

## **STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION**

109/2008

9 October 2008

In his latest tantrum Mr Caruana seems to have been upset by the speech delivered by Opposition Leader Joe Bossano to the 4<sup>th</sup> Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The Opposition would like to make it clear that we did not intend that the speech should hurt Mr Caruana's feelings, given the increasing frequency of his outbursts he is obviously going through a very sensitive phase in life.

However, Mr Caruana must understand that in a democracy people are entitled to hold a different opinion to him and are entitled to freely express that opinion, be it at Casemates Square, at the United Nations or anywhere else.

Given that the view of the Opposition is not the same as the view of the Government, Mr Bossano has a duty and an obligation to make that distinction clear. Mr Caruana may well be the present Chief Minister of the present GSD Government, but he does not have a monopoly on freedom of expression or freedom of political thought.

Mr Caruana may not be aware, for instance, that there were a total of 70 petitioners in addition to one from Gibraltar before the 4<sup>th</sup> Committee of the UN General Assembly this time round. This included four on the subject of Guam and no less than 62 on the question of Western Sahara. Clearly, neither the 4<sup>th</sup> Committee nor anyone else seems to have a problem with different views being expressed by different speakers and nobody else sought to exercise censorship on the basis that it may or may not embarrass the Government of the respective territory.

Mr Caruana's objection to Mr Bossano's use of the term "territorial Government" defies all logic. He should know that this is UN terminology and it is the term that the UN itself uses to describe the Governments of the remaining 16 Non-self-governing territories of which Gibraltar is one. However, the Opposition would like to make clear, for the avoidance of doubt, that Mr Bossano's use of this term was not intended to downgrade Mr Caruana or to undermine his status or his sense of self-importance. Nothing could have been further from Mr Bossano's mind.

It is also rather odd that Mr Caruana should equate his own political interests and the partisan interests of the GSD Government with the interests of Gibraltar as if both were the same thing. The interests of Gibraltar and the interests of the GSD are not the same thing. Indeed, in the view of the Opposition it was precisely

in the interests of Gibraltar that Mr Bossano should attend and put across our point of view.

Given all the above, the Opposition regret that Mr Caruana was so upset but are nonetheless happy to note that at least on this occasion he was not moved to tears!

ENDS