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THIRD INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International

Establishing a pragmatic path to greater autonomy and decolonization

1. Introduction

The British Overseas Territories, especially those in the Caribbean, are experiencing a period of significant uncertainty. There is the still unresolved issue of 'Brexit', and the likely impact on the territories in regard to trade, aid, and political cooperation.¹ Pressure is also coming from the UK Parliament on three fronts. First, the requirement to have public registers of the beneficial owners of companies. Second, the legalization of same-sex marriage. Third, the call for diluting 'Overseas' status to allow locally resident British Overseas Territory and UK citizens

2.1. *Extending the franchise*

In many of the territories, including those in the Caribbean, there is a notable difference between total population size and the numbers who are able to vote in elections. The restricted franchise is a result of the tight controls over 'Belonger' status, and it is an issue that should be considered when gauging the quality of democracy, political participation, and civic engagement. Formal nationality issues are the responsibility of the UK, but each territory has its own more informal arrangements – equivalent to local citizenship. Belonger status (this term is used in a generic way because territories use different terminology: Caymanian; Turks and Caicos Islander) is granted to those individuals who are seen to have particularly strong links with a territory.

Being a Belonger is highly prized and the status is passed down from parent to child. This is the case in the

- Where appropriate to tighten and/or enforce campaign finance laws. For example, in

a stronger footing. The UK should reconsider its well-established position of keeping support to a minimum, and establish a 'new deal' for the territories. As a first step it needs to make good any losses in support presently provided by the EU beyond 2020. But it needs to go further, and put in place financial support that will upgrade key services, such as health care and education, strengthen infrastructure, and give a real chance for economic growth.

Funding should also be committed for more than just a single year – perhaps three years – to give the territories more certainty when putting their plans in place.

3.1. *Greater support for dealing with immigration*

One example where further financial support could be provided, which might also help boost