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THIRD INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

*Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for*



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GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

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**ADDRESS TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
PACIFIC REGIONAL SEMINAR IN QUITO, EQUADOR  
30<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2012 – 1<sup>st</sup> JUNE, 2012**

by

rooted in values shared by the current Progressive Labour Party (PLP) Government of Bermuda. From its inception the PLP's platform has never wavered from the cause of the independence of our people. As a society that prides itself on the value we place on democracy, we are equally committed to the democratic process of ensuring that we will consult with and be guided by the will of the majority by way of referendum before

the common man and woman and assuming that...

with the closest neighbor the United States being 700 miles north-west of us. Statistically, Bermuda's per capita gross domestic product of approximately \$70,000US annually, puts us in the rank of the fourth highest material standard of living in the world. Our economic drivers are international companies (insurance, re-insurance and finance) and a domestic tourist industry.

**Mr. Chairman,** reverting to the subject of good governance and preparation of the Bermudian people for the eventuality of Independence; since coming to power in 1998 the PLP government has done much in that regard. We have sought to learn the lessons of Bermuda's 1995 defeated referendum on independence under a previous government. It taught us first and foremost that preparation of the people (and indeed the people themselves) are not to be taken for granted nor is such a nationally consequential decision to be left up to electoral chance in spite of the electorate's signaled

aversion. It will have to be a concerted effort with hands

on participation by the masses. It is not a matter of

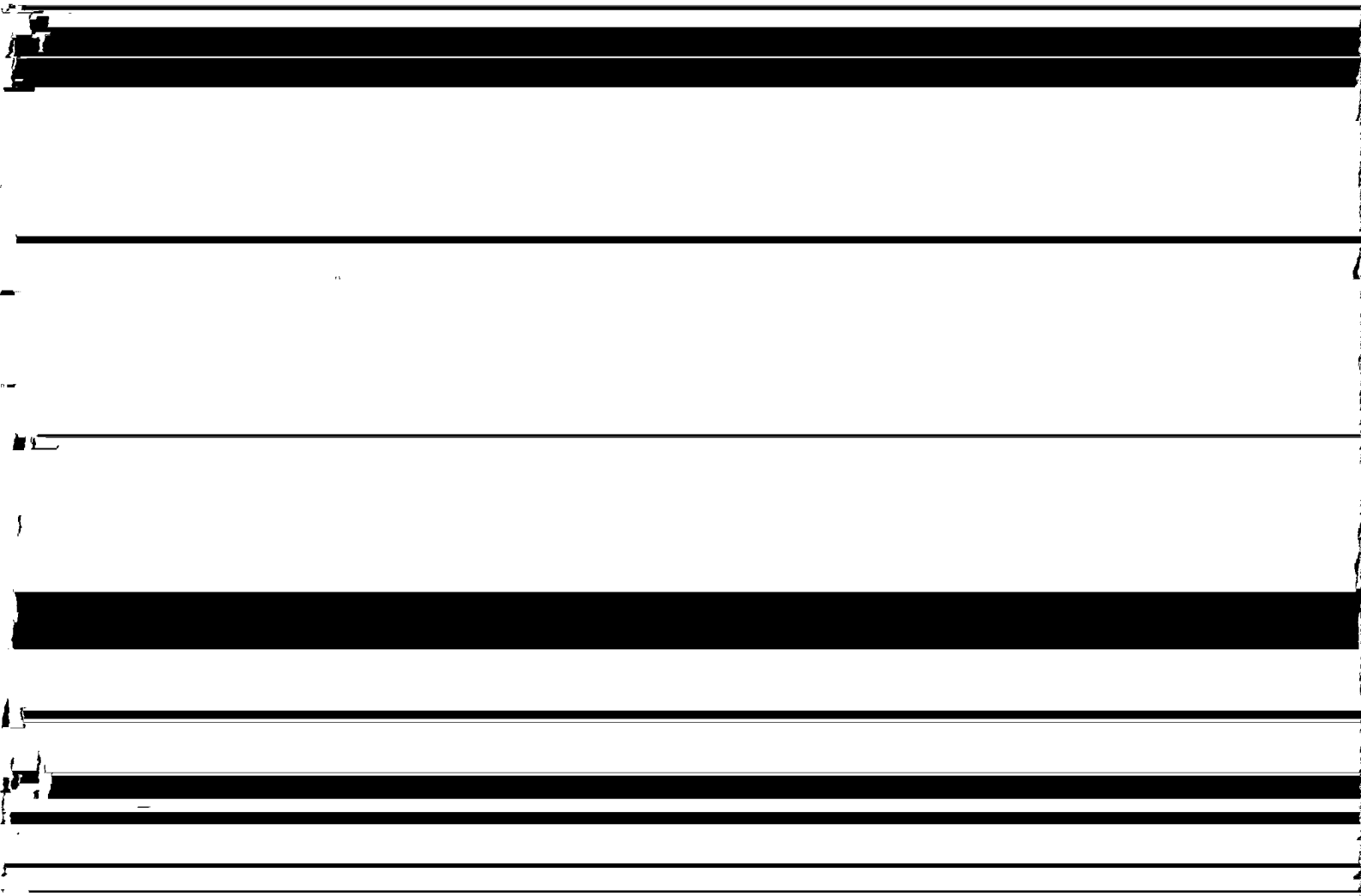
their strongly signaled endorsement of the cause of  
independence bolstered by their convictions as to the

control would threaten its integrity; and that international business as a pillar of our economy would

flee our jurisdiction as a result. Those in favour of independence cited: Bermuda's inherent lack of democracy under the present arrangement; restrictions Bermuda currently faces to advance its national interests; past colonial abuses and lingering inequities against the Black population that independence would

of doing business in Bermuda independent or not, for as long as conditions remain favorable. We have witnessed social and economic advancement as well as political stability of other most comparable jurisdictions that have gone independent such as Barbados, Bahamas, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. Some of our competitive advantages are our developed economy, world-class infrastructure, tested Constitution and political stability. Additionally, we are beholden to retaining the Privy Council as our final court of appeal and the UK has

presented *contracts for sale to have limited*





conducting an independence referendum. It has since been augmented by the recently tabled *Referendum Act 2012* outlining more generally comprehensive measures

of this happenstance necessitating increased borrowing that again while comparatively conservative, has further challenged general sensibilities about the health of the

To further reassure our people and to instill confidence in political leadership our Government has taken up the mantle to implement certain measures including



circumstances as relates to the issue of independence are unique; as are necessarily the challenges of this Special Committee in supporting us in that regard. Viewed from a compelling vantage point, we are indeed stragglers in the great decolonization movement ushered in after the Second World War and generally culminating around the decade of the 1960s. We have been spared both the turbulence and upheaval that that process entailed for many societies, as much as we are now denied the inertia of its momentous zeal.

Indeed, Bermuda no longer carries the full stigma or exacting limitations of the label “colony” as our very relationship with the United Kingdom has changed. We have been afforded the benefit of a time-tested Constitution which provides for a semi-autonomous internal government. We boast an enviable economy, world class infrastructure and a stable government that is periodically elected. In short, our circumstances present the people of Bermuda with having to grapple

with a status quo suggesting that we have much to lose  
depending upon the choices we make, as we are equally

challenged to formulate a compelling vision of what is to  
be gained by standing on our own. And yet while the  
dream of independence persists if temporarily deferred,  
our Government's present cue from our people is that  
this pursuit is not a current top priority. However, like

g<sup>11</sup> 2016 negotiating regular Democratic session to session 1