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**Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of
Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the
specialized agencies and the international institutions
associated with the United Nations**

Information submitted by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system on their activities with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Report of the President of the Council

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2022/21, the Economic and Social Council requested the President of the Council to continue to maintain close contact with the Chair of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples on the matters considered in that resolution and to report thereon to the Council.

2. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 77/131 on implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations, the General Assembly requested the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations to examine and review conditions in each Non-Self-Governing Territory so as to take appropriate measures to accelerate progress in their economic and social sectors. In paragraph 21 of the same resolution, the Assembly commended the Economic and Social Council for its debate on the question of providing assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories, and requested the Council to continue to consider and intensify its cooperation with the Special Committee, with the aim of developing appropriate measures for the further coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in implementing the relevant resolutions of the Assembly. The Assembly, in paragraph 12 of its resolution 77/130, encouraged the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and regional organizations to continue to provide assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories affected by hurricanes, natural phenomena or other extreme weather events and to formulate appropriate programmes to support emergency response and recovery and rebuilding efforts, and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly on that matter.

3. The following 17 Territories are under the purview of the Special Committee: American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands (Malvinas),¹ French Polynesia, Gibraltar, Guam, Montserrat, New Caledonia, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands, United States Virgin Islands and Western Sahara. Information submitted in response to a request to the specialized agencies and the international organizations associated with the United Nations to provide an account of their activities in relation to those Territories is set out below.

II. Support provided to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international organizations associated with the United Nations

4. Responses were received from 19 United Nations system entities and two international organizations. The Association of Caribbean States, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Labour Organization, the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the World Bank, the World Food Programme, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the World Meteorological Organization and the World Trade Organization indicated that they did not have any information to submit on the issue. According to the information received and compiled below, during the period under review, the 10 organizations indicated continued to provide support to

¹ A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories pursuant to the relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Special Committee.

A. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

[9 February 2023]

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) continued to provide support to the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean in 2022. Priority attention was given to responding to the needs related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the small island developing States (SIDS) platform, including the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. The situation of the Territories of the Caribbean largely mirrors development challenges common to the wider subregion, given the unique economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities to external shocks, high levels of indebtedness, limited fiscal space and high exposure to climate change and extreme weather events. For this reason, ECLAC, in line with, among others, the “Caribbean First” initiative, prioritizes integrated support for and the engagement of its 30 Caribbean members, including each of the seven Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean.²

The Caribbean First strategy emerged as a means to address economic, social and environmental issues and to support planning frameworks for the strengthening of sustainable development at a time when governments were under severe pressure to curtail public spending and to advance advocacy on behalf of the Caribbean. ECLAC officially launched the strategy during the thirty-seventh session of the Commission, held in Havana in May 2018. The purpose of the strategy is to give a prominent place to the Caribbean subregion in the work of the regional commission to better address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of Caribbean countries. It is also a way to ensure that the concerns of the Caribbean are given the widest consideration and that its demands are responded to through an integrated approach. This strategic vision is also aimed at making Caribbean voices heard and channelled in regional and global forums, with a view to advancing the Caribbean agendas for sustainable development with equality and strengthening their common positions. By so doing, the strategy is aimed at strengthening the sense of belonging of the Caribbean subregion in the wider Latin America and the Caribbean region to foster greater regional integration, cooperation and solidarity. Four years later, ECLAC reiterated its commitment to supporting Caribbean countries and associate members, including during the thirty-ninth session of the Commission, in which ECLAC reiterated the specific difficulties and circumstances of the subregion relating to the economy, finance and climate vulnerability and the need to address their specific challenges.

The adoption by the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee in 2022 of resolution 111 (XXIX) on support for the associate members of ECLAC provides further impetus for the work of ECLAC with the Territories.

1. Support in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals

Support from ECLAC to the Territories in 2022 was focused primarily on the inclusion of the Territories that are associate members in research related to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. In the 2022 issue of *The Caribbean*

² Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean: Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands, and United States Virgin Islands.

Outlook, entitled *Recovery and Resilience: Repositioning the Caribbean post COVID-19*,³ the situation across the Caribbean, including in most Territories, was considered with regard to economic recovery and repositioning. In addition, in a publication on the status of institutional mechanisms for sustainable development planning in the Caribbean, the situation in the British Virgin Islands was considered.⁴ A recent study on digital inclusion in the Caribbean provided an analysis of the extent to which such inclusion was considered in the national development plans and digital transformation frameworks of 11 Caribbean countries and Territories, including Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands.⁵ The situation in the Turks and Caicos Islands was analysed in a recent study on science, technology and innovation for sustainable development, which provided an examination of the energy transition in the Caribbean.⁶

2. Facilitating participation in regional and global conferences and platforms

Every effort is made to support the participation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean in regional and global platforms to make their voices heard. At the regional level, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and other associate members of ECLAC are invited to participate in the 11 intergovernmental bodies for which the Commission serves as secretariat. The bodies constitute multi-stakeholder platforms for policy dialogue, as they examine various public policy issues in the region, facilitate cooperation among countries and territories and promote regional positions while including subregional specificities in their mandates.

The Caribbean Territories have remained active participants in meetings related to sustainable development in the region. They continue to face development challenges similar to those experienced by the wider membership of the subregion, characterized, as small island developing States, by significant economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities and low levels of resilience. These Territories also face mounting public debt and onerous fiscal challenges, which contribute to high interest rates and curtail local investment. Furthermore, their limited technical and institutional capacity has circumscribed their efforts towards more effective governance and affected their ability to deliver a range of social services to meet the growing needs of their vulnerable populations. For example, six of the seven Territories participated in the fifth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, held in March 2022. In the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the fourth and fifth meetings of the Forum, the participation and contributions of the associate members of ECLAC in the Forum were welcomed, and their specific political and economic constraints, as well as their vulnerabilities in their pursuit of sustainable development, were recognized for the first time.

It is important to highlight the participation of the Caribbean Territories, in particular Montserrat, in the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in June 2022. At the Conference, the secretariat presented the document entitled *The Sociodemographic Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean*. In addition, member countries adopted a resolution reaffirming the Montevideo Consensus on

³ See www.cepal.org/en/publications/48379-caribbean-outlook-summary-recovery-and-resilience-repositioning-caribbean-post.

⁴ See www.cepal.org/en/publications/47772-review-status-institutional-mechanisms-sustainable-development-planning-caribbean.

⁵ See www.cepal.org/en/publications/48652-digital-inclusion-caribbean-digital-transformation-frameworks-and-initiatives.

⁶ See www.cepal.org/en/publications/48634-science-technology-and-innovation-sustainable-development-lessons-caribbeans.

Population and Development as the basis for a comprehensive road map for national and regional action on population and development.

During the twenty-ninth session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, held in October 2022 in Paramaribo, Montserrat became Vice-Chair of the Committee, a position held for two years. In addition, in Committee resolution 111 (XXIX), while acknowledging the efforts of the Commission towards the greater inclusion of Caribbean associate members in its studies and the need, in particular, for the inclusion of data on the associate members in reports on coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response and recovery, the Committee requested ECLAC, where possible, to expand its collection of data on key sectors in associate member countries with a view to shaping appropriate assistance programmes to accelerate progress in their economic and social sectors. It further requested the Commission to support associate members in their efforts to monitor and review implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway, including with regard to deployment of resources.

During the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Buenos Aires in November 2022, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC presented the document entitled *The Care Society: A Horizon for Sustainable Recovery with Gender Equality*. Member countries, including Anguilla, adopted the Buenos Aires Commitment, in which they recognized care as a right to provide and receive care and to exercise self-care on the basis of principles of equality, universality and social and gender co-responsibility, and therefore, as a responsibility that must be shared by people of all sectors of society, families, communities, businesses and the State.

The fifth Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Santiago in December 2022 within the framework of the fourth review and evaluation cycle of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The main objective was to examine the achievements in fulfilling the commitments assumed by the member countries of ECLAC in the San José Charter on the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean. At the conference, the countries of the region, including Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands, presented their advances in public policies aimed at older persons and identified key actions to expand the protection of the rights of older persons in the following five years. The secretariat prepared the document entitled *Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean: Inclusion and Rights of Older Persons*, and member countries adopted the Santiago Declaration, in which they reaffirmed their commitment to promoting, protecting and respecting the human rights, dignity and fundamental freedoms of all older persons, without discrimination or violence of any kind, and reasserted the responsibility of States to pursue the measures and actions needed to ensure healthy ageing, with dignity and rights.

Several Caribbean Territories have been active participants in the establishment of the Parliamentary Observatory on Climate Change and Just Transition,⁷ and representatives from the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands participated in its parliamentary meeting and workshop in September 2022. Representatives from the same Territories attended the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and participated in a side event related to the Observatory, at which they signed a joint statement on climate financing.

⁷ See www.cepal.org/en/opcc.

3. Support for research and data analysis

ECLAC gave attention to strengthening the national capacity of Montserrat in the dissemination of official statistics. Through a series of virtual sessions held from 2020 to 2022, ECLAC provided technical support to the Statistics Department of the Government of Montserrat to enable the Government to provide public access to microdata from its Intercensal Population Count and Labour Force Survey of 2018 through an online application developed using REDATAM software (REDATAM is an acronym that stands for “retrieval of data for small areas by microcomputer”). The data, which were published in 2022, will enable superusers of statistics data in Montserrat, including policymakers and academics, to gain access to, process and analyse survey data while ensuring data privacy, which can contribute to evidence-based decision-making for sustainable development.

4. Conclusion

ECLAC attaches great importance to the sustainable development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean. Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee resolutions 85 (XXV) and 111 (XXIX), as well as ECLAC resolution 574 (XXVII), directly inform the way in which ECLAC engages with the Non-Self-Governing Territories and its other associate members. ECLAC continues to actively support the sustainable development aspirations of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean through various interventions.

Notwithstanding its commitment, and the exhortations for the provision of United Nations system support to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, ECLAC continues to be challenged to adequately resource its interventions. This is primarily a result of the budgetary procedures that place limitations on the use of regular budget resources to support the development activities of associate members and the Territories. Every effort should therefore be made to offer more support to the development efforts of the Territories, as stressed in Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee resolution 111 (XXIX).

B. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

[12 February 2023]

The Commission does not have any activities in the three Pacific Non-Self-Governing Territories of American Samoa, French Polynesia and New Caledonia. French Polynesia participated virtually in the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2022. As associate members, the Territories are extended invitations to participate in ESCAP meetings and workshops, and an effort will be made to increase engagement in areas of relevance to these Territories.

C. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

[27 February 2023]

Tokelau

(a) Environmental problems facing the Non-Self-Governing Territories

The atoll islands of Tokelau are 3 to 5 m above sea level, making the Territory highly vulnerable to coastal erosion and the impacts of climate change, including submersion owing to rising sea levels. Given that all three atolls are situated in the tropical cyclone belt of the Pacific, the Territory is also exposed to climate-related disasters. Beyond rising sea levels, continued environmental degradation, including

invasive species, ocean acidification and rising water temperatures, also poses major risks to the territory. Solid waste accumulation continues to be a problem, and climate change may have an impact on local livelihoods and food and water security.

Continued loss of biodiversity is a major risk to the Tokelauan natural environment and traditional lifestyles and culture. Land biodiversity is subject to numerous threats and has been on the decline in recent years. Marine resources are also being reduced by overfishing, which poses a threat to revenues from fishing licences. In view of its status, the Territory does not have access to the sources of global climate finance available to countries.

(b) Impact of natural disasters, such as hurricanes and volcanic eruptions, and other environmental problems, such as beach and coastal erosion and droughts

In “Living with change: an integrated national strategy for enhancing the resilience of Tokelau to climate change and related hazards, 2017–2030” the most significant hazards are identified as being tropical cyclones, severe weather systems (resulting in heavy rains and flooding), droughts, flooding associated with storm surges and king tides, sea level rise, waterspouts, disease epidemics, bush fires, landslides and tsunamis. The geographic isolation and limited capacity of Tokelau to manage disaster risks is further exacerbated by the risk of compound and consecutive disasters, whereby multiple hazards impact the islands at once. Recent studies have identified that a great earthquake from the Kuril Trench poses the most significant tsunami inundation threat to Tokelau, with modelled wave heights in excess of 1 m, which may last 20 hours and include several wave trains.

(c) Marine and other natural resources

Recent work using data from the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency suggests that average annual tuna access fees for Tokelau for the period 2015–2018 were \$13.4 million, equivalent to 84.2 per cent of government revenue.

(d) COVID-19-related information as it pertains to the impact of the pandemic on the Territories and the assistance provided to face that challenge

The high dependence of Tokelau on imports makes it vulnerable to external shocks in times of crisis. According to the socioeconomic impact assessment conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Tokelau in November 2020, the prices of imported food items underwent a considerable increase owing to COVID-19, in particular in Nukunonu, where close to three fourths of households reported increased prices of imported food. Similarly, in Atafu and Fakaofo, 45 to 46 per cent of respondents reported increased prices of imported food items during the lockdown period, indicating the vulnerability of Tokelau to price shocks that can, in turn, lead to other crises. However, unlike that of Pacific countries, the economic model of Tokelau does not depend on tourism and has therefore been less exposed to the tourism-driven economic decline affecting the region.

D. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

[2 February 2023]

The present input covers Non-Self-Governing Territories under the administration of France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

Until July 2022, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had a Human Rights Adviser embedded within the Resident Coordinator Office in the multi-country office in Jamaica.⁸ In addition, in August 2022, OHCHR deployed a Human Rights Adviser to the Resident Coordinator Office in the Barbados and Eastern Caribbean multi-country office. While OHCHR did not implement any specific activities in the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean during the reporting period, it was involved in integrating and mainstreaming human rights issues, including economic, social and cultural rights, into the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the English- and Dutch-Speaking Caribbean (2022–2026).⁹

In addition, OHCHR provides secretariat support to United Nations treaty bodies, which are committees composed of independent human rights experts that oversee the implementation of international human rights treaties by States parties thereto and issue concluding observations providing recommendations to States parties on how to improve their compliance with those treaties, including with regard to some of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In the past, several United Nations treaty bodies addressed issues concerning the Non-Self-Governing Territories under the administration of the United Kingdom.

OHCHR also supports two additional United Nations human rights mechanisms: the universal periodic review and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council. Neither the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review of the United Kingdom, held in November 2022, nor the special procedures have addressed issues relating to the Non-Self-Governing Territories under the administration of the United Kingdom.

In November 2022, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination considered the periodic reports submitted by France and adopted concluding observations. The Committee reiterated its concern for discrimination against Indigenous Peoples in the Overseas Territories of France compared with the rest of the population, in particular the difficulties that children face in gaining access to education in New Caledonia, and recommended greater efforts to ensure equal treatment, with consideration for the needs of each territory, as well as cultural and linguistic diversity.

In addition, the Committee noted with concern the adverse effects of extractive activities on the environment and health of Indigenous Peoples in the overseas territories of France. The Committee recommended consultation with the Indigenous Peoples affected and the adoption of measures to offset or mitigate these consequences.

The Committee recalled the fact that the rights to land of Indigenous Peoples in the overseas territories are not fully respected, and recommended recognition of their collective rights, in particular to their communities' ancestral lands and to the resources they have traditionally used, as well as the adoption of measures to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis. The Committee also recommended the guarantee that Indigenous Peoples are consulted on all legislative and administrative measures that may have an impact on their rights, with a view to obtaining their free, prior and informed consent.

In its 2014 concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of the United States (CERD/C/USA/CO/7-9), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination requested the United States to provide, in its

⁸ See <https://jamaica.un.org/en/about/about-the-un>.

⁹ See <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/multicountry-sustainable-development-framework-english-and-dutch-speaking-caribbean-2022>.

next periodic report (submitted in 2021), detailed information on the implementation of the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in the non-autonomous territories administered by the United States.

In paragraph 4 of its concluding observations on the combined tenth to twelfth reports of the United States (CERD/C/USA/CO/10-12), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination indicated the following:

The Committee remains concerned at the absence of specific legislation implementing the provisions of the Convention in the domestic legal order and at the absence of the Convention from the main and recent policies related to the elimination of racial discrimination and the resulting equity plans. While noting the applicability of the disparate impact doctrine in certain fields of life, the Committee remains concerned that it has limited scope and applicability and is not encompassed comprehensively on a legal level, including the Constitution, and that, accordingly, indirect discrimination is often not be addressed in court. In this regard, the Committee reiterates its concern that the definition of racial discrimination used in federal and state legislation and in court practice is not always in line with article 1 (1) of the Convention. While noting the information provided in the State party's periodic report on the implementation of the Convention in American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands and Wake Island, the Committee regrets the insufficiency of information on how persons residing in these territories enjoy their rights under the Convention, without discrimination and on equal footing with those residing in the mainland, taking into account the special status of these territories (art. 1).

E. Pacific Islands Forum

[6 March 2023]

1. Status within the Pacific Islands Forum

French Polynesia and New Caledonia are full members of the Pacific Islands Forum. Tokelau is an associate member, and American Samoa and Guam hold observer status.

2. New Caledonia

Since 1990, the Pacific Islands Forum has supported efforts towards self-determination in New Caledonia under the Matignon and Nouméa Accords, in particular through a Forum Ministerial Committee. To date, the Committee has deployed to New Caledonia 10 times to monitor the implementation of the Accords. The Committee observed the New Caledonia referendum held on 12 December 2021. Its observations are captured in its report.¹⁰

At their fifty-first meeting, in 2022, Forum leaders raised the issue of self-determination in New Caledonia in their communiqué, in which they welcomed the report of the Forum Ministerial Committee to New Caledonia, following its mission to observe the 2021 New Caledonia Referendum on Independence, and supported the Forum's continued engagement with New Caledonia through established Forum processes.

¹⁰ See www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2021-Forum-Ministerial-Committee-to-New-Caledonia-Referendum-Observer-Report.pdf.

3. Regional and international engagement

Although French Polynesia and New Caledonia are considered Non-Self-Governing Territories under the purview of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, they engage with the Pacific Islands Forum alongside independent Pacific countries as full and equal members. It is a privilege entrenched under the Blue Pacific Principles for Dialogue and Engagement, which include:

- (a) One Blue Pacific: recognizing and engaging with the full Forum Membership;
- (b) Regional priorities: embedding and progressing the Forum's regional priorities;
- (c) Partnership approach: joint planning, programming and delivery by both the Pacific Islands Forum and the Forum Dialogue partner(s);
- (d) Utilizing existing mechanisms: aligning with and seeking to build on existing regional and international mechanisms, processes and meetings;
- (e) Collective outcomes and impact: developing joint outcomes statements and outlining a clear process for follow-up and implementation.

4. COVID-19

Since the beginning of the pandemic, COVID-19 transmission has been relatively low in the Pacific compared with the rest of the world. From the outset, Pacific Islands Forum leaders swiftly enacted the Forum's regional mechanism to address crises in the region, the Biketawa Declaration of 2000, and in April 2020, the Forum's foreign ministers established the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19. French Polynesia and New Caledonia were key in its development and have actively utilized the mechanism. Among other purposes, the Pathway has provided a coordinated approach to addressing the challenges and obstacles arising from the pandemic, including the distribution of medical supplies and aid. At the time, it was the world's first such regional framework. French Polynesia and New Caledonia have received COVID-19-related support and assigned it to other members of the Forum through the Pathway.

The secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum has provided Pacific Humanitarian Pathway briefings to Forum Dialogue partners, which includes the administering powers France and the United States. New Zealand is a full member of the Forum.

As Chair of the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific, the secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum co-led the development of *Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in the Pacific Region*.¹¹ It is a comprehensive report that consolidates a wide breadth of data from various sectors across the membership, including on COVID-19 impacts, measures and policy responses to health and well-being, economic recovery and resilience, adaptive learning and employment pathways, inclusive social protection systems, and sustainable livelihoods and food systems issues. An extensive set of recommendations is also provided in the report.

As heads of the region's premier political and economic policy organization, Pacific Islands Forum leaders, foreign ministers and economic ministers have made high-level statements on the COVID-19 pandemic. New Caledonia and French Polynesia were active in the development of the statements. While the role of the

¹¹ Available at www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/SEIA-Report.pdf.

associate members and observers is more limited than that of full members, they do have access to and are kept abreast of the Forum's initiatives.

5. Environmental issues

French Polynesia and New Caledonia

Participation of the Territories in climate change-related negotiations and events is encouraged at every opportunity. French Polynesia was the Chair of the Pacific Resilience Partnership task force (2019–2022) and an active member of the regional governing entity responsible for the implementation of the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management. Through the Framework, Pacific efforts are integrated in reducing and managing climate and disaster risks for resilience development. French Polynesia and New Caledonia are usually invited to join the Pacific Islands Forum's member country delegations to the Conference of the Parties negotiations as observers. They can also participate in side events on climate change, where they have the opportunity to present the realities of the impacts of climate change on their environment and people. They are also often invited to make contributions to climate change discussions, especially on policy formulations and advocacy.

Tokelau

Having appointed a dedicated climate change spokesperson, Tokelau is increasingly noticeable at regional climate change dialogues, where it is always forthcoming about sharing its climate realities with the rest of the members. In turn, the stance of Tokelau on climate change is often woven into the collective regional climate advocacy priorities.

American Samoa and Guam

While participation in regional climate change dialogues and conferences is not limited to Forum members only, owing to geographical location and their governing arrangements, American Samoa and Guam have not been as active in regional climate change advocacy. However, their specific climate change issues are often considered in regional dialogues on climate change policy and international advocacy messaging.

6. Drug trafficking, money-laundering and other illegal and criminal activities

French Polynesia and New Caledonia are parties to existing Pacific Islands Forum security declarations and arrangements. The Boe Declaration on Regional Security of 2018 addresses the expanded concept of security that includes transnational security issues, such as drug trafficking and money-laundering. Policy development, capacity development and information exchange on drug trafficking, money-laundering and other illegal criminal activities within the region are areas in which French Polynesia and New Caledonia will benefit under the security declarations.

Pacific Islands Forum leaders endorsed the Boe Declaration Action Plan when they met in Tuvalu in August 2019. The Action Plan provides specific proposed actions to be progressed under six strategic focus areas, including transnational crime, humanitarian assistance and disaster response.¹² The secretariat will look to develop a regional transnational crime disruption strategy and a humanitarian assistance disaster response coordination mechanism to operationalize these specific areas of the Action Plan.

¹² See www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/BOE-document-Action-Plan.pdf.

French Polynesia and New Caledonia are members of the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police organization and, as such, are privy to discussions on and advice from the organization on drug issues, money-laundering and other illegal criminal activities within the region.

A major initiative of the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police organization is the Pacific Transnational Crime Network, which provides a police-led proactive criminal intelligence and investigative capability to combat transnational crime in the Pacific through a multi-agency and regional approach. Discussions with New Caledonia and French Polynesia on their considering formally joining the Network are continuing.

Pacific Transnational Crime Network membership benefits include:

- (a) Attendance at the Transnational Crime Conference as a full member;
- (b) Collaboration with other Pacific law enforcement agencies and regional forums to exchange intelligence to detect and combat drug trafficking, money-laundering and other illegal criminal activities;
- (c) Access to capacity development initiatives available to enhance intelligence skills and capabilities through professional development initiatives contextualized to the region, as well as exchanges.

French Polynesia and New Caledonia are members of the Pacific Immigration Development Community. By virtue of their membership, they are eligible to gain access to capacity development initiatives that target border management and border-related crimes, including drug trafficking and money-laundering.

French Polynesia and New Caledonia are also members of the Oceania Customs Organization. Under the Law Enforcement and Border Security programme, there is constant dialogue to address pertinent law enforcement and border security issues that affect the region as a whole and to position its members to benefit from and contribute to mutually beneficial regional initiatives. The programme is aimed at:

- (a) Increasing end-to-end international supply chain security by introducing a balanced approach to security measures and facilitation to safeguard shipments entering or leaving a customs territory from manipulation or interference by criminals, providing compliant traders with greater facilitation, and increasing both the level of protection achieved by customs controls and cooperation between customs and trade;
- (b) Playing a vital role in efforts to combat organized crime, as customs has information and expertise on goods and cargo movements, to produce faster and better targeted customs controls that facilitate legitimate trade but tighten security requirements, and to ensure by way of greater transparency that the international supply chain and its stakeholders refrain from illegal, criminal and terrorist activities.

While French Polynesia and New Caledonia are not members of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency,¹³ France, as part of the Pacific Quadrilateral Defence Coordination Group (Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States), participates in annual monitoring-, control- and surveillance-related operations led by the Agency, such as Operation Kurukuru (region-wide), Operation Rai Balang (Micronesia subregion) and Operation Tui Moana (Polynesia subregion), supporting monitoring and surveillance operations within the exclusive economic zone of Forum member countries.

¹³ The Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific agency that is responsible for fisheries in the Pacific, based in Solomon Islands.

7. Marine and other natural resources

The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency has 17 members and does not include French Polynesia or New Caledonia. Tokelau, however, is a member and participates in the Vessel Day Scheme of the parties to the Nauru Agreement Concerning Cooperation in the Management of Fisheries of Common Interest. The Agency supports its members in sustainably managing their oceanic fishery resources within their 200-mile exclusive economic zones. This support includes monitoring, control and surveillance activities to strengthen national capacity, implementation of harmonized minimum terms and conditions of access,¹⁴ and implementation of monitoring-, control- and surveillance-related agreements on information-sharing to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Pacific.

The Vessel Day Scheme has greatly reduced opportunities for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activity through a management system for purse seiners. A monitoring, control and surveillance strategy of the Agency and of the parties to the Nauru Agreement has been developed in support of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing mitigation, which members are leading.¹⁵ In addition, increases in Scheme revenue largely contributed to increases in revenue from tuna fishing in the region. Annual Agreement revenue streams grew from around \$60 million in 2010 to approximately \$500 million in 2018.¹⁶

Notwithstanding the increases in revenue and the implementation of monitoring, control and surveillance tools, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing persists, with an estimated annual value of over \$600 million.¹⁷ More work is needed to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Pacific region, and members of the Agency, including Tokelau, are taking the lead in progressing this work.

F. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

[10 February 2023]

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development is implementing the Automated System for Customs Data project in several Non-Self-Governing Territories. The system supports the Territories in building an efficient and effective customs administration. By doing so, the project:

- Benefits the territorial economy by collecting revenue
- Assists the territorial Governments in implementing national and international policy
- Protects the Territories by combating fraud and the illegal trafficking of prohibited and restricted goods
- Provides the statistical information on foreign trade transactions essential for economic planning
- Encourages international trade

The automation of the customs process contributed to keeping the Territories' customs open and the international trade of goods operational while measures to protect against the COVID-19 pandemic were active.

¹⁴ See www.ffa.int/mtcs.

¹⁵ See www.ffa.int/system/files/RMCSS%20%202%20August%20web%20version.pdf.

¹⁶ See www.pnatuna.com/sites/default/files/Independent%20Review%20of%20the%20PNA%20Purse%20Seine%20VDS%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf.

¹⁷ See www.ffa.int/files/FFA%20Quantifying%20IUU%20Report%20-%20Final.pdf.

The most recent version of the system, the Automated System for Customs Data World, which underpins the full customs clearance process, is expected to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of customs authorities in tackling drug trafficking, money-laundering and other illegal and criminal activities, as well as the illegal exploitation of marine and other natural resources. Those resources would thus be available for the benefit of people in the Territories.

The projects are at various stages of implementation in each of the Territories, as noted below.

1. Anguilla

The Automated System was upgraded to its most recent version in 2020. In the same year, Anguilla customs successfully implemented the system web portal to further enhance and modernize the quality of customs processes. In 2021, import and export transactions increased by 26 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively, in comparison with 2020.

2. Gibraltar

In cooperation with the University of Gibraltar, the Automated System organized international and regional meetings and capacity-building workshops for customs administrations, facilitating the dissemination of knowledge on international standards and best practices, including:

- Humanitarian affairs and relief operations: customs knowledge seminars and webinars on Importation and Customs Clearance Together working groups were periodically organized with the participation of the World Customs Organization and other agencies (e.g. the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), as well as non-governmental organizations
- Protection of the environment and wildlife through the organization of workshops on customs control of trade in Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora-listed species
- Cross-border e-commerce with Automated System postal customs declaration and Automated System pre-arrival processing for express couriers

3. Montserrat

In 2020, customs requested that the Automated System be upgraded to include interoperability with the Port Authority. It has allowed for the streamlining of clearance processes, the reduction of paper-based transactions and the minimization of associated costs. Average release times using the Automated System Unitrack port interface were reduced by 25 per cent in 2021. In the same year, import and export transactions increased by 6 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively, in comparison with 2020.

4. New Caledonia

In 2021, New Caledonia migrated its customs system to the Automated System, which allowed for the centralization of data exchange 24 hours a day, seven days a week and interconnection with public and private entities while computerizing new processes. In 2021, import transactions increased by 7 per cent in comparison with 2020.

5. Saint Helena

The Automated System has been operational since 2015. It includes the online manifest submission procedure, customs declaration processing and selectivity. In 2021, import and export transactions increased by 25 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively, in comparison with 2020.

6. Turks and Caicos Islands

In 2021, a module for examination of imported vehicles was integrated into the Automated System. The automation process allows traders to enter information directly in the system for subsequent examination by customs officers. In 2021, import and export transactions increased by 26 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively, in comparison with 2020.

G. United Nations Development Programme

[21 February 2023]

1. Latin America and the Caribbean

As part of sustained efforts to help Territories to recover from the pandemic, in Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat, UNDP continued to support the implementation of the COVID-19 recovery programme to provide technical and financial support to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises that were affected by the pandemic, with a focus on blue economy interventions.

In Anguilla, UNDP supported the economic recovery of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, with eight participating enterprises benefiting from a comprehensive training programme facilitated by the University of the West Indies and the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management. Two enterprises received technical assistance, mentorship and \$6,500 in grants to implement business improvement plans.

In the British Virgin Islands, the Strategic Blue Economy road map, approved by the Cabinet in December 2022 and developed with support from UNDP, sets out an integrated approach to ocean-based sustainable development, including pathways for future investment and financing of a regenerative blue economy. In addition, micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in the tourism sector in the Territory benefited from the UNDP “future tourism” project, which included training in the areas of digital technologies, financial planning and markets, in partnership with the University of the West Indies and the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management. Grants and mentorship have also helped participating businesses to reshape their processes and incorporate digital technologies to hasten recovery following COVID-19.

In Montserrat, 21 micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises benefited from the Business Adaptation Programme, with 10 being awarded \$4,000 to \$6,000 in grants to implement a business improvement plan.

In Bermuda, UNDP is currently implementing the Building Back Equal through Innovative Financing for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment joint programme with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The project is intended to pilot innovative financing through the establishment of the Inspire Fund to provide financing for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises led by women and young people.

UNDP does not currently have programmes in the Cayman Islands or the Turks and Caicos Islands.

2. Pacific

Tokelau was one of very few places in the world to remain free of COVID-19 until December 2022, when five of the first cases were recorded at the border of its northernmost atoll, Atafu, the last Pacific Territory to have cases of the virus. The arrival of COVID-19 in the Territory led to the reinforcement of the closure of its border, since the Territory had not seen any community cases. It is one of the most inaccessible atolls in the world. Without an airstrip, and with shallow coastal waters, the atolls can only be reached by dinghies, canoes or small rafts and one large cargo boat/passenger ferry. Without tourism, the economy of Tokelau has faced fewer economic disruptions than its Pacific peers. Nonetheless, it is reported that the Territory faced disruptions with respect to access to imports, delays in infrastructure projects, access to international study and travel for health and family reasons owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since Tokelau depends heavily on imports (34 per cent of its gross domestic product in 2016), the lockdown in late 2020 had a particular impact on access to imported goods and inflation trends. In late 2020, 50 per cent or more of the respondents in the socioeconomic impact assessment of the COVID-19 lockdown in Tokelau reported a reduction (or a great reduction) in access to imported goods, mostly because of higher prices. Disruptions in the global supply chain and higher import prices of food and energy, which affected neighbouring import-dependent Pacific Island countries, have also affected the economy of Tokelau. The consumer price index rose 3.9 per cent in the 12-month period ending in December 2021, pushed upward by transportation prices, which jumped 22 per cent in the last quarter of 2021 and the price of food and non-alcoholic beverages, which increased 3.2 per cent in the same quarter.¹⁸ However, as the global disruption caused by the lockdown has eased, the continuous self-imposed lockdown by Tokelau continues to have a heavy impact on food and non-alcoholic beverages, and the alcoholic beverages and tobacco category on inflation, with annual inflation of 14.6 per cent in 2022. The food and non-alcoholic beverages category recorded year-on-year inflation of 29.0 per cent, while the alcoholic beverages and tobacco category saw upward inflation of 15.0 per cent.¹⁹

As UNDP continues its environmental projects in Tokelau, key among them would be obtaining more land space for development. Therefore, a land reclamation project like that of Tuvalu, through the Green Climate Fund project, could be replicated to have more lands within the inner walls of the atolls for expansion of development and addressing the submersion of the atolls.

Currently, UNDP programmatic support in Tokelau is focused on addressing the issue of unemployment. Through circular economy interventions, UNDP contributed to increased employment and income generation, specifically for unemployed women and young people., including persons with disabilities, through value chain development in the recovery of glass waste, a low-value waste stream. The initiative provided jobs to unemployed young people. The waste management workforce in Tokelau has increased by 10 persons, with all the new waste management officers employed being women, and UNDP has strengthened support for the social protection system in 2021–2023. In addition, to accelerate digital transformation as a key pillar of building forward better from the COVID-19 pandemic and overcoming the geographic remoteness of Tokelau, UNDP extended the Zoom licences provided to

¹⁸ See www.tokelau.org.nz/site/tokelau/2021q4-cpi-tokelau-info-release.pdf.

¹⁹ See www.tokelau.org.nz/site/tokelau/2022q4-cpi-tokelau-info-release.pdf.

the Government of Tokelau. Furthermore, to provide support for the fight against COVID-19, the quarantine and isolation centres were refurbished and equipped on each atoll in the period 2020–2021.

The gender inequality gap in Tokelau was reported by the United Nations country team in a common country assessment conducted in November 2021.²⁰ After the most recent General Fono election, there were only 3 women (who came from the *fafine*, or women's group), 1 from each atoll, in the 20-member Government, bringing representation by women to 15 per cent.

H. United Nations Environment Programme

[2 February 2023]

1. Marine litter and plastics

In November 2022, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) secretariat of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (also known as the Cartagena Convention) hosted a virtual pre-inception workshop for the Prevention of Marine Litter in the Caribbean project. The secretariat is an executing agency of the project, which is financed by the Government of Germany. The project will focus on reducing the flow of plastic waste (mainly packaging) from terrestrial sources into the Caribbean Sea and its coastal areas, including the British Virgin Islands and Member States. In the British Virgin Islands, the aim is to improve the management of plastics, building upon and expanding local efforts, with a focus on legislation, extended producer responsibility, monitoring, evaluation, circular economy activities and increasing awareness of the issues and solutions surrounding plastics. Implementation of project activities was scheduled for the first quarter of 2023.

Through the European Union-funded project on capacity-building related to multilateral environmental agreements in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries, the UNEP Cartagena Convention secretariat has been developing a technical information brief on plastics within the Caribbean region, focusing on sources, quantities, presence and impacts. The brief aims to better inform the region's negotiators participating in the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution in accordance with resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) resolution 5/14. The brief is expected to be finalized in the first half of 2023 and will benefit all the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the wider Caribbean region, including: Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands.

2. Caribbean Marine Protected Area Network

With funding from the European Commission and in partnership with the European Union, the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and under the third phase of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries multilateral environmental agreements programme, the UNEP Cartagena Convention secretariat developed two reports in an effort to strengthen and facilitate the cooperation of the regional Caribbean Marine Protected Area Network under the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife and to create a functional network of marine protected areas in the Caribbean, including the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The reports aim to facilitate the

²⁰ Available at <https://unsdg.un.org/un-in-action/tokelau>.

development of a plan for the creation of a functioning network that will strengthen the interconnections of habitats, species and conservation outcomes.

3. Pollution prevention and monitoring in the wider Caribbean

Through the Global Environment Facility-funded Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CReW+) project, an integrated approach to water and wastewater management in the Wider Caribbean region using innovative solutions and sustainable financing mechanisms, the UNEP Cartagena Convention secretariat developed a regional environmental monitoring platform. The regional platform provides a framework to improve data and information management regarding marine pollution and marine biodiversity in the wider Caribbean region and support the periodic development of the secretariat's "State of" reports on marine pollution and biodiversity in support of its Protocols concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities and Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife, while making information generated in the region, including Non-Self-Governing Territories, more accessible to stakeholders for national and/or regional decision-making. The platform will be incorporated into the World Environment Situation Room, the UNEP data, information and knowledge platform.

4. Awareness-raising

The UNEP Cartagena Convention secretariat organized or partnered on several webinars covering wide aspects, such as wastewater management in the Caribbean region, marine litter and plastics, microplastics, nutrient pollution, coastal eutrophication and links to the sargassum influx, as well as ecosystem-based management. Focal points from Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands were invited to participate in these capacity-building and awareness-raising activities.

I. Universal Postal Union

[17 February 2023]

For a number of Territories, the relevant provisions of the Acts of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) apply in full, particularly with regard to the operation and regulation of international postal services and due fulfilment of the obligations arising from the Acts of UPU. Some Territories may also benefit, on a regular basis, from technical cooperation and other UPU projects.

In addition, the territories of Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, French Polynesia, Gibraltar, Montserrat, New Caledonia and the Turks and Caicos Islands currently benefit from a number of information technology solutions and associated services provided by UPU, namely its integrated international mail management solution (International Postal System), as well as its interoperable Customs Declaration System for the exchange of customs information between designated operators and customs authorities.

J. World Health Organization

[15 February 2023]

Examples of activities undertaken by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the Non-Self-Governing Territories of Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands are set out below.

1. COVID-19 operational support

(a) Nine shipments were directed to the Territories, totalling \$229,761.31 in supplies, which represented 3.2 tons and 39 m³;

(b) Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat received biomedical devices, such as oxygen concentrators with accessories, catheter kits, and fingertip and handheld oximeters;

(c) The Turks and Caicos Islands were supported through the delivery of personal protective equipment kits (surgical masks, surgical gowns, gloves, respirators and face shields), as well as respirator fit test kits;

(d) Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat were supported through the delivery of 19,825 antigen-based rapid diagnostic test kits and 15,375 other test kits.

2. COVID-19 laboratory support

(e) Anguilla: delivery of technical support/training on antigen-based rapid diagnostic tests (see “COVID-19 operational support”);

(f) Bermuda: continuous support for the newly established molecular laboratory (testing initially performed at a forensic laboratory with support from the Pan American Health Organization), including technical advice and reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) reagents;

(g) Turks and Caicos: technical support for the laboratory;

(h) Although the main focus was not on COVID-19, Anguilla and Montserrat participated in training on fundamentals of molecular detection and diagnosis of emerging threats, held in Barbados on 6 to 9 December 2022.
