

UN TURKADN

OCT - 9 1980



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

UN/SA COLLECTION



Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.109/636/Add.2
1 October 1980

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH
REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES
AND PEOPLES

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION
TO THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS, 1980

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>
INTRODUCTION)
I. INFORMATION ON THE TERRITORY) /See A/AC.109/636/
II. ACTIVITIES OF THE VISITING MISSION)
III. DISCUSSIONS HELD AT LONDON ON 27 MAY 1980) /See A/AC.109/636/Add.1/
IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	416 - 440
A. Constitutional and political evolution	416 - 429
B. Economic situation	430 - 434
C. Social situation	435 - 440

Annexes

I. ITINERARY OF THE VISITING MISSION	
II. MAP OF THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS	
III. STATEMENT MADE BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE VISITING MISSION ON 16 APRIL 1980	/See A/AC.109/636/Add.3/
IV. EXPLANATION SUBMITTED TO THE VISITING MISSION OF POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS	

CONTENTS (continued)

Annexes (continued)

- V. COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS
- VI. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS
- VII. TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS: GOVERNMENT REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, 1976-1980 [See A/AC.109/636/Add.3]
- VIII. TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS: LABOUR FORCE BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS, ISLAND AND SEX, DECEMBER 1978
- IX. TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS: LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION, APRIL 1970 AND DECEMBER 1978

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Constitutional and political evolution

416. The Mission was informed of recent developments in the Territory, including in particular the recent visit to London of two missions, one from the Government and the other composed of members of the Opposition.

417. The aim of the mission headed by the Chief Minister was to obtain a larger measure of self-government through constitutional changes that would give the locally elected government more control over the management of the country's finances and the development of its economy. According to the account given to the Visiting Mission by the Chief Minister, the United Kingdom Government's response to this request was that such changes would amount to full internal self-government, which could only be conceded if the Chief Minister and his party committed themselves to accepting independence as the sequel to an 18-month period of internal self-government.

418. The Chief Minister and other members of his Government also explained that if the Territory were to accept the formula the United Kingdom Government had offered, an "independence package" would be worked out which would bring in, during the period of internal self-government, a substantial sum of development aid to improve the country's infrastructure. If the formula were to be rejected, it had been made clear that British aid would dwindle over the next few years.

419. The government mission felt that, given the alternatives presented to it, it had no choice but to accept the "independence package".

420. During its visit to London, the Opposition party was informed by the United Kingdom Government of the talks held a few months earlier with the territorial Government. The Opposition party told the Mission that, had it been in power, it would not have accepted the formula suggested by the United Kingdom.

421. It appears that, following the two missions, the question of independence has suddenly become the major issue of political debate in the Territory and will be a major factor in the upcoming elections. Both politicians and the electorate seem to believe that the people will give their verdict on the subject at the elections, which have therefore acquired a unique significance. One of the ministers informed the Visiting Mission that he would therefore like to see the elections held under the supervision of the United Nations.

422. Wherever it held public meetings, the Mission could see that the main concern of the population was to give its views on the question of independence.

423. The overwhelming majority of those who expressed their views at the meetings took the position that they did not wish the Territory to be independent in the present circumstances. The same view was also expressed during the conversations which the Mission held with individuals and groups.

424. Most speakers justified their opinion with essentially economic and social reasons: lack of infrastructure (deep-water harbour, airports and roads); few viable industries or exports; lack of doctors and engineers; public health problems; and inadequate education.

425. However, several speakers touched upon what they saw as essentially political problems which would affect the economic and social framework of an independent Turks and Caicos Islands, namely: a lack of confidence, based in part on the perception of inadequate political education and experience, in the ability of Turks and Caicos islanders to run the country without outside help or protection; their helplessness against external threats, in particular to their fishing grounds, which provided their food and basic export earnings; and their inability to cope with organized crime, which was using the islands as a transit point in the international drug trade and which, they felt, posed serious security and social problems.

426. Although in most cases, especially on South Caicos and Providenciales, the population in general spoke against independence, some speakers, notably in Grand Turk and Salt Cay, stressed the administering Power's responsibility for years of neglect leading to the present situation.

427. In visiting the various islands, the Mission found that a sense of national unity had not been well established. The Mission feels that there is a clear need for promoting national unity and adhesion in the Territory.

428. The members of the territorial Government and elected members of the Opposition party as well as the people of the various islands invariably expressed the view that while independence in the future was inevitable they did not want it at the current stage.

429. The Mission accordingly wishes to recommend:

(a) That the political education of the people of the Territory be intensified so that they may become fully aware of their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with their fully expressed wishes;

(b) That efforts be made to safeguard the political evolution of the islands from external influences which either force or retard its natural course;

(c) That the territorial Government be granted constitutional changes towards greater self-government, without any conditions being imposed by the administering Power; such self-government should give the locally elected representatives more power, especially to initiate and carry forward the economic and social development of the Territory.

B. Economic situation

430. The Mission visited the crafts centre on Grand Turk, the fish processing plants and customs house on South Caicos, the former site of the salt extraction

industry on Salt Cay and the future site of the Club Méditerranée complex on Providenciales. It saw all the airports of the Territory and also saw for itself the condition of the roads. It stayed in the hotels, which are considered the main tourist assets at this time.

431. The Mission wishes to observe that urgent steps must be taken to strengthen and develop the economy of the islands as the Territory has almost no agriculture or industry, nor the infrastructure and communications systems which are requisite for an accelerated development.

432. Development aid at its present level has not satisfied the urgent needs of the country; bilateral aid has not been possible because of the Territory's colonial status, and multilateral aid, from the United Nations and other international agencies, has been limited by the artificially high per capita gross national product due to the extremely small size of the territorial population.

433. In the light of these findings and the information gathered in its meetings with members of the Government, the Opposition, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chief Secretary and the Financial Secretary, as well as its public meetings, the Mission thinks that the economic situation of the Territory is a matter requiring urgent attention.

434. Accordingly, the Mission wishes to make the following recommendations:

(a) The administering Power should take urgent steps to establish an infrastructure on which a viable economy can be built;

(b) The locally elected Government should play the key role in the selection and implementation of all development projects; it should be able to determine the order of priorities on the basis of its knowledge of local needs, and draw up plans and allocate financial resources accordingly;

(c) To that end, the administering Power should take immediate steps to enable the Territory to receive both bilateral and multilateral aid. The administering Power should enlist the maximum possible international aid;

(d) The administering Power in particular, and all other present and potential donors, should consider giving "untied" aid. Especially as regards the aid now received from the United Kingdom, it would be most useful in view of the relatively small sums of the fund involved, if the Territory could use it to make purchases on the open market. By reducing both time and freight costs, this would make for a far more effective use of the aid given by the administering Power;

(e) The attempts now being made to revive the agriculture and the traditional industries of the islands should receive encouragement from the administering Power and international agencies. Given careful nurture and attention, these industries should form the basis for the long-term development of the economy and help it in its progress towards self-reliance.

C. Social situation

435. The Mission found that the lack of an adequate infrastructure was an impediment to social and civic development. With the exception of Grand Turk, water supply and electricity did not reach most settlements; most roads were unpaved, making communications extremely difficult. Access to the islands is only possible by air, which is expensive, and both intra- and inter-island telephone links are meagre and unreliable.

436. The only adequate and reasonably equipped health centre is on Grand Turk. The lack of adequate medical facilities on the islands is a cause for concern, particularly because each island, and within it each community, is so isolated.

437. The educational system is limited, although both teachers and students appear to be making the best use of the limited facilities now available.

438. Among the repeated complaints the Mission heard were the lack of proper facilities and equipment; the paucity of scholarships and means for higher education; and the absence of vocational training geared to the islands' needs.

439. On the basis of its observations and discussions with the Territorial administration, the Mission concluded (a) that the civic infrastructure of the country needs immediate improvements in order to provide the inhabitants with basic services and facilities; and (b) that the development of human resources needs immediate attention, in order to meet the requirements for the proper development of the country's economy.

440. On the basis of these observations and conclusions, the Mission makes the following recommendations:

(a) It should be the first priority of the administering Power to ensure that essential services such as electricity and water supply are easily available to all the islands, and that the system of communications, both within and between islands, is improved;

(b) The health services need immediate improvement in the outlying islands, and should be reinforced with additional staff and better facilities;

(c) The educational system should be improved so as better to serve the islands' needs; vocational training should be given higher priority. At the same time, the administering Power should increase the number of scholarships for higher education made available to the Territory's young people;

(d) These steps must be taken simultaneously with the measures aimed at stimulating the economy, to ensure that there is neither an absence of jobs nor of trained manpower in the future.