



Premier of Bermuda

Ministerial Statement
To The House of Assembly
By:

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Premier of Bermuda
Minister of National Security

Cayman - UK Overseas Territories Pre-JMC

Good Morning Mr. Speaker,

I rise today to inform this Honourable House of my recent meetings with my fellow Premiers and Chief Ministers of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories.

Mr. Speaker,

I was joined by the leaders of Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar and Montserrat in Georgetown, Grand Cayman on Wednesday, 16th July.

The leaders of Tristan da Cunha, St. Helena and Pitcairn, understandably, were not able to make the long journey to join us.

Mr. Speaker,

The meeting was called to discuss and plan for the forthcoming Joint Ministerial Council Meeting, or JMC, to be held in London this December. You might recall

that the JMC is the opportunity for the UK Overseas Territory leaders to meet with the UK Minister for the Overseas Territories and a few of his fellow Ministers to discuss matters of mutual interest.

The discussions at the JMC centre around the principles espoused by the UK in the 2012 White Paper on Security, Success and Sustainability and serve to agree at the ministerial level collective issues between us.

Mr. Speaker,

During our just concluded preparatory meetings we discussed measures designed to ensure our economic futures for the long term. In particular, Territory Leaders shared their concerns on:

- Economic diversification;
- Principles of Good Governance in the administration of our respective territories;
- Global standards of financial regulation accountability and transparency;
- Environmental Sustainability; and
- Security and Immigration

From this list, specific agenda items will be confirmed.

I should add, **Mr. Speaker**, that in order to be sure that I would be to join you this morning, I departed Cayman prior to the formal conclusion of the meetings, but I anticipate that my colleagues will confirm an agenda that will serve to strengthen our future economic, environmental and social sustainability.

Mr. Speaker,

It was the considered view that the format of the 2013 JMC was far more effective than previous meetings. Therefore, we wish to ensure that the progress made is further strengthened.

To this end, the Territory Leaders have agreed that the December meetings with the UK should span a two day period, with three sessions focused on the formal agenda, and one session conducted with UK Ministers in a less formal setting. At the conclusion of the meetings in December the Territories and the UK will agree a Communique that will be released within each of the Territories and the UK, and be made available to the public.

In addition, a Progress Report will be produced that will identify items agreed at previous JMCs, the progress made on each item by the UK and by the Territories, and any additional action points agreed at the meeting.

Mr. Speaker,

You would be aware that this was my first meeting with the Overseas Territories leaders, and as such it was an excellent opportunity for me to meet my colleagues and to understand the issues from their perspectives.

Each of us share a constitutional link to the UK, but, as many of us are aware, Bermuda's Constitutional relationship to the UK is far more advanced than our sister territories. So much so, that the other territories look upon our Constitution with envy.

Therefore, **Mr. Speaker**, it is most important that we protect the rights and responsibilities that are ours, as enshrined in our Constitution. Notwithstanding this significant difference, there is more that unites us than distinguishes us. As a result, we are able to learn from each other, support each other and together ensure that each of us prospers.

Mr. Speaker,

For example, later today we will be debating the Public Access To Information Amendment Bill 2014 and its associated Regulations. While in Cayman I took the opportunity to discuss Cayman's experience with implementing their Freedom of Information Act. There is much that we can learn from them and I look forward to formalizing a relationship with Cayman in this regard.

While in Cayman, I took the opportunity to meet with a number of leaders of Bermuda companies with a presence in Cayman. We enjoyed meaningful exchanges, and in particular discussed opportunities for Bermuda in a highly competitive and mobile business environment.

Mr. Speaker,

I look forward to the JMC meetings in December and together with my fellow Territorial Leaders will ensure that we work to ensure the future prosperity of our territories.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.