

21 September 2026

Overseas Territories Caribbean Caucus 2026 Outcome Statement

(Premier Wheatley attended 8-10 September Meeting in Bermuda)

The Premiers of Anguilla, Bermuda, The Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Deputy Premier of the Turks and Caicos Islands met in Hamilton, Bermuda, from 8th to 10th of September 2026 as the 2026 Overseas Territories Caribbean Caucus.

The Caucus was hosted by the Government of Bermuda under the chairmanship of the Premier of Bermuda, The Hon. E. David Burt JP MP, and was held in the Bermuda Cabinet Office. The Caucus provides an opportunity to discuss the matters which the Territories hold in common, to exchange experience and to agree positions of relevance to the region. It was reaffirmed that 'we are the strongest when acting together'.

Leaders reaffirmed the right of self-determination of the peoples of the Territories, and the obligations owed to them under Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations, including the obligation to develop self-government and to exchange ideas to uphold this principle. The Leaders took note of the approach taken by the UK Prime Minister towards the rebalancing of power and the shifting of decision-making into more domestic levels.

A RENEWED WHITE PAPER AND COMPACTS

Leaders reaffirmed their long-standing position that a new White Paper is required to replace the existing 2012 White Paper, as affirmed by the House of Lords Constitution Committee. Leaders seek from the United Kingdom a statement of policy towards the Overseas Territories which is transparent, comprehensive and public, including clarity on the nature of the relationship, together with how it is expected to evolve in accordance with the UN Charter.

Leaders recognise that the Territories differ in size, population, economic circumstance and constitutional ambition, and that a White Paper should provide a framework capable of accommodating such differences rather than adopting a single undifferentiated approach. Individual compacts for those territories that choose to adopt them, should flow from such a framework and not stand in place of it. Moreover, both the White Paper and compacts should be developed in full consultation with the Territories, reflecting the consensual nature of the relationship between each individual territory and the United Kingdom that is based on mutual respect.

CONSTITUTIONAL MODERNISATION

Leaders record that the principal obstacle to successful constitutional engagement with the UK is frequently not the substance of what is sought but the absence of any defined process by which to seek it. Territories have spent extended periods negotiating the process itself without addressing matters of substance. Leaders call upon His Majesty's Government to publish a clear, codified process for constitutional reform, setting out the parties, stages, criteria, policies and principles that pertain to the development and sustainment of this fundamental platform on which the individual relationships between the respective territories and the UK are built.

Leaders agreed the general principle of equilibrium, namely that a constitutional advancement agreed with one Territory should not be denied to another and should be offered to the others rather than withheld pending separate negotiation. Where a provision has been accepted by the United Kingdom in one constitution, no Territory should be required to negotiate it afresh.

PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT

Leaders acknowledge and thank the Speaker of the House the Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, for his unwavering support and dedication towards the Overseas Territories and supporting our Parliamentary relationships. Leaders agreed that positions advanced within the JMC require support beyond Government to Government relationships. Leaders agreed the revival of a collective All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the Overseas Territories, alongside the APPGs maintained by London Offices of Territory Governments.

PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Leaders affirmed that participation in regional and international bodies is not a matter of status but of practical necessity, bearing directly upon shipping, trade, disaster resilience, health cooperation and access to climate finance, amongst other issues. The non-sovereign status of the Territories should not be a barrier to regional integration and international level engagements to represent the national identity of any territory, each of which are separate and distinct.

Territories who wish to pursue greater external affairs relationships with regional and international bodies encourage the United Kingdom to acknowledge and respect their distinct identity based on our history, culture, and economic standing.

PENSIONS

Leaders returned to the long-standing question of the annual uprating of the United Kingdom State Pension, which is not extended to residents of most Territories. Leaders record the plain anomaly that pensioners resident in a number of independent countries receive uprating while British Overseas Territories Citizens resident in their own Territories, who have contributed on the same basis, do not. This raises the question of equality and impacts the lives and life chances of countless British Nationals in the Territories.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Leaders welcomed the extension of overseas medical arrangements to Territories previously without allocations within the NHS Quota System and confirmed that unused allocations may be shared between Territories where need arises. 3 Leaders record difficulties in accessing the NHS Quota System and seek from His Majesty's Government support for Chief Medical Officers for the Territories wishing to access such system.

Leaders further committed to supporting one another in the development of their health systems, including through the establishment of regional centres of excellence.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Leaders reaffirmed the exposure of the Territories to the effects of climate change and their own commitment to environmental stewardship. Leaders recalled the commitment given at the last JMC concerning a climate finance facility for the Territories and note that it remains outstanding. Leaders noted that a Territory climate change trust fund is now established in a particular Territory that may provide a route through which funding could be received and distributed.

Leaders committed to work across Territories within the region to share frameworks and develop mechanisms to access climate financing to mitigate the threat of climate change with the intention of the Territories remaining the owners and custodians of our environments. As such we seek an approach that supports our pursuit of self-sufficiency in the stewardship of our environments.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Leaders affirmed the standing of the Territories as well-regulated international financial centres which meet, and in a number of respects exceed, the standards set by the international bodies responsible for them. We are willing partners in the maintenance of international standards and ask that the relationship be conducted accordingly.

The United Kingdom should be ready to affirm the good standing of the Territories publicly and in international fora. Leaders addressed the arrangements for registers of beneficial ownership and for legitimate interest access now in place or in development across the Territories. It is encouraged that the same treatment is applied to the Crown Dependencies. Leaders agreed that the Territories will assist one another in mutual evaluations, including by making technical expertise available between them, and welcomed the offers of assistance exchanged during the Caucus.

TRADE AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS

Leaders expressed their interest in the territorial extension of United Kingdom free trade agreements and ask His Majesty's Government to publish a clear and actionable pathway by which a Territory wishing to seek such extension may do so. It was agreed to give practical effect to collective action, including through joint bloc trade missions.

COST OF LIVING

Leaders shared the challenge of the rising cost of living and identified its principal drivers as the cost and reliability of shipping, the structure of freight and insurance arrangements, and the cost of energy. 4 Leaders noted work under way to establish a direct shipping route between the United Kingdom and the Territories and agreed that representatives of the shipping industry should be invited to the JMC so that the proposition may be explored with Leaders directly. Leaders agreed to share strategies and best practice, including measures to improve price transparency and revised arrangements for freight and insurance, and to continue that exchange between meetings.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND CYBER SECURITY

Leaders agreed that cyber security is properly understood as a matter of national security. Territories have placed the function within their national security frameworks, have issued policy governing the use of artificial intelligence within the public service, and are developing national policy more broadly.

Leaders noted that Territories have already sustained cyber attacks of significance. Leaders agreed that, because cyber security extends to national security and defence, responsibility in this field engages the United Kingdom directly. Leaders therefore urge His Majesty's Government to extend to the Territories capacity building, preparedness support and access to defensive tools commensurate with the threat, and to do so in a manner which recognises that the size of the Territories is a source of vulnerability rather than a reason for lower priority.

CONCLUSION

Leaders agreed that the positions recorded in this Statement will be advanced collectively and are committed to continue cross-regional collaboration in the areas relevant to their Territories. Leaders agreed to convene the next Caribbean Caucus in the Cayman Islands.

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About:

The Government of The Virgin Islands is committed to promoting good governance and the sustainable development of the Territory with a view to ensuring a well-informed, prosperous, cohesive and stable society. The Premier's Office serves as the focal point for coordinating cross-sectoral policies and programmes and promoting the sustainable development of The Virgin Islands.