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*Challenges and Opportunities in the Process of Decolonization of the Non-Self
Governing Territories in the Caribbean Region: Anguilla and Montserrat*
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1. Introduction

The United Nations Decolonization Committee has a mandate to monitor the situations of non-independent populations and, as far as possible, to support their progress towards *self-determination* and the achievement of *political equality*. Resolution 1541 (XV) of 1960 sets out three legitimate options for exercising full self-determination, namely independence, free association with an independent state, or integration into an

(Connell, 2001: 133). It must be noted, though, that their situations have evolved considerably since that assessment.

The following section presents brief socio-economic profiles of the territories and an overview of their constitutional histories. Section Three examines contemporary international developments for the islands. The global economic crisis with its related impact on investment flows, tourism activity, employment and the financial services sector is viewed as a major blow for their economies. The recent political developments in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) are also seen as a challenge for other British Overseas Territories and particularly those in the Caribbean, which may further complicate their own constitutional negotiations with Britain.² The concluding Section Four discusses opportunities for Anguilla and Montserrat in their interaction with the

Four political parties: Anguilla United Front; Anguilla United Movement; Anguilla
Progressive Party; Anguilla National Party; Anguilla Alliance

Chief Minister: Hon. Osbourne Fleming

Cabinet of four ministers, portfolio responsibilities: (1) Finance and Economic
Development; (2) Infrastructure, Housing, Public Utilities and Agriculture; (3) Social

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position with our administrative services

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In 2006 a new Commission for Constitutional and Electoral Reform was established and a report published in July 2006. The Commission stated that the majority of people consulted were generally satisfied with the status quo but that there was a minority favouring independence. It made recommendations on a number of issues including electoral reform, Anguillian Belonger status, voter eligibility and increased self-government. In 2008 two public fora were held on constitutional reform and in mid-

2008 the government established an Anguillian team to draft a Constitution. The

government's explicit aim is the attainment of a greater degree of self-government. It is reported that discussions with the British Government should take place in 2009 but to date there are no reports of such talks.⁵

Montserrat

It is conceivable that without the spate of natural disasters the country has experienced from 1989 onwards, Montserrat may have proceeded to full independence. In the 1970s, Montserrat appeared to be on a similar trajectory to its Leeward Islands neighbours, Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts and Nevis, territories with which it had historically been joined in a Crown Colony administration. Consequently Montserrat became a full member of the Caribbean Community in 1973. It participated in the West Indies

in some quarters to expand on the original proposals⁷. The Select Committee presented its report in 2005. Most of its recommendations were accepted by the Financial Commission⁸



Councils and the recommendations to remedy it; concerns to further define the status of Belonger and the entitlements and regulation of non-Belongers; more involvement of civil society in governance processes.

These demands also parallel the discussions and developments in other British Overseas Territories in the Caribbean and Bermuda.¹⁰ Developments in each jurisdiction influence

Anguilla and Montserrat are micro-economies, heavily dependent on a very narrow range of service industries (tourism, financial services, construction in particular). Remittances from nationals overseas are also significant for household economies. Economic expansion for Anguilla, in particular, has been fuelled by inflows of FDI. Both islands import most of their requirements in food, energy and manufactured goods. Thus, they are extremely sensitive to developments in the global economy and have been greatly affected by the economic crisis of 2008 – 2009. Moreover, for at least two decades their

the pound sterling, the currency in which most of Montserrat's budget support and development aid is predicated, to the local currency.¹⁴ Nonetheless, Montserrat appears

Anguilla, no doubt because of its more moderate growth rate and primary reliance on development assistance rather than on large inflows of FDI at this point.

A longer term dilemma for Anguilla and Montserrat may well be the future of their financial services sectors. Both are acknowledged to be very minor players among the international financial centres but the rents derived from offshore accounts are a much-needed additional source of revenue for small economies with a small tax base. Since

At the recent meeting of the G-20 countries in London, with a major offensive from the new U.S. administration, several new, tougher measures were agreed on to enforce international financial

The quotation above describes Anguilla almost three hundred years ago and emphasizes the timeless importance for small territories of flexible economic relations, wide social networks and access to the outside world. Anguilla and Montserrat have both benefited

cooperation since most countries are experiencing similar pressures in the context of the

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Hogan C. *Statement by Hon. Claude Hogan (Montserrat) Caribbean Regional Seminar*

*on Implementation of Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism:
Next Steps in Decolonization* St. George's, Grenada, 22-24 May 2007

CRS/2007/CRP.12

Hughes Fawcett M. *Closing Statement by Marguerite Hughes Fawcett—Dominica*