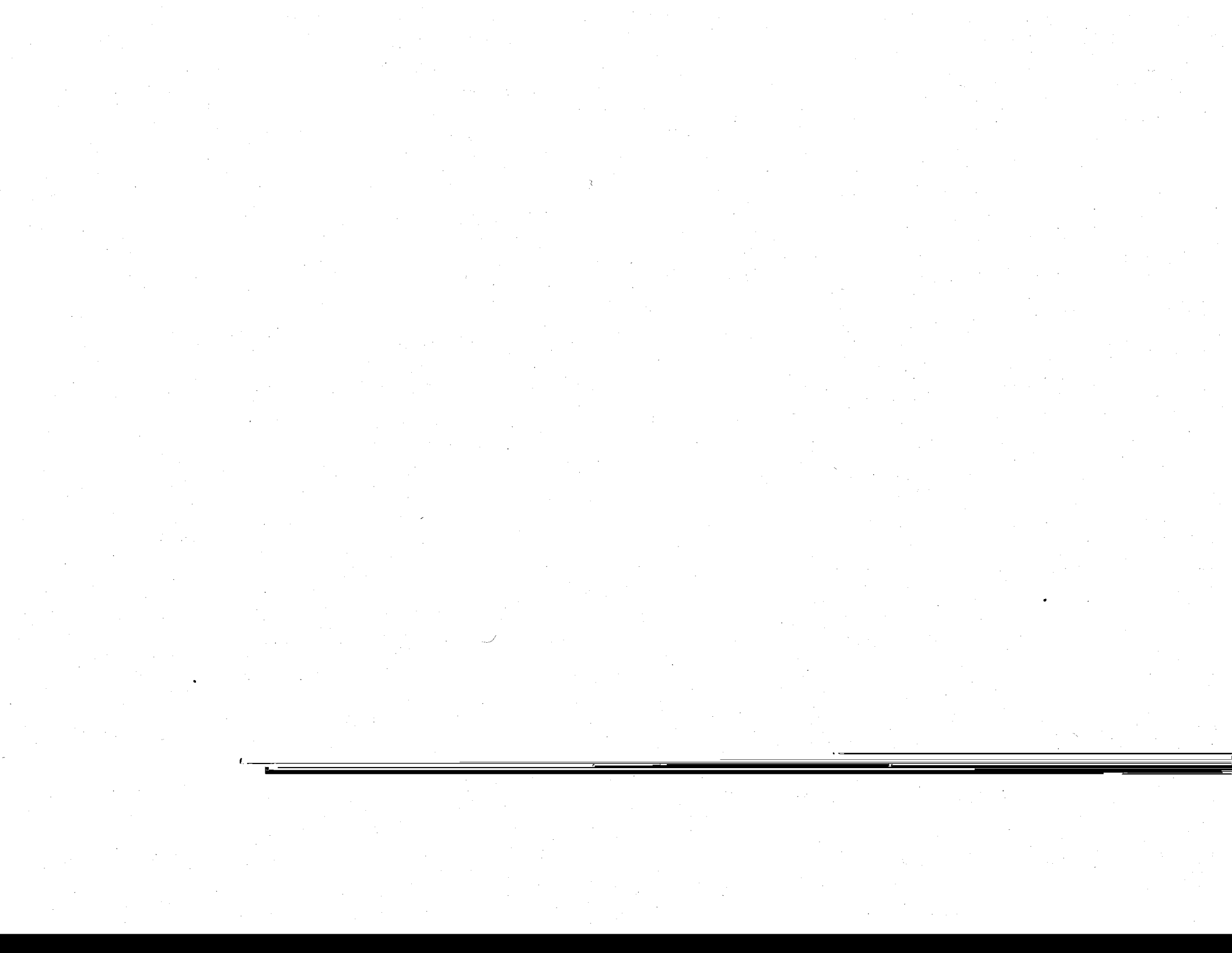


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**Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International
Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: accelerating decolonization
through renewed commitment and pragmatic measures**

St. George's, Grenada





VIRGIN

UNITED NATIONS CARIBBEAN REGIONAL SEMINAR ON DECOLONISATION

ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA
2ND - 4TH MAY 2019

STATEMENT BY DEEMIED OF THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW A. FAHIE

Excellencies, Honorable Ministers, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

decolonisation framework. This Caribbean regional seminar is an integral part of that

As a matter of principle, it is still our right as a people to govern ourselves, until such time as

We have demonstrated over the course of our modern history that we are fully capable of doing so.

CURRENT SITUATION IN THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Madam Chair, let me now turn to the current situation between the BVI and the UK.

And our message was clear in recent years the BVI/UK relationship has become increasingly

In 2018, despite the Exchange of Notes and success of our cutting-edge system, the UK adopted the Sanctions and Anti-Money-Laundering Act 2018 that imposes public registers of beneficial ownership on the Overseas Territories.

This singular issue gets to the heart of the BVI's current concerns regarding the UK.

The UK illegitimately passed legislation to try to force the BVI and other Overseas Territories to adopt public registers, despite the fact that this is an area constitutionally devolved to the Territory Government.

The UK has set an implementation deadline of 2023 before an Order in Council is passed to force the Overseas Territories to comply. However, this is currently being contested by Members of Parliament who want to see an earlier implementation deadline of 2020.

The actions taken by the UK violate the principle of self-governance. It has long been established that the UK Parliament does not legislate for the BVI without our consent.

If the financial services industry were to fail because of an arbitrary decision made by the UK Parliament, how can we be reasonably expected to rebuild our society.

The UK's international obligation under the UN Charter is to advance our economic growth and development, not undermine it.

The Members of Parliament who authored the report place little value on the unique culture and values of our people, nor the principle of self-governance or the right to self-determination.

The report also recommends that the blunt colonial legislative instrument, an Order in Council, is used to impose these measures on the BVI and other Overseas Territories should we not comply.

such a provision in regard to the adoption of public registers of beneficial ownership.

What our recent experience with the UK Parliament has taught us is that when the UK Government has challenges controlling its benches, whether as a result of Brexit or other

The UK has also continued to provide support. They have also offered a \$400 million loan guarantee to assist the Territory Government in securing financing for the recovery. However, we are concerned about taking on unsustainable debt and must weigh our options

Our main goal is to rebuild the society with greater resiliency and to diversify the economy to support long-term growth.

It is important that as we continue to rebuild, that it is the Territory Government that is the primary body steering the recovery process, as provided by our constitution.

Our responsibility is to ensure that the recovery benefits the people of the BVI and reflects their aspirations.

The UK and other partners must respect this principle and work in genuine partnership with us.

DEEPENING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UN

In support of our national development objectives and the sustainable development goals (SDGs), we wish to deepen our relationship with the UN.

Currently the BVI is unable to access international funds under UN programmes from sources such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) or even the UK's own climate change fund for small island developing states (CISF)

