

Progress made on the commitments in the 2012 Joint Ministerial Council communiqué

Bermuda

Introduction

Post the December 2012 JMC, Bermuda held elections on 17 December 2012 in which the One Bermuda Alliance was elected as the Government of Bermuda. As highlighted in the Throne Speech (8 February 2013) the Government's primary objectives are to ensure that Bermuda has a well-managed economy, reduce the public debt and increase employment opportunities for the people of Bermuda.

The Government of Bermuda continues its efforts to work closely with the UK Government to develop Ministerial discussions at the Joint Ministerial Council for the enhancement of partnership with the Overseas Territories.

Jobs and Growth

The Government of Bermuda is committed to increasing employment. The Ministry of Economic Development is responsible for creating sustainable growth and job creation in the international business sector and other possible sectors. The Ministry has set up a public-private sector partnership with the business community by forming the Bermuda Business Development Agency (BBDA). In June 2013 Mr Stephen E. Lund was appointed to the position of Chief Executive Officer. Mr Lund brings a wealth of experience from his former position as the CEO of Nova Scotia Business Inc. The purpose of the BBDA is to bring together the efforts of Government and the private sector, to grow Bermuda's economy, provide additional support for international business and create jobs which is key to developing Bermuda's future success.

The Government of Bermuda is committed to working with the UK on all priority actions that aim to support jobs and growth. The Government is working to develop partnerships to support development of entrepreneurship and growth of small businesses including with UK bodies such as the British Chamber of Commerce and UKTI.

A key element in ensuring business are able to operate with ease is to ensure immigration policies are suitable with global operation. In order to fulfil its commitment in creating employment opportunities and economic growth. The Government eliminated the Term Limit Policy which meant work permit holders who worked for six years or more in Bermuda were not entitled to renew their work permit.

Increasing investment and trade

During Minister Mark Simmonds' visit to Bermuda in April 2013, the Premier spoke at a joint press conference about Bermuda's support for a business event to coincide with the 2013 Joint Ministerial Council to help boost trade opportunities. The Premier met with the Acting Consul-General and UK Trade and Industry officials at the British Consulate-General in New York (Aug 2013) to discuss inward investment opportunities.

With assistance from the Overseas Territories Department the Premier of Bermuda, the Hon Craig Cannonier was extended an invitation to address the World Islamic Economic Conference in London in late October 2013. The focus of the Forum was to demonstrate 'Changing World, New Relationships'. The Premier was one of 17 Heads of States to give the opening address by Leaders at

the Forum. Bermuda was one of two western nations represented alongside the Rt Hon David Cameron.

Developing entrepreneurship and small businesses

Government has plans to expand the geographic scope of the current Economic Empowerment Zone legislation to cover the entire island. Before proceeding with any change, the Minister of Economic Development requested that the Central Policy Unit of the Cabinet Office conduct a mid way five year review as was set out at the onset of the initiative.

Infrastructure investment

There are a number of proposed investments being considered which include hotel development and a casino gaming initiative. Amendments are being made to the Hotel Concessions Act to attract developers for new tourism resorts and to facilitate the upgrading of existing properties, with provisions to encourage job creation and training programmes for Bermudian hospitality workers.

Meeting international standards on tax co-operation and financial sector regulation and combating financial crime, bribery and corruption

Bermuda is committed to being a global leader in supporting international cooperation in tax matters and seeks UK recognition and support in doing so. The Government of Bermuda rejects absolutely any reference to Bermuda as a 'tax haven'. Bermuda's consumption based tax policy, which has been in place since the 19th Century, is in line with its foreign trade partners. The scale of taxes imposed by the Government is broadly in line with those prevailing in the countries with which it conducts the bulk of its foreign trade. In Bermuda, the estimated ratio of total Government receipts in relation to GDP was approximately 18.3% of GDP in fiscal year 2011/2012. By contrast, for the federal government of the United States, the same ratio was approximately 19.8% of GDP in 2012.

Distinct from the other leading offshore financial centres or international holding company centres, Bermuda has a proportionately massive service industry, centred on our world status as an insurance/reinsurance centre of excellence. Bermuda's expertise and capacity contributes directly to the UK economy from generating over 100,000 jobs in the UK mainland, more UK jobs than for instance of Japanese industrial investment in the country.

Bermuda stands out for the structure of its financial services market compared to other offshore financial centres. Two thirds of the financial assets domiciled in Bermuda are engaged in insuring property losses and other risks in the UK, US and Europe. By comparison, only 7% of the funds domiciled in the UK Crown dependencies are backing insured losses, while the rest are domiciled with offshore banks and mutual funds.

Bermuda is in globally leading position on transparency, as establishing its first Tax Information Exchange Agreement (TIEA) with United States nearly three decades ago (1986) in order to ensure maximum financial transparency and security. Bermuda has taken the lead in transparency and cooperation on international taxation matters with 40 Tax Information Exchange Agreements in place with 90% of the G20, 76% of OECD and 52% of EU member states. In September 2013, Bermuda joined the OECD Multilateral Convention on Mutual Assistance in Tax Matters to facilitate cooperation between jurisdictions in the assessment and collection of taxes, in particular to combat tax avoidance and evasion.

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Bermuda is also a Vice Chair of the OECD Global Forum. In the sixth meeting of the Global Forum meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, Bermuda achieved a very good rating from the OECD Global Forum out of 50 jurisdictions worldwide. Bermuda was successful in receiving a Largely Compliant rating the same as the UK, US and many other G8 jurisdictions.

The Minister of Finance of Bermuda, the Honourable E.T. Richards added “this is proof from an authoritative source that Bermuda is administering on behalf of the G20 an internationally agreed tax standard for handling requests for information under TIEAs, and also that Bermuda is among the leading World economies in international cooperation on tax matters and meets the standards”.

Bermuda is committed to automatic exchange of information under three FATCA initiatives based on the IGA model 2 with the US, UK and the G5 EU pilot initiative multilateral FATCA.

With regards to beneficial ownership, Bermuda established a legislative framework in 1939, requiring that persons wishing to incorporate in Bermuda provide central authorities with information on the proposed ultimate beneficial owner(s). Under *the Exchange Control Act 1972 and Regulations* which were put in effect in 1973, companies were required to seek permission from the Bermuda Monetary Authority (BMA), as the Exchange Controller, to issue or transfer shares to non-residents. This permission is required both during the incorporation process and post incorporation. As part of the process to obtain permission, companies are required to provide details of ultimate beneficial owners. All such information is subject to vetting by the BMA and is retained by the BMA. In addition, information on ultimate beneficial ownership in relation to all applicants, regardless of whether the person is a Bermuda resident or non-resident, is required as part of the application for incorporation under the Companies Act 1981.

On the invitation of the UK Government, the Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs the Hon. Mark Pettingill JP MP represented Bermuda at the Arab Forum on Asset Recovery (AFAR) in Morocco in October. The aim of AFAR II is to bring together the G8, regional partners and key financial centres to forge greater collaboration towards the recovery of stolen ‘assets’ (the proceeds of criminal conduct) in transition countries. Bermuda’s focus was to highlight its commitment to international cooperation and the importance of having in place strong systems and controls to identify beneficial ownership of companies and other legal vehicles.

Bermuda looks forward to working with the UK to develop a greater engagement with international organizations.

The Environment and Green Growth

Developing Sustainable Fisheries

The lionfish problem represents a serious threat to Bermuda's reef ecosystem. In May the Minister of Environment and Planning, *the Hon, Sylvan Richards JP, MP* applauded the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for awarding the Bermuda Lionfish Task Force a grant from the Darwin Plus fund. The Darwin initiative is an important part of the UK Government's network of support for conserving biodiversity and natural ecosystems in the Overseas Territories. The grant will assist the Task Force in research activities and focus on the lionfish population and distribution study; development of a specific trap for commercial fishers; evaluation of the impacts of lionfish feeding and population dynamics study.

Creating sustainable long-term incentives and encourage private sector investment in renewable energy

The Sustainable Development Department (SDD) has the wide perspective of advancing Bermuda's social, economic and environmental sustainability. This mandate contributes to the SDD involvement in three projects on behalf of the Government of Bermuda:

Establishing a National Infrastructure Plan – This plan will include a current state assessment of Bermuda's infrastructure components, to confirm priorities for new builds and identify funding options. The scope of this long-term plan will include infrastructure associated with public safety, major utilities, tourism, telecommunications, education and health care.

Assessing the feasibility of establishing a marine protected area in our Exclusive Economic Zone – This project will likely result in a significant area of our EEZ designated as a no-take zone. The true value of such a designation will be in the establishment and effective management of a monitoring and compliance regime to ensure non-compliance is discouraged and or sanctioned.

Developing adaptation and mitigation policies in response to the threat of Climate Change to Bermuda – This project will result in a set of holistic mitigation and adaption strategies to address the potential threat to our economy, infrastructure, water and other utility systems and our marine environment. To off-set the likely threats, Bermuda will need to introduce a series of measures to preserve our natural and built assets to ensure that our quality of life is maintained.

Given the nature of these respective projects/initiatives and the long term implications for Bermuda's sustainability, the SDD respectfully submits these for consideration under the JMC mandate. The SDD view is that UK support, perhaps initially through the JMC, will be critical to the successful implementation of the recommendations that will emerge from the work associated with these three national projects. In addition the collaborative and collective effort required to advance these projects could serve as a model for similar projects in other Overseas Territories leading to incorporation of a best practice process and solutions for the UK and its OTs.

More strategic approach to the management, protection and conservation of the natural environment

An Environment Charter was signed on 26 September 2001 between the Government of Bermuda and the then UK Minister responsible for OTs, Baroness Valerie Amos. The Charter contains commitments from the UK Government and the Government of Bermuda covering a broad range of issues such as sustainable development, environmental legislation, Multilateral Environmental Agreements, funding, species and habitat protection, environmental impact assessment, pollution and public awareness.

Bermuda has a national Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) which was written in 2003 with assistance from Flora and Fauna International, and funding from the Darwin Initiative. The NBSAP is a blue print for strategic action to protect and preserve Bermuda's biodiversity and unique ecology.

Objective B of the 2003 Bermuda NBSAP is 'To ensure that biodiversity conservation is integrated into all Government policies, programmes and plans by 2007.' There are 27 activities under this objective and completion of these is a work in progress, with only a limited number have been started or completed to date. Reports can be found online at <http://www.conservation.bm/bap-implementation/>

Bermuda's Cabinet agreed the creation of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Climate (AHWGCC) Change following participation by a Government Representative at the Climate Change Conference in December 2009. To date there has been no UK involvement. The AHWGCC's mandate has adaptation as its primary focus and only in recent months has an initial group been constituted and jointly chaired by the Director of Environmental Protection and SDD. One of the objectives of the AHWGCC is to raise awareness of the need for consultation on the possible effects of climate change on Bermuda's natural and built assets and infrastructure.

On the mitigation side, locally based companies had shown an interest in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) programme that was launched by the UN to fund the UNFCCC Adaptation Fund for adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries. This Communication had been directly with the UK Government through DEFRA, the Director of Environmental Protection was invited to meet with officials at DEFRA in London to discuss how the Government of Bermuda might on behalf of locally domiciled entities wanting to participate in these emission-reduction programmes, participate in the approvals process at the pre-implementation phase of administering CDM programmes. The hope at the time was that these programmes would grow quickly, however economic changes in 2008 seem to have stifled the programme somewhat.

Environmentally responsible way for commercial use of natural resources

In 2009, the Marine Resources Section of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) developed a Strategy for the Sustainable Use of Living Marine Resources (aka the Fisheries Strategy) which was adopted by Cabinet in 2010. The strategy was in part a response to a lively debate in the media over whether Bermuda should allow long-line fishing, but also an effort to bring structure to the Marine Resources Programme. Much more than a policy statement on long-line fishing, the

strategy frames an integrated mixture of component activities and development initiatives that include aquaculture and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) to realize a coordinated policy direction for sustained commercial and recreational use of Bermuda's marine resources. Now in the third year of implementation, the Fisheries Strategy has attracted the interest of UK university faculty programmes for some graduate students to gain field experience while making a technical contribution to the work. The University of York has been our principal collaborating institution. The scope to expand international student participation from the UK is limited by the small number (three persons) of full time staff who run the programme and who must assure that students are productively and safely engaged while in Bermuda.

Outside Bermuda's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the UK has been a solid partner in progressing the work of the Sargasso Sea Alliance.

The Bermuda Government is considering the future of its EEZ. The Minister of Environment and Planning, the Hon. Sylvan Richards JP MP announced the release of a consultation document "Bermuda's Exclusive Economic Zone and Its Future." This document serves as a tool to inform and assist the public in better understanding the issues and implications of whether or not a marine reserve should be established in the offshore waters of Bermuda's EEZ.

To share knowledge and best practice in the areas of food security and agriculture and aquaculture production

Outreach to the UK has so far not yielded results for the Government of Bermuda's initiative to intensify its agriculture under the banner of an Agriculture Strategy which is entering the second and final year of the development phase. Implementation is set to begin in the fall of 2013 with the scheduled completion of the strategy. The strategy is being managed by the DEP but has elicited the support of a number of other government agencies including the Conservation Services, SDD, Education and Economic Development. External partners from the private sector are well represented on the Agriculture Working Group.

During 2011 and 2012 significant effort was made to stimulate the development of commercial aquaculture. Government held workshops that included stakeholders from the NGO sector as well as private individuals interested in learning more. To date one person is moving ahead with an aquaponics project and a middle school has approached the DEP for assistance with putting together a project at the school. However there is a lack of staff in the Marine Resources Section to provide consistent input and support. There has been no outreach to the UK Government in aquaculture development.

Implementation of Environmental Charters and Multilateral Exchange Agreements (MEAs)

Regarding the Convention of Biological Diversity in which the UK extended the ratification to 7 of its Overseas Territories, Bermuda was not included in the ratification at that time. In 2001 it was noted that Bermuda was in generally a good state with regards to environmental policies and legislation and remains so compared to other jurisdictions where the CBD has been extended. Since then Bermuda has taken a number of biodiversity conservation actions which make us even more compliant with the CBD. This was further reflected in the recent RSPB report on environmental

governance in the UKOTs. The JNCC recently prepared a report on the implications for small islands of signing up to the CBD and there is renewed interest in extending the convention to the UKOTs. It is recommended that Bermuda consider applying for extension of the Convention.

Bermuda has adopted the following Multilateral Exchange Agreements:

- Convention of Migratory Species (CMS) which Bermuda has signed the CMS MOU on Migratory Sharks and extended ratification to Bermuda
- RAMSAR Convention
- CITES

The UK to strengthen the way it represents Territory interests in relevant international fora

Small island states have problems and interests in common that bind them together and while there may be a solid intellectual grasp of these issues by UK based officials and policy makers, their understanding is limited simply for not having lived the experience. Many small islands and their economies are vulnerable in many ways. While the same biological or economic principles may apply, these can play out differently on the ground as a result of scale and other distinguishing characteristics which make them unique. As an example, even the process of natural selection on small islands varies from the same 'process' being expressed on larger land masses. It is fundamental that these nuances, scale effects, and of course cultural effects are deeply understood if the interests of small islands (OTs) are to be fully represented in international fora. Also discussions at these events not linear and reason alone cannot always substitute for a grounded understanding of how options and their interaction will play out on the ground. In other words, there is a need for representation from the OTs if their interests are to be accurately represented.

Identify and share best practice

The Plant Protection Section of the DEP has the gruelling task of inspecting all botanical material entering Bermuda. As the amount and volume of these items have grown over the years, there has not been a parallel shift in methodology to cope while retaining a satisfactory management of risk to local flora and agriculture from invasive pests and plant diseases. Sampling protocols that are recognized as best practice are the kind of tools that would benefit Bermuda in pest management as would training in risk management for the officers in the Plant Protection Lab.

The UK Government would also be able to assist the Government of Bermuda and other OT Governments in supporting how interaction and involvement with UK based NGOs is handled. It is strongly encouraged that these NGOs with an environmental remit and OT focus most be encouraged to work in collaboration with Government's of the Overseas Territories and the UK Government. Pressure from NGOs can dominate the direction of the work within our respective Environmental departments, particularly where these departments are limited in resources.

Support from International Organisations

EU

In July 2013 the Cabinet considered the merits on joining the new Overseas Association Decision (OAD) which comes into force 1 January 2014.

Cabinet approved the recommendation subject to suitable amendments made within the text concerning the provisions on regulation of financial services.

Commonwealth

In committing to the agreed action points in the 2012 JMC Communiqué the UK has briefed Territories on the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) agenda and the opportunity to feed in comments to the UK Government. It was unfortunate that this was circulated to Territory Governments within days of requesting formal response. As such Bermuda was unable to properly advise respective Ministries and formulate a cohesive response to the agenda.

Within the agenda, the session on Debt Challenges in Small States will be a focus on the Commonwealth's high level advocacy mission. The mission's report will be circulated prior to CHOGM and it would be essential that OTs are provided with the report and encouraged for feedback prior to CHOGM.

The agenda indicates there will be a Ministerial meeting on Small States the day prior to the plenary CHOGM session. The UK does not provide representation at Small States meetings as opposed to other Commonwealth countries and we would request that the Minister Simmonds attends and represents British OTs. UK Ministerial presence illustrates to the Commonwealth that the OTs are committed to having a greater engagement. Bermuda looks forward to outcomes and discussions at CHOGM by way an update on this meeting should be given at the next JMC.

The Minister of Finance attended the Commonwealth Finance Ministers meeting as part of the UK delegation in September 2013 in Washington DC.

The tripartite meeting between the Commonwealth Secretariat, FCO and United Kingdom Overseas Territories Association took place in November 2013. It provided for open and frank discussions surrounding the political constraints for Overseas Territories to be awarded Associate Status to the Commonwealth.

Better Government

Democratic Government

Bermuda's written Constitution outlines a framework for its democratic principles and practices. It provides for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, an elected law-making body based on universal suffrage, an independent judiciary, a public service and an appointment process based on merit, and oversight bodies in the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of the Auditor General. This framework has been augmented further by primary statutes establishing the Human Rights Commission, a civilian-led Police Complaints Authority and the enactment of a Public Access To Information law that is anticipated to come into force in 2014.

Secondments and exchanges with and between OTs and HMG

This is seen as an effective tool for capacity building. Bermuda has had the benefit of assessments and programme offerings by the former UK National School of Government. We are exploring opportunities for exchanges with or secondments to County Councils in the UK. Bermuda has hosted exchange visits for civil servants from OTs and continues to welcome same.

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have also approved a request from the Government of Bermuda (London office) for one of its seconded staff (Bermudian Customs Officer and currently studying law in UK) to undergo a month attachment with HMRC. Approval was given by HMRC in September 2013 with a view to the secondee undergoing legal training which will help benefit the policy direction of HM Customs Bermuda in the long term.

Codes of conduct

Codes of conduct exist for Ministers and civil servants and are updated to align with best principles and practice. There is a Register of Interests for Members of Parliament. Probity is important and expected in the conduct of public affairs and the Government of Bermuda is committed to ensuring honesty and integrity in all aspects of public life in Bermuda.

The public service

Strengthening public services for more efficient and effective service delivery has been the underlying theme in the modernisation and reform of Bermuda's public service. Promoting fair and transparent recruitment in the public service is also fully addressed by the Constitution and the Public Service Commission Regulations 2001. A refreshed Performance Management Vision and Approach has recently been rolled out by the Cabinet Office which is buttressed by a mandatory training regime that cuts across the public sector. The approach is outcome driven and integrated across the public sector to ensure the effective management of employees and other resources for the delivery of world-class public service.

In July 2013, Public sector workers and Government agreed with unions to a two-year package including an overall 4.6 percent reduction in their take-home pay by taking a day off a month unpaid. This is expected to yield about \$21 million in annual savings which will help to reduce Bermuda's fiscal deficit.

The Savings and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission in November presented to the Minister of Finance a wide-ranging recommendations on public service. Please see under **Public Financial Management** for more details on the SAGE Commission.

E-government

A department was established 10 years ago to share experience of improving delivery using e-government. There has been some progress but fragmentation, proprietary systems and software, and constrained budgets have hindered faster progress. The department is presently under review to ensure that digital capability is better matched with commercial capability to improve service delivery and outcomes.

Public financial management

The period since 2008 has been difficult for public sector financial managers in many countries and Bermuda has not been excluded. Annual deficits have widened and debt levels have increased. Strengthening public financial management and ensuring transparency of process has been a key goal for the new Government since taking office in December 2012. The Government of Bermuda has established a set of fiscal targets and rules aligned to International Monetary Fund criteria for small economies to manage public debt and expenditure within certain ratios in comparison to GDP.

The new Government also established, by legislation, a Spending and Government Efficiency Commission (SAGE) in April 2013. The primary objective of the Commission is to make recommendations to streamline government processes and to make government more efficient and cost-effective. Its recommendations were presented on 31 October 2013.

Procurement

Strengthening public sector procurement has been another key goal for the new Government. In 2011 and 2012, the Government amended the Public Treasury (Administration and Payments) Act 1969 to establish an Office of Procurement and Project Management. The Office is fully functional. It provides professional, qualified procurement expertise and advice to Government; it seeks to ensure that there is no bias in the awarding of government contracts; it applies performance measures to ensure that government obtains value for money. The Office also advises on and supports the development and adherence to procurement regulations and best practice. The Auditor General is directly tasked with reviewing allegations on improper procurement procedures.

Stronger and Healthier Communities

Sport

Bermuda successfully hosted the 15th NatWest Island Games in July 2013 (the first Games held outside Europe). Participating teams representing islands from the United Kingdom; UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies as well as Greek, Scandinavia and Spanish Islands. It was a great opportunity for the OTs to build on the London 2012 Olympic Legacy. Sports such as cricket and football have wide participation within Bermuda. Bermuda was host to sixteen hundred and seventy-seven (1677) registrants from twenty-one (21) member islands. It was impressive to have a community of one thousand and twelve competitors (1012) in fourteen (14) sporting events across the island.

Vulnerable persons

Government proposes to implement a Vulnerable Persons legislation to protect the most vulnerable from those who may do them harm.

Government proposes to amend the Senior Abuse Register to provide greater protection to seniors.

Children

The Children's Act 1998 sets out provisions for the care and protection of children; which includes establishing and maintaining a Child Abuse Register. Government proposes to introduce family mediation to the administration of the Children Act.

Tackling Discrimination

Legislation passed to remove discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Bermuda's Human Rights Act was amended in June 2013, following approval by both the Assembly and Senate, to remove discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Bermuda Regiment: Conscription

Proposals have also been outlined in the 2013 Throne Speech to remove conscription from the Bermuda Regiment. The conscription issue is being addressed by Bermuda's Security and Defence Review as part of its wider work on assessing the island's security needs. The review committee will consider Bermuda's security needs post-conscription in keeping the Government's promise to grow the full-time component of the Bermuda Regiment.

UN Committee on the Elimination Against Discrimination to Women (CEDAW)

The Director of Human Affairs visited London in July 2013 to meet with FCO and Home Office colleagues to discuss Bermuda's extension to CEDAW with two reservations under Articles 1 and 15. The Director was also invited to attend the UK examination of CEDAW.

Bermuda's constitution poses a barrier to signing up to CEDAW with discussion focussing on Article 15 and the discrimination between men and women under Bermuda's constitution. Constitutionally,

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the non-Bermudian husband of a Bermudian woman has fewer rights under the constitution compared with a non-Bermudian wife of a Bermudian man. Such discrimination would not be allowed under Article 15(4) of CEDAW.

The Government will be developing a National Gender Policy to promote equitable decision-making that involves the differing needs, constraints and priorities of men and women.

Safer Communities

Strengthening coordination on tackling crime

Bermuda has a Policing Plan for 2013 with priority aims that include:

- making neighbourhoods safer
- reduce the fear of crime
- provide visible, accessible and effective patrols

Government will be continuing the implementation of Operation Ceasefire through development of a call-in programme to engage community and moral voices with individuals involved in gangs.

The Provision of "cash back for communities" initiative will offer funding to support for Team Street Safe mediation to help people transition out of the gang lifestyle, to organizations to help families in need, and for short-term jobs initiatives to provide work for out-of-work Bermudians.

Incidence of gang crime and activity is down this year, marred by a double murder in January. Three other murders in 2013 (as at 2 Oct 2013) with one gang related. Several gang leaders have been convicted and others have left Bermuda. New measures have been introduced to improve co-operation between probation and the police. A leading Bermudian lawyer has been appointed in July 2013 to take over as Head of the Police Complaints Commission which probes allegations of misconduct by officers. Ministry of Public Safety have doubled the budget for the commission to \$50,000, in line with a pre-election promise. The Commissioner of Bermuda Police Service has also announced (Oct 2013) that police officers will be subject to random drug testing as part of a series of anti corruption measures. These measures are expected to come into effect at beginning of next financial year and designed to improve the force's credibility.

The Memorandum of Understanding between Bermuda and the UK has now been approved by the UK Home Secretary on 10 Sept 2013. The MoU demonstrates international police co-operation between Hampshire Constabulary (UK) and Bermuda and provides framework for both parties to investigate serious crimes committed on board Bermudian registered vessels. In accordance with the Bermuda Merchant Shipping Act, the MoU only has current powers to investigate crimes committed by crew members and does not extend to passengers where the MoU would serve greater purpose.

Work is also underway within Overseas Territories Directorate to extend 2003 Extradition Act to Bermuda and other Overseas Territories.

Prisons and probation

The former Director-General of HM Prison Service of England & Wales continues to provide high-level support to the strategic development of the Bermuda Department of Corrections. A prison trainer from HM Prison Service delivered prison management training in Bermuda in March 2013. Improvements have been made to security management in main prison. Bermuda's Head of Prison Security underwent 5-week training secondment to a UK Prison in February/March 2013, funded by FCO-OTD.

Bermuda's Head of Prison Security underwent training on secondment to UK Prison (Feb/March 2013) which was funded by OTD.

Disaster preparation and resilience

The Government is actively taking their responsibilities seriously in handling their first Atlantic Hurricane Season since coming to office. Minister for Public Safety actively presiding over hurricane preparation arrangements.

The Bermuda Weather Service has undertaken a key role in helping the public to better understand forecasts and for preparing round the clock weather forecasts. A new initiative by Emergency Measures Organisation (EMO) is to send text messages alerting community in terms of preparedness. However, concerns still remain about the current resources allocated to EMO and the proposal for an Emergency Planning Officer would greatly help support its work and deliverables.

The Bermuda Regiment is a valuable resource in providing disaster relief both within Bermuda and Caribbean Overseas Territories and is on heightened alert during the Atlantic Hurricane Season.

The Governor of Bermuda has also set up a Security and Defence Review (Aug 2013) to conduct an extensive review of the island's security and disaster management needs. The committee panel is seeking public input into the review and the deadline for submissions was 1 October 2013.

Health

Strengthening public health systems

Specifically Bermuda would benefit from discussions made at the JMC in regards to those students who choose to pursue a degree in nursing in the UK. All UK University Nursing Degree Programmes are funded by the NHS Bursary Scheme. To be eligible for a NHS Bursary (maintenance grant), all applicants (including British citizens) must:

- be ordinarily resident in any UK country on the first day of the first academic year of the course; AND
- have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the three years preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course; AND
- Be settled in the UK on the first day of the first academic year. 'UK and Islands' for NHS Bursary purposes means England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man only.

In the case of British Overseas Territories applicants, such as Bermuda, whilst entitled to British Citizenship and have a right of permanent residence in the UK, (which satisfies the last criteria above re: settled status), this does **not** automatically make our students eligible for NHS Bursary support, if they have not been resident in the UK or Islands throughout the three year period specified.

Tackling chronic non communicable diseases

As of November 2013 a chronic disease risk factor survey, STEPS to a Well Bermuda, was underway. STEPS which is the abbreviation for "Stepwise approach to chronic risk factor surveillance" is a standardized tool created by the World Health Organization (WHO) used worldwide in over 100 countries to determine the prevalence of chronic disease risk factors in the population. The STEPS survey is important to accurately assess the prevalence of important chronic disease risk factors in the Bermuda population. The STEPS tool will identify the prevalence of risk factors such as elevated blood glucose levels, raised blood pressure, overweight and obesity, tobacco and alcohol use and sedentary lifestyles. This information will allow Bermuda to estimate the burden of chronic disease on the society in the years ahead and most importantly to plan population-based interventions to mitigate the harmful impact of these diseases.

Education

The Government of Bermuda is committed to reforming the public education system, to ensure Bermuda's young people have the necessary skills and training to secure well paid jobs and adequate careers.

Strengthening participation and attainment

In a Supreme Court ruling Parent Teacher's Associations of maintained schools were granted all of the powers of boards of governors. In September 2013, the Minister of Education launched a public consultation entitled "Improving Student Achievement - The Role of Parental and Community Involvement: Proposed Changes to the Education Act 1996" with regard to how maintained schools should be run. The results of the consultation which are now being considered will have important implications for schools, and for the future of public education.

Government has recently concluded consultation on a White Paper on Inclusive and Special Education, to hear the public's views on getting public education right for every child in order to set out Government's plans and a clear framework to meet the needs of all students.

UK University Education

Bermuda has seen a rise of students choosing to study degree programmes at UK Universities as opposed to traditionally studying at US or Canadian Universities. The Bermuda London Office currently has a student database of several hundred students studying in UK Universities throughout the country to include Scotland and Wales. The Government through the London Office is committed to assisting these students where necessary and providing any guidance required.