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PRESS RELEASE

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1000 days that have changed Gibraltar for the better

The GSLP/Liberal Government has reached its first 1000 days in office. These have been 1000 days full of energy, passion and sheer hard work during which Gibraltar has been transformed for the better.

In that time the Government has given effect to over 300 commitments contained in the manifesto of the GSLP/Liberals which became the programme of the new Government on 9 December 2011.

This focus on the delivery of the manifesto in a coherent, detailed and organised manner has never been seen in Gibraltar before. It reflects the commitment of the Government to keep its promises to the electorate within this term of office.

The hundreds of pledges that have already been completed are a tribute to the hard work of many public servants all over the Government, in the civil service, in agencies, in authorities and in companies, who have driven the Government's policies and agenda forward.

Some of the changes that the Government has introduced in its time in office are physical and visible. There are 1000 homes for our people at an advanced stage of construction. This includes the housing projects at Mons Calpe Mews and Beach View Terraces. There will be housing constructed specifically for the elderly at Charles Bruzon House and in Mons Calpe Mews. The Government has not forgotten its housing tenants. The largest refurbishment of Government homes that Gibraltar has ever seen is currently underway at Glacis, Laguna and Moorish Castle Estates. The very positive results of this refurbishment can be seen in those blocks where the scaffolding has already been removed.

In almost every area of life these 1000 days have changed Gibraltar. The Government's enthusiasm for new technology, driven personally by the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo, has seen more interaction between the citizen and the administration happen on-line than ever before. The programme of e-Government continues to unroll and there are more exciting innovations in the pipeline. There is now a huge amount of Government information, data and statistics available on the internet. Gibraltar declared a record budget surplus this year as a result of prudent stewardship of the economy.

In our relations with the European Union, Gibraltar has been able to boast a transposition record of EU legislation which is second to none. The legality of our actions in relation to the artificial reef, bunkering activities and land reclamation have been upheld by the European Commission. The Government continues to work to open an office in Brussels. The Government continues to put Gibraltar's case before the United Nations and works in lock-step together with the United Kingdom Government on the challenges ahead.

The veil of secrecy that shrouded the decision-making process in many areas of public life has been torn down. The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has driven the democracy agenda of the Government like the reforms to the Development and Planning Commission which now holds meetings in public, publishes the minutes and deliberates and decides in front of the media. Meetings of Parliament are now televised and take place more often, with about ten meetings in a year as opposed to two or three.

The criticisms of Commonwealth Park by our political opponents have been answered by the extensive use that the general public make of it. It has turned out to be an oasis of calm in the middle of our city which is what we promised. The construction of a small boats marina is underway. There are more Gibraltarians in employment than ever before. Our tourism product and our beaches are now looking better than ever. The premises for the new Gibraltar International Bank are being prepared. The Health Service is now stronger and better than it was when we took over. We have built a day care centre for the elderly and will continue to add to and strengthen our social care facilities.

These are all policy areas that we promised and that we have delivered.

We promised to look into allowing bathing off Mid-Harbours. When this was not possible we created a new bathing pavilion at GASA instead. Working hours for public sector workers have been changed as promised. The Youth Centre now opens on Saturdays. We have built and refurbished play-parks for our children. New schools are being constructed, a new power station will be built and, today, funding for the new University of Gibraltar has been announced.

The Government has made legislative changes too. No smoking in enclosed public places is now a reality. There is legislation against bullying at work and allowing civil partnerships. There is a comprehensive legislative programme which is set to continue for the duration of this term of office which will give effect to a number of flagship policies.

Commenting on the 1000 days of a GSLP/Liberal Government, the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo said:

"It has been a positive and constructive 1000 days in Government. The Government has moved in a fast and responsible manner in order to give effect to what we promised. One reason for this progress is because there are ten Ministers in the Government who have the authority and the ability to get on with the job that they have been entrusted with and then report back to Cabinet every week. We promised change and we will continue to deliver that change."

"It has been an exciting 1000 days. Having said that, this commemoration is also tinged with sadness because we lost Charles Bruzon on the way. We hope that the opening of Charles Bruzon House will be a fitting tribute to his memory."

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia said:

"The delivery of the manifesto remains the priority of the Government and is one of my areas of responsibility. It will be recalled that in the first few months of our time in office there was some concern that the new Government was not moving quickly enough. We

said at the time that there was a considerable amount of work going on behind the scenes. That work is now reflected in visible activity which covers many different areas all over Gibraltar. Nowhere in Europe can any Government please everyone all of the time. No Government is infallible. What we have shown throughout these 1000 days is our determination and our commitment to work for the good of Gibraltar and its people. This we pledge to continue.”