



Deputy Chief Minister

PRESS RELEASE

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Garcia highlights value of stronger bond with the Commonwealth

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has said that Gibraltar values its relationship with the United Kingdom and that the Government is now working on strengthening links with the Commonwealth. Dr Garcia was addressing a gathering of the NLC Commonwealth Forum at an official function last night.

The Deputy Chief Minister explained that there has been considerable interest from Commonwealth countries in exploring ties with Gibraltar since the Brexit referendum last year. He added that a number of meetings had already taken place and that the Government was keen to peruse the relationship further.

Dr Garcia explained that Gibraltar already participated in a number of Commonwealth organisations like the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Commonwealth Telecommunications Union and the Commonwealth Games.

The Deputy Chief Minister reminded those present that he last addressed the Commonwealth Forum in May before the Brexit referendum had happened. Gibraltar does not want Brexit and did not vote for it, he said, but we are now working closely and positively with the United Kingdom Government on EU exit. He also outlined the work that the Government had done with the Devolved Administrations, the Crown Dependencies and the other UK Overseas Territories.

The Deputy Chief Minister explained the background to the 1967 referendum and said that the people had voted to remain British despite the consequences that would follow. He declared that this is not 1704 when people and territories could be handed over from one monarch to another regardless of the wishes of the people living there. This is 2017 and the wishes of people must be sacrosanct and paramount, he said.

The delegation from the Commonwealth Forum of the National Liberal Club, who are in Gibraltar at their own expense, will remain here until Saturday with a full programme of



events. This will allow them to take back to the UK a better understanding of what Gibraltar is all about.