



SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

On the Occasion of the Convening of the Legislature

Delivered by His Excellency the Governor
Friday, 5 November 2010



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Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, the job of governing a country would become much easier if you were able to see into the future. However, the renowned management consultant, Peter Drucker, taught that the best way to predict the future was to create it.

The Government has taken this philosophy to heart and is developing a National Plan, a blueprint for change that aims to touch every aspect of life in Bermuda. From streamlining bureaucracy to investing in technology and green initiatives. From establishing a timetable to redress the inequality of access for persons with disabilities to promoting a merit-based civil service, with the emphasis on service. From the restoration of public confidence in Government to the reduction of tax anxiety.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, like other Throne Speeches, today's address will lay out the Government's strategy for the next 12 months. There, however, the similarities between what will be said here today and what has been said in the past will end, because unlike Throne Speeches delivered in the past, today's has been influenced by two unique, contemporary factors: context and culture. Context refers to the post-recessionary climate, a new norm in which even the most resilient economies are being severely tested. Culture reflects the aspirations of Government's new leadership team, aspirations that will bring about change not only in what actions are carried out but in how these actions are executed.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, before setting out the Government's particular objectives and the road map it plans to follow to achieve them, we should spend a little more time looking at the twin dynamics of context and culture.

You have already heard the Government consistently reject the notion of business as usual. It has made clear that, as a new administration, the only acceptable response to the current post recessionary global economic realignment, which is characterised by slower growth and greater volatility, is to ensure that disciplined and effective financial management is applied across all Government ministries.

Accordingly, the Government proposes to restrain growth in spending and to effect savings

of at least \$150 million in the first year. In addition to reduced spending, Ministries will be required to obtain the best value for money. This objective will be achieved with the help of the new Procurement, Contracts and Project Management Office. Instead of an entitlement culture, a needs-driven culture of accountability is being proposed that will bring enhanced oversight and greater compliance in the area of public service delivery.

Additionally, this Government will strengthen the independent oversight agencies integral to Bermuda's system of governance. To ensure impartial legal advice, the Office of the Auditor General will be provided with funding for an independent counsel and amendments to the Audit Act 1990 will be made to this effect. Similarly, the Ombudsman will be afforded a like opportunity.

As part of the Government's efforts to support the economy, it has formed a Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

This exciting new Ministry will focus on improving the economy by addressing the needs of local business and the career aspirations of Bermudians. These goals are not mutually exclusive as improving the economy will create more opportunities for Bermudians and Bermuda businesses. By bringing Labour and Training, Employment, Work Permits and the Bermuda College into this Ministry, a better assessment of the needs of the economy will be possible. This initiative will also enable the Government to monitor skills required, identify Bermudians that are looking for jobs and ensure that the right training is provided to Bermudians to meet the needs of our employers. This Ministry will also oversee the process and ensure fairness and equity before determining that there are no suitably qualified Bermudians to fill jobs before work permits are issued. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry also will focus on creating opportunities for Bermuda businesses and Bermudian entrepreneurs to start or enhance their business by expanding the Economic Empowerment Zone. Therefore this Ministry will also be responsible for the Bermuda Small Business Development Corporation. This Ministry also has responsibility for the Post Office, which currently costs significantly more than it earns. New revenue streams are to be sought to reverse this trend.

Additionally, the Ministry of Business Development and Tourism is designed to help strengthen the economy, enhance our competitiveness and look for new sources of business so that our economy remains healthy and vibrant. This Ministry houses those Departments that focus on

the current pillars of Tourism and International Business. We must ensure that we sustain and strengthen our competitiveness in both areas. To this end, this Ministry includes the Department of Tourism, the Registrar of Companies and the Business Development and Regulatory Unit.

While the Government has clearly demonstrated that it is intent on jumpstarting economic recovery for Bermuda and her people, the violence that has plagued our community must continue to be met with firm law enforcement. To this end it is forming the Ministry of National Security, a Ministry that will be responsible for public safety and for strengthening the professional standards of the Bermuda Police Service, the Bermuda Regiment, and the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service. The Bermuda Police Service has strongly led in the fight against crime and to provide them with additional support, the formation of a second Police Support Unit (PSU) is being considered. This Unit will provide visible, effective patrols to suppress anti-social and violent activity in the areas most in need.

Furthermore, a Gang Task Force has been formed, comprised of representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups. The Task Force will work with the US Consulate to strengthen the intelligence sharing between our two countries. This coordinated effort will direct its resources to apprehending those responsible for gun crime and discouraging those at risk from joining that destructive lifestyle.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, with strong enforcement must come socially conscious interventions that recognise the symptomatic nature of much of the anti-social behaviour so prevalent in our community. To this end a High Risk Adolescent Intervention Team will be implemented through a realignment of duties within the Department of Child and Family Services.

It is worth observing at this juncture that the Government knows that the people of Bermuda expect to be heard by the country's leaders. According to the multi-talented American author, poet, historian and philosopher Henry David Thoreau, the greatest compliment he was ever paid was to be asked for an opinion and then to have his answer "attended to". The Government of Bermuda has listened closely to the people in regard to the fight against crime and, as a result, is taking steps to tackle the problem of criminals re-offending. In an effort to close the gap between the Courts, Corrections and Probation Services, the Ministry of

Justice will now assume responsibility for the Department of Corrections, the Department of Court Services, Alternatives to Incarceration and the National Drug Control Department, in addition to its existing responsibilities.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, the Government has created a new Ministry of Youth, Families, Sports and Community Development.

Our children are our most precious resource. We must not ignore the troubled youth that need attention but they also cannot overshadow the many more numerous young people who are also striving to be the best that they can be. In order to provide the best opportunity for all, we must provide support to families and develop community programmes that will help to produce successful youth and families. The Ministry includes Departments that focus on supporting our children, our youth, their families and the community. This includes: the Departments of Youth, Sport and Recreation, Human Affairs, Community and Cultural Affairs, Child and Family Services, and the Department of Financial Assistance.

The Government also intends to recognise the World War service of many men and women of Bermuda, particularly those who protected our shores locally, whose service to date has gone largely unrecognised and seemingly unappreciated. That is a regrettable and altogether unacceptable circumstance that this Government is committed to remedy. The Government believes that every man and woman who served this country during the Great Wars, whether on the foreign front or here in Bermuda, is deserving of recognition and the Island's gratitude. To this end, a new war memorial, designed and built by the Ministry of Public Works, is being erected here on the grounds of the Cabinet Office. The new memorial will be comprised of seven marble plaques engraved with the names of every Bermuda resident who served. The names will be displayed on seven individual walls that will form a semicircle around a rolling ball water fountain resting on a granite base. Seating will be provided at the memorial and it is expected that it will be a serene place where War Veterans, other members of an appreciative public and visitors may gather to reflect upon and to pay respect to those who served our Island so heroically during the Great Wars.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, the Civil Service employs thousands of Bermudians who administer

critical programmes, implement Government policy and keep the machinery of government running. In the decade since the Review of the Civil Service, the Government has grown and the social responsibility assumed through policies like Future Care and free Child care has, by definition, affected the role of the public service. Therefore, the Government will update the 1999 review of the Civil Service aimed at maximising the potential and output of the public sector.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, the adoption of the Cambridge Curriculum, is an important step towards the measurement of student performance and achievement by internationally recognized standards. To date, the curriculum has been introduced in Mathematics, Science and English. To compliment the quality of the new curriculum, the Ministry of Education will introduce Master Principals to model effective instructional leadership which leads to improved teacher quality. This step will be part of a deliberate strengthening of site leadership to support further autonomy at the schools. In addition, Amendments will be made to the Education Act to strengthen the Board of Education and to ensure that the structure for accountability that is to be created by the Board and the Commissioner of Education is holistic and addresses all relevant constituencies. These actions will increase student achievement, our foremost priority.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, on the healthcare front, as a new hospital begins to take shape the health of Bermudians will continue to be a priority of this Government. Quite simply, quality care must be affordable. 2011 will see changes in regulatory requirements for health insurers and by 2012 more affordable insurance options will be available to the public. With that reform, and to promote dignity in healthcare, the Health Council will reform the minimum health insurance benefit to ensure it is a 21st Century package for our people.

In conjunction with the Bermuda College and the Ministry of Education, a Health Module will be developed for the senior schools leading to the direct employment of graduates in those healthcare fields for which they have been trained.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, the environmental miracle of Bermuda's coral reefs must be preserved.

During this Session the Legislature will be invited to take note of a report entitled “A Summary of the Economic Valuation of Bermuda’s Coral Reefs” prepared by the Department of Conservation Services. The Government will lead the development of sustainable coral reef management, prioritising the passage of legislation specific to marine ecosystems.

In a similar vein, Bermuda remains a comparatively clean Island, but this reputation is under threat. Violations of the Waste and Litter Control Act 1987 through improper setting out of waste, littering and illegal dumping is threatening the health of our nation and harming Bermuda’s land and marine environment. The Government will invoke powers invested by the Waste and Litter Control Act to combat this problem on several fronts. Upon consultation with Bermuda’s environmental non-governmental organisations, the Government will prohibit the importation and use of certain materials that are deemed to exacerbate the litter problem and will invoke the waste haulier licensing requirement in the Act to combat illegal dumping.

As an island which relies on rain as its primary source of drinking water, increased demand but lower rainfall has strained existing systems. The Government will develop a Water Supply and Servicing Master Plan for Bermuda. This plan will evaluate our water infrastructure, determine Government’s necessary reserves and consider whether a regulatory authority is required.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, energy demand and the consequences of increased use are global issues. For Bermuda, the government will mount an energy conservation campaign targeting young people with a view to creating a lifelong sense of personal responsibility in the conservation of energy. Incentives promoting investment in an alternate, green energy source by homeowners and businesses will continue to be promoted.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, despite the global economic downturn, Bermuda is one of the world’s leading centres for international business. However, this is a fiercely competitive industry and we must do everything in our power to protect our lead in this area. Our tax protection undertaking legislation, which is due to expire in 2016, has made an important contribution to this success and has been replicated by some of our competitors. In order to maintain our competitiveness, the Government will bring a Bill to extend the tax protection regime to 2035.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, balanced economic growth requires stimulus in the domestic economy as well as the international sector. This Government has been encouraged by the positive impact of the economic empowerment zone in Northeast Hamilton.

To further develop economic momentum, transition zones will be established along the perimeters of the existing boundaries of the EEZ in Northeast Hamilton.

In addition, EEZs will be established in St. George's and Sandys during this Session, and the Bermuda Small Business Development Corporation Act will be repealed to facilitate the activities of new enterprises in economic empowerment zones across the Island through a Bermuda Economic Development Corporation.

The role of Government is to help its citizens in times of need and to devise a framework that supports the honest work of its people. To that end, the Government will enshrine equality of treatment with an Equal Pay Act.

Another measure designed to assist the people of Bermuda is an overhaul of immigration law.

The task of administering Bermuda's myriad immigration laws is highly challenging. The uncertainty, subjectivity and ambiguity created by the law in this area must be addressed. Therefore, the Government will embark on a wholesale overhaul of the Bermuda Immigration and Protection Act 1956, guided by a need for continuity, protection and fairness.

In the area of cultural affairs, the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs is developing the National Cultural Heritage Policy Document. This policy will be a major step in demonstrating this Government's commitment to the promotion, preservation and celebration of our culture, cultural icons and our culture bearers. The Government believes this will foster improved goodwill amongst the cultural communities, artists, supporters of culture and those involved in the entertainment industry.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, Government's spending must reflect global economic conditions and be tempered with prudence, compassion and foresight. As ministries identify savings in this

fiscal year and in preparation for the next, the result will be a Government that is leaner, more efficient but without the padding sometimes relied upon for ‘wants’ as opposed to ‘needs’. We must live within our means and this Government will lead by example.

We have the opportunity with hard work and cohesive efforts that engage our entire community to have a country that will be the envy of the world. This Government will reach out to all in our community to create better working relationships. We must embrace the diversity that is Bermuda and turn that to our advantage.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, during this Session the Legislature will be invited to consider a number of Bills and statutory instruments including:

- The Bail Amendment (No. 2) Act 2010;
- The Consumer Protection Act 2010;
- Insurance Amendment (No. 3) Act 2010;
- The Companies Amendment (No. 3) Act 2010;
- The Pensions Increase Order 2010;
- The Morgan’s Point Resort Act 2010;
- The Architects Act 2010;
- Prisons Amendment (Foreign Inmates) Act 2010; and,
- A new Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service Discipline Code.

As a new season unfolds in Bermuda’s political landscape there remains a need for common effort in pursuit of common purpose. We must strive for harmony in our discourse and not disagree just for the sake of disagreement. The community is tired of that and wants a country that is prepared to have all hands on deck pulling in the same direction. That which divides us cannot be allowed to trump that which unites us.

Oliver Wendell Holmes summed it up this way: “I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving”.

Traditionally at this stage the Governor adds some words of his own. On the special, and infrequent, occasion of a Throne Speech within days of a new Cabinet I want to add little. I do want to say that I join the many Bermudians who will wish the new Administration

success in their fundamental goals. I have in mind their emphasis on public confidence in Government, on the widest look at social questions and on the need for sustainable support to the essential services.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, I declare this Session open and may God grant you wisdom in your deliberations.

Sir Richard Hugh Turton Gozney KCMG, CVO
Governor and Commander-in-Chief
Bermuda
5 November 2010