



PRESS RELEASE

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Government Embraces Dynamic and Open Democracy

The Government refutes the GSD's renewed call for the establishment of an unnecessary Public Accounts Committee. The Gibraltar Commission on Democratic and Parliamentary Reform, headed by Adolfo Canepa, and which included the Chairman of the GSD and two former AACR and GSD ministers, decided in 2013 that there is no need for such a committee in Gibraltar. The Commission's report reflects its wealth of local expertise and its ability to directly address and respond to Gibraltar's unique needs with bespoke solutions and innovative ideas. Indeed, many of its recommendations have already been implemented with noticeable positive results.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC, said: 'Gibraltar's public finances are in a very healthy state indeed. Public debt has fallen every year of this administration, and continues to fall. We have secured long-term investment in Gibraltar through government-owned companies, which provides security and resilience in a post-Brexit economic environment. I am confident that I will be able to declare a very healthy surplus in our public finances during this year's Budget.

'Mr Clinton's blind willingness to pursue the one-size-fits-all model for our Parliament shows he doesn't understand that Gibraltar's core strength is the flexibility and dynamism of our approach to governance. What may be best practice in one jurisdiction does not necessarily mean that it will apply to Gibraltar. We cannot have the same systems in Gibraltar with 17 parliamentarians and four thousand public sector workers which apply in the UK with 650 parliamentarians and hundreds of thousands of public sector workers. A Public Accounts Committee would be like holding the committee stage of the Budget every day of every year and would grind Gibraltar to a halt, something which only our common enemies would welcome. Whilst it is crucial that we understand what works well for others, we must also understand how to adapt established procedures to best serve our own community. That is why whether we are in Government or in Opposition, we will not agree to a Public Accounts Committee although we make all our accounts public and open to scrutiny like never before. Indeed, the Government that I lead makes more financial information public and available to every citizen online than any Government in the history of Gibraltar. The Opposition don't even have to ask for information, we publish it automatically every month.

'A prime example of this is the introduction by this Government of monthly meetings of Parliament, which are open to the public, televised, live-streamed, and placed permanently on the public record in Hansard. This also means that there are more opportunities than ever before for the Opposition to ask questions in Parliament and for the Government to answer under full public scrutiny. Embracing democratic debate and being dynamic in our approach to governance has



proven and continues to be Gibraltar's core and unique strength in navigating the challenges we face.

'Incidentally, in our Parliament we should be proud of the ability of members to ask multiple supplementaries, something which is not the case in the UK Parliament because they have so many members. Our Parliament is better in this way than the Westminster Parliament and this systems gives Oppositions greater opportunity to ask detailed questions.'