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PRESS RELEASE

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**CHIEF MINISTER ADDRESSES BVI BUSINESS CONFERENCE :
THE FUTURE FOR SMALL TERRITORY ECONOMIES**

At a Business Outlook Conference hosted by the premier of the British Virgin Islands and attended by over 150 top executives, Gibraltar's Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo spoke as one of the lead speakers on a conference discussion on 'Smart Government - Critical to the Global Competitiveness of Small Territories.'

In his address he stressed the importance of bringing administrations into the 21st century in terms of both technology and attitude and used the public sector in Gibraltar as an example of the type of progress that can be made in such areas working together with workers and business representative organisations. He explained that, in Gibraltar, he is about to launch a platform of e-government through the use of information and communication technology. He said this would provide a more efficient and effective administration which will make Government services more accessible and will make more information available to citizens, thus intentionally making the Government more accountable. Mr Picardo also announced that his government will shortly introduce a new identity card which will allow for even greater e-government applications to be accessible to citizens. He also touched on Gibraltar's Civil Service Review and the proposed changes to Civil Servants' working hours.

Yesterday Mr Picardo met with the Premier of the British Virgin Islands, Dr the Hon. Orlando Smith, and the Premier of Bermuda, the Hon L Craig Cannonier to discuss the benefits of greater cooperation of the British Overseas Territories for the mutual benefit of all. Last year, the first meeting of the Heads of Government of the British Overseas Territories to take place outside the annual Joint Ministerial Council meetings in the UK was held, at Mr Picardo's suggestion, in Gibraltar. It was then that Mr Picardo highlighted to all OT Premiers that each of the Territories are world leaders in diverse fields and should be seeking to leverage that together internationally. In this respect, Bermuda is the world leader in captive insurance business; the BVI is the top jurisdiction for company registrations in the world; the Cayman Islands are the main jurisdiction in the world for the incorporation of Hedge Funds; and the Falkland Islands enjoy potentially huge oil reserves and fishing grounds; with Gibraltar being the "online Las Vegas" in virtual gaming. Based on the outstanding success of the Gibraltar meeting and this follow-up, the Overseas Territories' leaders are now encouraging their fellow Heads of Government to meet more regularly to pursue matters of mutual interest and cooperation.

Mr Picardo, Dr the Hon Orlando Smith and Premier Cannonier also continued their discussions over lunch with the Governor of the British Virgin Islands, His Excellency Boyd McCleary, the Chief Executive of the BVI Financial Services Commission, Mr Robert Mathavious and other industry guests.