

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 93/2007

17 October 2007

The Opposition regrets the intemperate language used by Mr Caruana when referring to the address given by the Leader of the Opposition to the United Nations 4th Committee in New York.

Mr Caruana should understand that no number of tantrums on his part is going to deflect the Opposition from defending our policies which we consider to be in the best interests of Gibraltar.

It is clear that Mr Caruana is of the opinion that only Governments may address the United Nations. He should know by now that this is not the case. In respect of some territories, there have been addresses from ten or twelve delegations including different political parties, non-Governmental organisations and individuals from the territory concerned.

The Opposition cannot understand why Mr Caruana should be so upset. The views expressed by Mr Bossano before the 4th Committee are the same as those he expressed previously to the Committee of 24 and to the UN seminar that took place in Grenada earlier this year, as the views of the Opposition. This simply reflects the fact that the Government and the Opposition have a different view on how to address the decolonisation issue.

In view of the policy differences between the Government and the Opposition on this issue, it is perfectly legitimate to present the UN with the full picture, reflecting the views of both sides, as opposed to a one-sided version from Mr Caruana alone.

The annual consensus decision between the United Kingdom and Spain, which does not require a vote, has been proceeded with as in previous years. This calls for the decolonisation of Gibraltar through bilateral talks between the two countries in the spirit of the Brussels agreement.

We welcome that the UK has heeded our call to send the same message at the UN as it sends to us, and at least they have explained that their support for the consensus decision is constrained by their commitment not to continue with this process unless Gibraltar is content for them to do so.

However, it is important to note, nonetheless, that the effect of the annual consensus decision is to perpetuate colonialism in Gibraltar, in the sense that it is a mechanism to bring about Gibraltar's decolonisation, which can only be valid if it has not happened already.

The Opposition think that the United Kingdom should have gone beyond explaining its qualified support, and should not have supported the consensus at all, in which case the text would probably not have been there.

ENDS