically, socially and politically.

II. Budget

9. The fiscal year of the Territory begins in April. According to the 2021/22 budget statement of the territorial Government, delivered on 26 February 2021, for the 2021/22 fiscal year, the revenue was forecast at \$998.9 million. This is \$123.3 million (11.0 per cent) less than the 2020/21 original estimate. The most significant decreases are in relation to the continued impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the global economy through the lack of cruise and air travel (forecast to be down \$20.7 million, compared to the 2020/21 original budget) as well as customs duty and payroll tax (forecast to be down \$34.4 million and \$19.3 million, respectively).

10. For 2021/22, the total expenditure, including debt service of \$127.8 million and capital investment of \$92.9 million, is estimated at \$1.1 billion, which is \$18.6 million (1.6 per cent) lower than the 2020/21 original estimate, primarily due to the efforts by the territorial Government to cut expenditure across all ministries by an average of 5.1 per cent and lower COVID-19 related expenses as the COVID-19 vaccine was more widely distributed. The operating expenditure is forecast to be \$888.0 million, representing \$47.6 million (5.1 per cent) lower than the 2020/21 original estimate.

11. The budget deficit for 2021/22 is expected to be \$124.5 million. In 2020/21, net debt was expected to stand at \$3.0 billion as of 31 March 2021 and the Sinking Fund balance was expected to be approximately \$348.8 million. According to the administering Power, the economic impact of COVID-19 is expected to have continued knock-on effects on the 2021/22 budget. It is estimated in the 2021/22 budget document that, as at 31 March 2022, gross public debt will remain at the same level as the previous year, at \$3.35 billion, and debt will be \$3.1 billion, \$370.0 million below the debt ceiling.

12. Unbudgeted COVID-19 expenditures stood at \$127.2 million, which included (a) payment of unemployment benefits (a first in Bermuda), (b) purchase of personal protective equipment, (c) provision of COVID-19 testing, quarantine facilities and vaccination services, (d) embodying of the Royal Bermuda Regiment, (e) enhanced cleaning contracts, (f) grant funding for the business sustainability and continuity funding programme of the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation, and (g) funding for the Bermuda Airport Authority.

III. Economic conditions

A. General

13. The economy of Bermuda is based primarily on the provision of financial services for international businesses and on tourism. According to the administering Power, the industrial sector is small and agriculture is limited, since only about 20 per cent of the land is arable. According to data from the territorial Government, the agriculture, forestry and fishing industries shared 0.3 per cent of the nominal gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020 and those industries increased by \$0.2 million (1.4 per cent), primarily due to a rise in crop and animal raising activities.

14. The territorial Government estimated that its GDP had decreased by an average of 8.1 per cent in real terms in the first three quarters of 2020, due to significantly reduced expenditure on goods and services in the tourism sector.

15. In 2020, the Minister of Finance established a COVID-19 Economic Advisory Committee to provide insight and expert advice on how to protect jobs and stimulate economic activity during the economic crisis stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

16. The territorial Government developed an Economic Recovery Plan to address the impact of the pandemic together with the structural and systemic issues that had been constraining growth. The plan combined fiscal responsibility with proposals for growth, employment and greater economic equity. The plan has been guided by six key principles: combating COVID-19 as a priority; reducing the cost of living; fairness and equity; financial viability; fiscal prudence; and timeliness.

B. Financial services

17. Bermuda is one of the world's leading international financial and business centres. According to the administering Power, the sector accounts for about 41 per cent of its GDP. Bermuda is also one of the major jurisdictions worldwide in the fields of large-scale insurance and reinsurance.

18. 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.

19. According to the 2021/22 budget statement, 733 new international companies and partnerships were registered in 2020, compared with 681 in 2019. The total number of international companies and partnerships stood at 11,874 at the end of 2020, representing a growth of 0.5 per cent.

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. 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.

23. 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. On 14 December 2020, the Government of the United Kingdom published a draft Order in Council setting out a framework for the registers. By that date, the Governments of the permanently inhabited overseas territories had already committed themselves to introducing publicly accessible registers; the Government of the United Kingdom is assisting the overseas territories in order to meet the commitments, where required.

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

C. Tourism

25. The territorial Government stated that, in 2020, the tourism industry was severely affected by the impact of government measures aimed at controlling the spread of COVID-19, including the restriction on commercial flights, limitations on business operations in the interest of public health and restrictions on movement with the introduction of shelter-in-place and curfew guidelines. Those restrictions led to a significant decrease in the contribution of tourism to total GDP, falling from 5.1 per cent in 2019 to 1.8 per cent in 2020. According to the 2021/22 budget statement, in 2020, total visitor air and cruise arrivals fell by 84.4 per cent and 98.3 per cent, respectively, and spending was only \$69.8 million, an 86.6 per cent decline from the previous year.

26. The official statistics of the territorial Government indicated that, in the first three quarters of 2021, 45,713 visitors had come to Bermuda, including 2,710 cruise passengers. According to the administering Power, the significant reduction is a result of the global decline in tourism due to COVID-19, including the pause in the global cruise ship industry for most of 2020 and early 2021.

D. Construction

27. The value of new construction projects that had been started during the first three quarters of 2020 declined by 45.4 per cent to \$48.5 million from \$88.9 million during the same period in 2019. During the same period, the estimated value of construction work put in place also decreased by 42.2 per cent from \$183.3 million in 2019 to \$105.9 million in 2020. According to the administering Power, the majority of the reduction can be attributed to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to lockdowns, quarantine and record unemployment.

E. Transport and communications

28. With a network of some 200 km of paved public roads and 400 km of private roads, Bermuda has a high road traffic density, with approximately 79 vehicles per km in 2016. Restrictions on car ownership to one per household, coupled with a policy of allowing no rental cars, have resulted in the development of a public transportation system of buses and ferries. In 2016, Bermuda amended its legislation (Motor Car Act 1951) to allow the rental of mini cars for the first time. On 20 April 2017, the Motor Car (Minicar) Regulations 2017 came into effect. In 2019, a total of 49,647 road vehicles were registered, compared with 49,087 in the previous year, representing an increase for the fourth year in a row.

29. 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.

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

IV. Social conditions

A. General

31. For 2021/22, the Ministry of Education is to be allocated a budget of \$128.1 million, equivalent to 11.4 per cent of the estimated total government expenditure. In addition, the Ministry of Labour is to receive an estimated budget of \$61.7 million, of which \$3.6 million is allocated to workforce development. The Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports is to receive an estimated budget of \$12.9 million.

B. Labour

32. The total number of filled jobs in Bermuda decreased by 5.7 per cent, from 34,378 in 2019, to 32,427 in 2020. The number of Bermudian job holders decreased by 4.6 per cent from 23,841 in 2019, to 22,750 in 2020. In November 2020, the unemployment rate stood at 7.9 per cent and for Bermudians slightly higher at 9.6 per cent. Bermudians recorded job losses of 1,091. The 2020 median income for all job holders was \$65,068, a 3.8 per cent increase from \$62,693 in 2019, which is attributed

to a significant reduction in the total number of jobs filled within service occupations, the occupational group with the lowest median income. The median gross annual income of Bermudian job holders was \$61,811, while non-Bermudians, including permanent resident certificate holders, non-Bermudian spouses of Bermudians and other non-Bermudians, had higher median incomes of \$75,141, \$79,135 and 67,053, respectively.

33. 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.

34. 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. Amendments to the Employment Act 2000 to strengthen employee benefits and protect all employees in Bermuda's labour force came into effect in June 2021. 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

35. For the fiscal year 2021/22, about \$128.1 million (down by \$9.35 million from 2020/21) would be provided to the Ministry of Education. Education in Bermuda is compulsory for children from 5 to 16 years of age, and it is free in public schools for all children up to 19 years of age. There are 10 preschools, 18 primary schools, 5 middle schools, 1 special-needs school and 2 senior secondary schools as well as 2 alternative schools in the public school system, which, according to the administering Power, had a student population of 4,630 in September 2019. There are a number of private schools, including six offering early primary education, serving some 40 per cent of the pupils of compulsory school age. Those institutions receive no government funding. The total school enrolment in 2019, which included public and private schools and Bermuda College, was 9,361.

36. 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 2022/23 academic year.

D. Public health

37. The budget allocated to the Ministry of Health for the year 2021/22 was \$187.2 million (16.4 per cent of the total estimated expenditure), which is a decrease of \$5 million from its original budget for 2020/21. The Ministry of Health represented the largest share of the government budget for 2021/22. 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.

38. The territorial Government indicates that Bermuda has the second most expensive health system in the world, while it ranks thirteenth in life expectancy. In 2020, of the adult population, 17 per cent have chronic diseases, a 50 per cent decrease from 35 per cent in 2019. According to the administering Power, health costs consume 11.5 per cent of GDP.

39. Bermuda has an ageing population and a low fertility rate. According to the administering Power, the population projection indicated that 20.4 per cent of the population was 65 years of age or older in 2020, compared with 19.6 per cent in 2019. Furthermore, in 2020, the total fertility rate was 1.4 births per woman, which is below the replacement level of 2.1 births per woman and life expectancy at birth was projected at 82.9 years, with men at 80.0 years and women at 85.9 years. Life expectancy is reported as being four years greater for the white population than for the remainder of the population.

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

E. Crime and public safety

41. The Ministry of National Security works to ensure safety and security in Bermuda. The Ministry oversees several departments and agencies to achieve its goals: the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service, the Department of Corrections, the Royal Bermuda Regiment, the Bermuda Police Service and the Police Complaints Authority.

42. The Bermuda Police Service remains committed to ensuring public safety through strong enforcement, community engagement and rigorous investigations leading to convictions. According to the strategic and operational plan 2021–2026, the Service has five priorities: (a) reducing serious crime and protecting vulnerable persons; (b) raising confidence in police; (c) reducing harm on the roads; (d) working in partnership with other agencies; and (e) developing digital policing. An interagency gang enforcement team tackles gang and gun violence.

43. The Government of the United Kingdom has indicated its commitment to providing assistance to the overseas territories to deal with major storms and other disasters. In 2021, HMS *Medway* and RFA *Wave Knight* were stationed in the Caribbean as part of the North Atlantic patrol tasking of the Royal Navy, ensuring a year-round maritime presence of the United Kingdom to support the overseas territories to prepare for and respond to the threat of hurricanes and other disasters and to provide humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and crisis communications support in the region.

F. Human rights and related issues

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

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

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

V. Environment

47. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is responsible for the management and regulation of fisheries, marine conservation and heritage, terrestrial conservation and nature reserve management, pollution control, agriculture, animals, plants and the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo.

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

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

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

2021, the territorial Government announced that the Tynes Bay plant was in a critical state which could require an investment of as much as \$150 million for a full replacement.

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

52. Bermuda was the first Territory to join the Blue Shield maritime domain awareness programme, an initiative of the Government of the United Kingdom aimed at tackling illegal fishing and other unlawful activities around the overseas territories.

VI. Military issues

53. According to the administering Power, Bermuda maintains a defence regiment of some 366 soldiers, namely the Royal Bermuda Regiment, which includes 34 full-time soldiers, with the remainder being part-time reservists. The Regiment is organized in two operational companies of about 100 soldiers each, supported by a logistics company and a training wing. The Regiment had consisted of both conscripted and volunteer members until conscription was suspended in 2015. Under the Defence Amendment Act, which became operative on 1 July 2018, voluntary enlistment is the only means by which a man or woman can enlist in the Regiment. The Regiment conducted a strategic review in the first half of 2018, which was updated in 2020 with a revised target strength of 420 personnel. Its two main objectives are force protection and provision of humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

54. 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.

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

VII. Relations with international organizations and partners

56. 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. In addition, Bermuda participates in the Sea Turtle Conservancy, the Caribbean-United States Security Cooperation Dialogue, the International Trade Union Confederation, the International Criminal Police Organization and the International Olympic Committee.

VIII. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

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

B. Position of the administering Power

58. The 2021 meeting of the United Kingdom-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council was held in London on 16 and 17 November 2021, when the administering Power hosted the representatives of the Governments of its overseas territories. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom gave the opening address and participants held wide-ranging discussions on such topics as climate change and the environment, economic resilience and health care, including the response to the pandemic. According to the administering Power, the statement made by the Duke of Cambridge at the meeting, following discussions at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, hosted in 2021 by the United Kingdom, showed the importance placed by the United Kingdom on the need to tackle climate change, its relationship with the overseas territories and its recognition of their significant contribution to its biodiversity.

59. In the communiqué adopted at the meeting, 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.

60. The Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories committed themselves to continuing 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 wished so, the United Kingdom would continue to support their requests for removal of the Territory from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

61. At the 11th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), on 25 October 2021, during the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the relationship of his Government with its overseas territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to choose to remain British.

62. He stated that his Government's responsibility was to ensure the security and good governance of the overseas territories and their peoples and that, during the pandemic, the United Kingdom had ensured that none of its overseas territories ran short of personal protective equipment, testing supplies or medical equipment and had delivered vaccines to all of them, including Pitcairn and Tristan da Cunha, which were among the most remote island communities on Earth. He also stated 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.

63. He added that, while the United Kingdom would carry out all the responsibilities of the sovereign Power, the Governments of the United Kingdom and its overseas

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

IX. Action taken by the General Assembly

64. On 9 December 2021, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution [76/92](#), 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 2021 ([A/76/23](#)) and the subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. In that resolution, the Assembly:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(l) Took into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, stressed the importance of fostering the economic and social sustainable development of the Territory by promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion and promoting the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems that supported, *inter alia*, economic, social and human development, while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration, restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges, and strongly urged the administering Power to refrain from undertaking any kind of illicit, harmful and unproductive activities, including the use of the Territory as an international financial centre, that were not aligned with the interest of the people of the Territory;

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

(n) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of Bermuda and to report thereon to the Assembly at its seventy-seventh session and on the implementation of resolution [76/92](#).

Annex

Map of Bermuda

