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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**PICARDO AND GARCIA TO ATTEND THE JOINT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

On Sunday the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo and Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia left for London to attend the annual Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) which brings together political leaders from the Overseas Territories and UK Ministers. The JMC will be hosted by the FCO's Minister for the Overseas Territories James Duddridge.

The plenary opening session will be co-chaired by Minister Duddridge, and the Chief Minister, Fabian Picardo. On Monday afternoon, Mr Picardo and Dr Garcia will meet the Minister for Europe, the Rt Hon Lidington MP.

There also will be a meeting of the Political Council of the UK Overseas Territories Association (UKOTA) before the JMC.

The JMC will include a session on the Health and the Environment which Minister Cortes will attend and Minister Isola will be present at the session on Financial Services. There will also be a session specifically on security including the sovereignty of territorial waters.

The delegation will have the opportunity of meeting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Environmental Audit Committee of the House of Commons as well as with a number of different UK Government Ministers and officials.

During the absence of Mr Picardo and Dr Garcia, the Minister for Justice Gilbert Licudi will be the Acting Chief Minister.