



**‘Let Us Build
One Another,
Together.’**

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

On The Occasion Of The Convening Of The Bermuda Legislature

Delivered by His Excellency the Governor Friday, 4 November 2011



2011 SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, Bermuda today is facing historic challenges. The Government is strongly convinced that the time has come for all who love Bermuda to recognise the obligation to work to build one another, together.

“Let Us Build One Another, Together” is the literal translation of an Nguni expression, **“Masakhane!”** One could also say: “Let Us Build Each Other Up.”

South African President, Nelson Mandela, chose this expression to mobilize his people in joint endeavour in building a new nation cradled in reconciliation, peace and justice.

For Bermuda, at no time in its recent past has there been a greater need to call upon this Island’s collective resources of ingenuity and courage and its tenacious spirit of community. Bermuda’s people and the economic fabric of society are being severely tested. Tough choices are being forced upon us all. Tough decisions are required to find solutions to the formidable challenges posed by a world in financial turmoil.

Many of the difficulties that confront Bermuda and its people are due to the fact that the global economy is more interconnected than ever. The simple truth is that there is no escape from the contagious and harmful effects of the economic downturn in those countries with which Bermuda does business.

Your Government is not deterred. It has made clear that it will take decisive action. It will be resolute in its efforts so that Bermuda will emerge stronger and more united. The Government will continue to provide caring leadership that reflects an understanding of the real pain being suffered by Bermudians.

Nor will your Government be discouraged by those who doubt the resilience and strength of character that is the legacy of Bermudians past.

As Nelson Mandela observed: It always seems impossible until it is done. In this Session of Parliament the Government will introduce a cohesive strategy that will address the challenges and find the solutions that will restore harmony and prosperity to Bermuda's people.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, the Government concurs with the philosophy of Sir Winston Churchill who said that he never worried about action, only about inaction. A strong bias for action underpins the stimulus programme that the Government is announcing today.

The programme will help re-ignite demand for Bermuda-based human capital. The plan makes clear that job creation is "job one". Your Government is committed not to job creation soon or job creation as soon as possible, but to job creation now.

While job creation remains its top priority, the Government's stimulus plan will also address the needs of citizens in a great many other areas.

These include the provision of support to those experiencing hardship; legislation that will address family issues; initiatives that will benefit seniors; measures in support of education, public safety and justice; steps that will help strengthen the economy; and plans to continue to transform the Government and strengthen its ability to deliver value for money to its taxpayers.

Some commentators are of the opinion that time is on our side and that the United States of America will soon be forced to introduce further growth-generating measures which will indirectly assist the Bermuda economy.

Your Government does not intend to wait. It is committed now to taking bold steps of its own in order to encourage employment. Such action is not only required in order to assist Bermudian families. It is also, lest it is forgotten, a central and enduring element of the social contract implicit in the Progressive Labour Party's election victory of 1998.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, spearheading the Government's national job stimulus plan is the Job Corps Programme and a new one-stop career centre. Of equal importance is the drawing up of new workforce development legislation and modification of the existing employment laws.

Some provisions of these employment laws have been shown to have the unintended effect of encouraging the hiring of non-Bermudians over Bermudians. In the current economic environment the need to change these laws now takes on a special sense of urgency.

The Bermuda adaptation of the Job Corps Programme — recommended in the Mincy Report — will provide eligible Bermudians, aged 16 and over, with free education and training designed to equip them to compete for stable, long-term, well-paid careers.

By integrating the teaching of academic knowledge, vocational and employability skills and social competencies, the Job Corps scheme will provide students with classroom theory and practical learning experiences that will contribute to success in the workforce and in life.

The Job Corps programme will come into full effect in the second quarter of 2012. It will be managed by a partnership between Government and the private sector.

Such partnerships must be the wave of the future. This initiative could not have been progressed as far as it has without the participation of companies such as Axis, Renaissance Reinsurance Ltd., Atlantic Philanthropies Bermuda Limited and HSBC Bermuda.

However, the Government is not waiting for the implementation of the Job Corps initiative to begin to provide opportunities to unemployed young people. It recognises the need to provide assistance now to those between the ages of 18 and 25.

The Government is pleased to announce that the Tri 30 Work Experience initiative is currently underway. Under the energy and auspices of the Ministry of Community Development, Tri 30 began on 26 September 2011 and will run until December 2011, providing work for about thirty young people for a three month period.

This programme enables these young people to reset their personal dials by providing a jump-start to entry level jobs. Thanks to the synergy between private and public partnerships, participants are also provided with some work training courses. These include Preparatory Workshops covering such topics as Work Ethics and Time Management.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, another employment measure for young people to be announced shortly is the YES initiative, named after the initials of the Youth Empowerment Scheme. This is intended to help young unemployed persons secure jobs as part of the work crew undertaking renovations on the “Springfield” National Trust property that the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation operate on a long term lease as the “Sandys Community Centre”.

The one-stop career centre will see the merger of the National Training Board and the Department of Labour and Training. This has been identified as a priority in order to more efficiently meet the needs of both job-seekers and employers.

The centre will be an active participant in the Job Corps programme, assisting successful graduates of the Programme in finding gainful employment. It will coordinate with the unit that processes work permits, ensuring that work permits will only be granted after the career centre has confirmed that there are no suitably qualified Bermudians available for a position.

In addition, all unemployed clients of the Financial Assistance Department that are able to work will automatically become clients of the one stop career centre, which

will assist in obtaining employment for those persons so that they can re-enter the job market as soon as possible.

The workplace has changed dramatically in the last two decades. Many job categories have already gone the way of the dinosaur while new categories are being created.

These new jobs often require different skills. For example, Information Technology is on the leading edge of job creation. There is an urgent need for the training and re-training of Bermudian workers to equip them to take advantage of these opportunities.

The Government is pleased to share that it is engaged in advanced discussions with Cisco Systems, the worldwide leader in networking products and services, for the establishment of a Cisco Academy in Bermuda.

This facility will provide certified training for Bermudians and prepare them for work in the IT industry. This is yet another avenue the Government has worked hard to open as it continues to ensure that Bermuda's young people are equipped to become fully-fledged members of the skilled workforce in today's knowledge-based world economy.

While the Government can provide the programmes to prepare people for work, it must be remembered that it is not the Government that creates jobs. Private industry creates demand for jobs that add economic value and drive development. Government provides the enabling environment for private sector job creation.

The Government will table a Bill in the first session of Parliament to provide work permit exemptions and permanent residence to eligible job creators in businesses that, amongst other criteria: have a significant number of Bermudians represented at all levels of the organisation; and provide entry level positions to young Bermudians graduating from high school and college.

Government is committed to protecting the interests of Bermudians and the key

sectors of the economy that provide jobs and other significant economic benefits to Bermuda.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, it was stated in the 2010 Throne Speech that immigration legislation, which dates from 1956, is to receive a major overhaul.

This is being done in phases. A Land Policy Review Group has been empanelled to review the various policies on land holding and disposition in Bermuda, with particular emphasis on Permanent Resident's Certificate holders and the foreign purchaser market. In addition, this year, the Government will focus on outlawing sham marriages and will remove legal barriers denying home ownership to non-Bermudian members of Bermudian families.

At the same time, legislation will be amended to remove certain incentives that allow employers to choose to hire non-Bermudians over Bermudians, because they do not have to pay social insurance for persons on temporary work permits or include work permit holders in occupational pension schemes.

At a time when there is a disturbing level of unemployment, there is a greater need for more robust measures that protect Bermudians and encourage their employment.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, the Government views its responsibility for sustaining Bermuda's, and indeed, the planet's environment as a sacred trust. It is currently developing a National Infrastructure Strategy for Bermuda which will be completed before the end of this calendar year.

A key component of the infrastructure strategy is the development of the waterfront in the City of Hamilton. The Government, the Corporation of Hamilton and the private sector under the auspices of Bermuda First have formed a Steering Group to drive forward this exciting project. The development will generate jobs and transform the

waterfront in a manner that preserves its stunning beauty while creating a dynamic new hub for business and entertainment.

Green initiatives are the waves of the future, with rich potential to create new jobs and opportunities for entrepreneurs. In this Session of Parliament, the Government will introduce legislation and policies required to implement the innovative measures contained in the Energy White Paper.

Turning to initiatives impacting the economy in general, it was Bill Gates who said that we tend to over-estimate the change that will occur in the next couple of years but often under-estimate the change that could occur in the next ten years.

Taking that admonition regarding long-range planning to heart, the Government will table legislation to encourage further foreign investment in Bermuda. Foreign investment is associated with the transfer of technology, job creation and maintaining a competitive edge in areas of comparative advantage.

A review of the Companies Act 1981 has been undertaken. In particular the 60/40 ownership regulation was examined with the express aim of finding ways to allow local businesses easier access to capital. While the 60/40 provision is generally thought to have served Bermuda well over the years, now there is a strong view that it could be blocking businesses from access to foreign direct investment.

Previously when discussions were held, there was both more resistance and a more protectionist stance adopted by stakeholders. That has changed. Given today's economic landscape, there is apparent agreement between all business sectors that they need greater access to capital. In effect, today's mantra now states: 'Free up Bermuda'.

The Government believes that it is also time to review Bermuda's ability to attract and service those who are investing or are interested in investing in the country. As a result, the Government will soon launch an inter-agency partnership that will provide

a rapid-response capability in support of plans and projects considered economically important to Bermuda.

The unit will provide more red carpet and less red tape.

In the same vein, the Ministry of Business Development and Tourism will modernise and streamline the current system of vetting corporate registrations and share transfers.

On the international business front, plans are in development to actively market Bermuda as a jurisdiction for Islamic Finance. Interest has been expressed already at the recent Business Bermuda briefing in New York, where details of the work being done by the Islamic Finance Task Force were shared.

Coincident with this exciting development, there is now the possibility of new air links with Emirates Airlines connecting Bermuda to dynamic and wealthy states in the Middle East including Dubai, Bahrain and Qatar.

The Government recognises the importance of diversifying the economy as Bermuda must attract new sources of revenue. Islamic Finance, asset management and green initiatives are all part of a new and enhanced model.

In its exploration of new frontiers, the Government is keen to establish a Bermuda Space Enterprise Zone, and a Communication Orbital Slot which will strengthen Bermuda's promotion as a global telecommunications hub.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, the unrivalled beauty of these islands is a special gift of which every Bermudian is justly proud. It is a gift shared with thousands of visitors each year, one which helps provide a livelihood for Bermudians and guest workers.

Given the context of today's environment, the Government will update and modernise

the Hotel Concession Act, at all times keeping Bermudians in the picture for jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

The Department of Tourism, in the short-term, will adopt a set of strategic initiatives to address the industry's immediate needs while Bermuda's long-term National Tourism Plan is being developed.

The initiatives include the launch of a new tourism brand, the start of a programme of corporate games, the reintroduction of college weeks, a scheme to convert cruise visitors to air visitors. A further option is consideration of a referendum on whether Bermuda should allow gaming.

The Government also recognises that more must be done to promote local entertainment. Many of you have already attended some of the bi-weekly tourism events during this summer which showcased Bermudian entertainment.

A signature entertainment product is being developed that will headline Bermudian entertainers and provide them with work, especially in hotels where hiring Bermudians is a pre-condition for securing concessions from Government.

There has also been a constant refrain that there are not enough activities in Bermuda to occupy our visiting guests. As a result, the Department of Tourism will approach cruise directors, cruise operators and entertainment promoters to increase and promote the number of activities and events available on the Island.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, the Government has listened attentively to the views of the community it serves and the challenges facing those who are struggling to cope with rising prices.

Accordingly, the Government aims to implement the findings of the Price Control Commission, including updating the relevant legislation, if this is considered

necessary, to alleviate some of the hardships being endured by Bermuda's consumers. This exercise has begun and is intended to be a collaborative effort between suppliers, retailers and consumers.

One cost that impacts all households and businesses is the fuel surcharge. The new Energy Commission is examining that concern and the Government awaits its findings.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, providing the mechanism for creating jobs and getting our unemployed back to work is indeed a priority. This reduces the strain on our helping agencies such as the Department of Financial Assistance.

However, we must also assure our citizens that there will always be assistance for those experiencing hardship.

Many will recall that the Occupational Pension legislation was amended to allow persons in financial stress to access to their pension entitlements to meet certain financial obligations.

Government employees are not immune to those same hardships and the Government will amend the Public Service Superannuation Act 1981 to extend similar allowances to participants in the scheme.

Further, the Government will also be modernising the Contributory Pensions Act 1970 to ensure that those in need receive the greatest benefit.

Doing more with less means we have to make the best use of available resources by focusing on the most important goals.

The proposed amendments are two-fold. First, the legislation will be amended to implement means testing with respect to the payment of non-contributory benefits as

opposed to entitlement as a right. Second, the Act is to be amended to mandate that self-employed persons who consistently neglect paying their pension contributions without presenting a valid reason will be denied a non-contributory pension. Everyone who is gainfully employed must contribute their fair share.

In addition, the Government will amend the Contributory Pensions Act 1970 to prevent an employer with pension contribution arrears relating to a prior business from registering an additional business with the Department of Social Insurance unless the arrears have been settled or an agreed payment plan is being properly maintained.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, a critical component in the fight to reduce gang membership is preserving and strengthening the family unit, regardless of whether or not both parents live in the same home.

The Government will provide the Bermuda Family Council with a statutory footing. The Council's aim is to promote family cohesion through the development of effective parenting skills. Also in support of families, the Government will establish shared parenting legislation which will seek to avoid bias and provide parents with equal rights and responsibilities when it comes to the welfare of their children.

Seniors will be the focus of a Bermuda national strategy on aging. Amendments to the Human Rights Act will be tabled to eliminate age discrimination. Government will introduce elder abuse legislation and health insurance reforms.

One such reform that is already being addressed is the matter of upfront payments for medical treatment. Such payments are a source of hardship to many seniors and others. No-one who is paying for health insurance should have to forgo medical attention because they cannot afford to pay a physician up front and then wait to be reimbursed.

The Government is also reviewing the eligibility criteria for Financial Assistance so that seniors owning their own home are not automatically excluded from access to Financial Assistance.

This review has been prompted by some anomalies in a strict application of the eligibility criteria which are seen as unduly punitive. The Government recognises that this is a time when there is a need to ensure the appropriate safety nets are in place for those who are unable to work and to provide for themselves. The mere fact of home ownership may not justify the denial of Financial Assistance.

In keeping with its track record of dealing with sometimes controversial social issues, your Government will also be tackling discrimination. While the Government is aware of the sensitivities in the community surrounding sexual orientation, it does not condone discrimination in employment and accommodation based on a person's lifestyle choices.

Accordingly, Government will assess whether it is feasible to introduce an Equality Act.

Your Government believes that effective philanthropy must always ask three questions.

First, what needs to be done? Second, how can we make a difference? Finally, and most importantly, why are we doing this?

Bermuda has a number of excellent charities striving to assist in building a better community and a better world. However, in the present environment of fiscal tightening, the Government as well as the business community has reduced the amount of grants to charitable organisations.

The Government will be formalising social pacts with the private sector and the various charitable and sports organisations to examine how to make better use of the limited resources. This is the social contract in action.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, I would like to turn now to the subject of education.

This is one area of national development whose critical importance has never been in question. In the words of the ancient Greek philosopher Diogenes, “...it is the foundation of every nation”.

During this year’s National Budget Debate, the Minister of Education said, “*Our plan for education reform is simple — it is as simple as a return to basics. Our plan is to focus — single-mindedly — on the reason for our existence — to teach our children so that they might learn. Our priority and everything that we do will revolve around students. Everything that we do will be geared to, and with the sole purpose of, positively impacting our students. As the most important stakeholder in our education system, they will occupy the primary position in our thinking, our plans and our programmes as we work to revive public pride in our public school system.*”

To this end, the Ministry of Education has consulted with affected parties regarding amendments it proposes to introduce into the House of Assembly to bring Bermuda in line with international best practice.

The amendments to the Bermuda Educators Council Act 2002 will require that persons who instruct, support and guide students in Bermuda — whether public or private — are fully qualified to do so, in Bermuda and around the world. The amendments will ensure that teachers are certified by subject or specialisation, and by teaching and education level.

The planned amendments will mean that educators at all levels, in the classroom, in administration, or both, will be required to be registered under the Act. Educators will have to meet the requirements relevant to the role that they are performing in schools in order to obtain and maintain educator certification.

If principals are the gatekeepers, teachers are the frontline — the soul of our education

system. It is they who must turn our students into scholars excited about learning by delivering knowledge in an engaging, stimulating and motivating manner.

Twenty-first century learners need 21st century teachers who not only possess twenty-first century literacies themselves, but who can also create the learning environments that will enable their students to develop such skills.

The Government believes that these changes will give parents, schools and the wider community confidence that those charged with educating Bermuda's students meet set qualification standards, and keep abreast of the relevant and up-to-date educational strategies.

Consideration is also being given to the formation of Career Academies in Bermuda's public school system. This initiative, which is also part of the Job Corps and Workforce development plan, will see the Island's business and education sectors working together to agree on, and develop, programmes that will meet the future needs of the economy.

This will operate in tandem with measures that the Government will be taking to augment the existing technical skills training so as to provide alternative pathways to success for our young people.

The Government is keen to assure that those who wish to pursue such a course are prepared fully to seize employment opportunities.

No-one should have any excuse to choose a dead-end life of crime instead of a constructive role of opportunities and growth that contributes positively to their community.

The Ministry of Community Development, which includes the Department of Cultural Affairs, is said to have the smallest budget but a significant and critical job, to stem the erosion of Bermudians' cultural identity.

Just recently, Mrs. Michelle Obama, First Lady of the United States, eloquently expressed the role of the arts. She said: “It is through our music, our literature, our art, drama and dance that we tell the story of our past and we express our hopes for the future. Our artists challenge our assumptions in ways that many cannot and do not. They expand our understandings, and push us to view our world in new and very unexpected ways...”

Despite the financial challenges, the Government will take a new approach to find other ways to inject additional financial support devoted to cultivating the Arts.

During this Parliamentary Session the Government will establish an Artists’ Registry to recognise the level of experience and work history of our Bermudian artists. Further, the Government will explore incentives for artists to showcase their talent and promote Bermuda as a place where artists of all genres can work.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, crime ranks closely behind the economy among Bermudians’ concerns. The way society deals with those who break the law is critical. In order to keep the trust and confidence of the people, your Government believes it must introduce measures to protect the public from violent and dangerous offenders.

Accordingly, in the area of public safety and justice, the Government will amend the Proceeds of Crime Act 1997 and the Criminal Code Act 1907, to allow the seizure of cash and property that are reasonably suspected to be the proceeds of crime.

The Courts will also be allowed, in sentencing, to consider an additional financial penalty by way of a tariff where certain offences are committed in connection with unlawful gang activity.

To mitigate the risk that an inmate granted parole will re-offend, legislation will be tabled to ensure that there is a more structured collaboration between Court Services and the Bermuda Police Service, mindful of the independence of the Parole Board.

Reforms are also pending for the Criminal Code Act 1907 with the aim of: ensuring that a person sentenced for a period of less than two years serves a minimum of twelve months before being eligible for parole; revising the minimum time served for life sentences before parole; and, permitting judicial discretion to be applied to reflect the circumstances of a crime.

The Ministry of Justice is advancing work on policy to address sexual offenders and a mental health treatment Court Programme to address offenders with mental health challenges in a more holistic manner.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, the Government is considering further proposals based on recommendations from the Parliamentary subcommittee on crime and violence, the Inter-Agency Gang Task Force and other outside agencies.

Based on their inputs, the Government intends to re-structure the Inter-Agency Gang Task Force working groups so as to reflect their community roles. Other changes will see key civil servants appointed to lead the groups and the appointment of spokespersons at Ministerial level. The Government believes that the aims of the Inter-Agency Gang Task Force need the support of all sectors of the community to succeed. The Government will report on the progress of the Task Force and on the success of the Bermuda Ceasefire initiative in the coming months.

The Bermuda Police Service has had some significant success in apprehending offenders and this has led to more convictions. In tandem with good law enforcement, there is increased responsibility to ensure that citizens' rights are protected.

Accordingly, the Government intends to modernise the Police complaints mechanism so as to improve the effectiveness of the Police Complaints Authority. The plan is for the Authority's investigative resources to be strengthened, and it is anticipated that retired police officers will be called upon as needed.

Also, the Government is formulating changes to the Defence Act 1965 which established the Bermuda Regiment and conscription.

First, the Government will review a recent decision by the Privy Council to take account of any inconsistencies in any discrimination provisions.

Second, the Government will table legislation that makes provision for new alternatives to conscription, including the introduction of a National Youth Service.

Lastly, a comprehensive review has been completed and recommendations made to improve access to natural justice for those soldiers who find themselves subject to disciplinary procedures. An improved framework for internal military discipline will provide for an election of mode and trial venue in certain circumstances.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, the Government knows that it is important to keep our young people out of the prison system.

Incarceration should only be used where there is no other course of action, for example in cases where the seriousness of the offence, the history of the offender or the risk to the public is such that a prison sentence is warranted. Government will introduce a new sentencing framework for young people including the establishment of a new classification of sanctions related to different types of drugs.

However, there will be less tolerance for impaired driving offences. The Government will table legislation to increase penalties for drunk driving and to expand the use of breathalysers. It also plans to mandate DUI education for all disqualified drivers.

Like many jurisdictions, Bermuda is faced with the challenge of transforming the public sector so as to improve efficiency, give value for taxpayers' money and reduce debt.

In today's context, it is even more important that, in delivering public services to citizens, there is easier access and friendly customer relations.

Technology has changed the way things are done in Government. Just this year, the Government introduced a website to solicit feedback from Government employees.

The responses were overwhelming!

The Government is heartened by the sense of responsibility displayed in some of the suggestions. All suggestions are receiving serious consideration and recommendations are being reviewed for implementation, wherever feasible.

Service transformation is about getting a better deal for citizens and businesses, and a better deal for the taxpayer. It is about putting people's needs at the heart of the system.

To meet the needs of stakeholders, your Government has tasked the Public Service to increase efficiency and professionalism in the delivery of programmes and services. The Government believes that poor service reflects badly on its entire organisation. The concept of service and what determines its level of quality must be understood by all members of the Civil Service from the top to the bottom.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, in regard to health services, the Government will re-design the standard hospital benefit. The re-design will target overseas care costs which are considered excessive.

The Ministry of Health's Finance and Reimbursement Task Group and the Health Benefit Task Group are working closely together to price the new benefit package and develop a financial model for claims payment.

Further, in seeking to provide greater access to basic health services Government

is assessing whether it is more efficient and affordable to the community to assist persons seeking financial assistance for dental and medical expenses by providing them access to these services in Government clinics in the eastern, western and central parishes.

The Government has commenced work on the next phase of good governance legislation. As with any ambitious transformation, your Government had to learn lessons and acknowledge that sometimes mistakes have been made and things have gone wrong. The Government regrets those mistakes.

Accountability is a high priority for the Government of Bermuda. It has sent a strong and unequivocal message that it has zero tolerance for behaviour and practices that do not accord with the highest standards of good governance.

Accordingly, the Government will introduce legislation to enable public authorities including the Director of Internal Audit and the Auditor General to “follow the money”, that is, ensuring that money paid to vendors, contractors and organisations receiving grants is used for the purpose for which it was authorized.

Government also will expand whistle-blower legislation to include persons not covered under the Employment Act including part-time and temporary staff and vendors and contractors.

In addition, Government will introduce legislation outlawing the provision of inducements whether in the public or private sector.

Taken together, these statutes will set out the rules of engagement which must be consistently applied when engaging in financial transactions and contracts in all public authorities, including quangos.

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, in addition to the raft of legislative initiatives that have

been highlighted previously, during this Session, the Legislature will be invited to consider a number of other Bills and statutory instruments, including:

- Criminal Code Amendment Act 2011
- Sexual Offenders Act 2011
- Prisons Amendment Act 2011
- Protected Species Amendment Act 2011
- Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011
- The establishment of a Taxi Authority
- Public Nuisance Legislation (also known as crack-house legislation)
- Electronic Monitoring legislation to extend electronic monitoring to parolees and for a wider range of offenders

Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, it is often said that the first step towards getting somewhere is to decide that you are not going to stay where you are.

The Government believes it has made clear that the measures outlined in today's Throne Speech constitute an unequivocal declaration that it has no intention of allowing Bermuda to stay where it is.

As stated at the outset, the Government's policies and programmes are intended to restore harmony and help put Bermuda back on the road to prosperity. This road will not be smooth nor the goal achieved easily.

Global economic uncertainty is expected to continue and will remain a threat to Bermuda. But your Government wants you to remember the essence of the Bermuda brand, namely, that this Island nation has a reputation for being resourceful and a history of overcoming adversity.

Every sector of society, every citizen from every walk of life is called upon to work together, recognising that each has a role to play, each can contribute to the greater good of the community.

The challenges may be daunting but they are not insurmountable. The Government is firmly of the view that if Bermuda's people work together, if Bermudians put aside their differences, and concentrate on finding common ground, Bermuda will be able to work through this difficult period.

Indeed, it is your Government's intention that Bermuda will emerge from the recession stronger than when it entered it.

“Let Us Build One Another, Together”.

That ringing exhortation by President Mandela ends this summary of the Bermuda Government's programme for next year.

Convention allows the Governor to add a personal codicil. I could talk on different themes notably my determination to help the agencies of law and order where I can. But I shall confine myself to one suggestion.

The Throne Speech has referred to tough choices and tough decisions. I would like to make a plea for donors corporate and personal, to smile upon charities which perform essential services. Bermuda is a country of low taxes and small scale government. Your island is proud of that, and rightly so.

Only about half as much of Bermuda's wealth is used by the public sector, just over 20 per cent of your wealth, as in the UK. Some essential services are left to the voluntary sector. That voluntary sector meets the challenge and delivers some services without which Island life would be different.

Without the St. John Ambulances, for example, Cup Match, motocross, powerboat racing at Ferry Reach and the rugby classic beginning this Sunday would, I think, all be deemed unsafe.

And without the LCCA some patients needing air evacuation for emergency treatment in Baltimore or Boston would suffer. I hope these charities are helped enough for them to support your Island of Bermuda through the recession.

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 his wisdom in your deliberations.

Sir Richard Hugh Turton Gozney KCMG, CVO
Governor and Commander-in-Chief
Bermuda
4 November 2011