

## BERMUDA INDEPENDENCE COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE (from Washington and New York)

On Monday, February 14, 2005 a delegation of the B.I.C. left Bermuda for a series of meetings with the relevant authorities and technical officials in the State Department, Department of Home-Land Security ,the Federal Aviation Administration and the United Nations.

The purpose of the BIC's meeting was to pursue and fulfill one aspect of its mandate. To gather factual, as opposed to conjectural, information on the issue of HOW Bermuda would carry out its affairs in the event that it should TRANSITION to Independence at any time in the FUTURE, and to disseminate that information in due course to the PUBLIC-at-large.

THUS FAR, this delegation, which is comprised of Commissioner Mr. David Rowntree, Administrative Assistant Elder Deborah Evans, Government Liaison to the BIC and Constitutional lawyer Mr. Philip Perinchief and myself Bishop Vernon G. Lambe Sr., Chairman to the BIC, has been extremely well received, and indeed commended for undertaking such a noble and daunting task. The delegation has been told that the BIC's advanced inquires and forward thinking is historic.

The BIC's questions, many of which were received by the above named officials PRIOR to our visit, have been fully and graciously answered. Indeed, we have been STEERED into areas of inquiry that we had NOT hitherto known existed.

To date, we have explored, and had answered, questions concerning pre-clearance, visa-waivers, re-entry privileges, international passport recognition, relevant treaties, aviation and shipping registries etc.

We have PROGRESSED well with much encouragement and enthusiasm from our hosts in ensuring that we have ACCURATE, CURRENT and EARLY NOTICE of future policies respecting topics under discussion.

On the morning of February 17, the BIC delegation attended the elections of the new SC-24 (now SC27) Decolonisation Committee or Special Committee 24, when His Excellency, Dr. Julian R. Hunte of St. Lucia, was returned as Chairman.

The Chairman, on behalf of the SC-24, warmly and specifically welcomed the Bermuda delegation for attending the session. Individual members of this assembly, notably Dominica, Bolivia, Cuba, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea, added their welcoming remarks. The Chairman invited all delegates to attend a session of INFORMAL CONSULTATION with the BIC delegation scheduled for tomorrow, February 18, in Conference Room 8.

Further meetings will be held with technical staff of the Decolonization Unit and various permanent representatives of East Timor (the newest Independent Nation) the Bahamas, St. Kitts and Nevis, Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and the Ambassador to the U.K. Mission to the U.N., Mr. Adam Thompson, whose offices we thank for arranging this visit to the U.N.

Indeed, we take this opportunity to thank the good offices of the Governor and Deputy Governor of Bermuda for clearing the necessary protocol inherent in a visit of this nature, in order for us to fulfill our mission.

THAT is our PROGRESS REPORT to date. Thus far, we have ONLY had positive responses to our mission and have been praised for the APPROACH the BIC and Bermuda are taking to INFORM its people on the myriad of issues surrounding Independence. We may be setting a PRECEDENT.

We return to Bermuda on Saturday, February 19, 2005.

Bishop Vernon G. Lambe Sr.  
Chairman – Bermuda Independence Commission