**Statement by Premier Alden McLaughlin**

**Project Future Update**

**6 May, 2016**

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to address a most erroneous and misleading editorial in today’s “Compass”.

Under the sensationalized title: *The EY Report: Requiem for Recommendations,* the editorial team have chosen to voice opinions that are in no way based on fact, but demonstrate a willful misunderstanding of the work of my Government and the Civil Service, in relation to the *Project Future Programme*.

I am fully cognizant that an Editorial is an opinion piece but that does not give a so called reputable publication a license to ignore the facts. They have also chosen to launch a personal, unwarranted and unjustified attack on a very capable senior civil servant, Mrs Mary Rodrigues and, by extension the civil service senior management team that are delivering these projects.

Madame Speaker, *Project Future* establishes, for the first time, a comprehensive and far-reaching programme of public sector reform, which will drive the efficiency and effectiveness of public services. The agenda for change has been set by the Government’s political priorities. In that context, the Government has welcomed the EY report as a useful stimulus to its thinking, providing a helpful challenge to existing ways of working. However, the EY report does not dictate the *Project Future* agenda.

Madame Speaker, with the intention of speaking fact to fiction, it should be acknowledged that the Project Future programme will see the implementation, in full or modified form, of the majority of the EY recommendations and a number of other recommendations.

Madame Speaker, in November 2015, my government published the Project Future Programme Brief. At the time I explained that the projects would be tackled in five phases, to be implemented over the next 5 years. Work has commenced on numerous projects. Some will be completed before the 2017 election, while others are not expected to be delivered until after the election.

I also explained then, and I do so again, that it is right for the Government to take a long term view and to put in place the delivery of the reforms this country needs. If we remain bound to electoral cycles we remain bound to short term action that will not tackle some of the fundamental issues we face. Our country needs more than that. Our country deserves better than that and that it why this Progressives-led Government is setting out a clear plan of future action.

Madame Speaker, in the Project Future Programme Brief, I also identified some 16 recommendations from the EY report that would not be implemented, because they clearly conflicted with our policy – for example recommendations to raise levies would clearly run counter to the commitment this Progressives-led Government has given the country to seek to cut rather than raise levies and charges. We also excluded recommendations where the analysis indicated that the benefits were not sufficient to justify taking the ideas forward. Madame Speaker, this is open, transparent and responsible government in action.

Madam Speaker, the Compass editorial today reserves its most vitriolic comments for Mrs Rodrigues, whom it seems to hold personally responsible for implementing the key recommendations of the report, while insinuating that my government’s support for Project Future is less than “enthusiastic”.

While I suspect that they know better, let me make clear the actual governance structure for Project Future:

* We, the Government are the decision-makers. We have selected the projects to be explored, and we decide which business cases documents are approved.
* The Deputy Governor and his Chief Officers are responsible for implementation.

Mrs. Rodrigues and the Strategic Reforms Implementation Unit (SRIU) are responsible for developing the implementation strategy and providing tools and guidance to help Chief Officers and their teams to deliver the projects. Madame Speaker the SRIU has delivered in this role and continue to work to support the work of the civil service. Already their work has already earned the regard of external consultants and officials from other Overseas Territories.

Madame Speaker, it has been five months since I launched the Project Future Programme in November, 2015. While there has been a significant learning curve for government and the civil service alike, and we have faced some challenges, as a government we have declared our objectives and we are making progress. Here is but a brief snapshot of the work which is underway, in various stages (i.e. either in preparing business case documents, project planning or project execution):

* 13/17 of the Phase I projects,
* 7/9 of the Phase 2 and 3 projects,
* 11/18 of the Phase 4 projects, and
* 2/7 of the Phase 5 projects.

It has always been my intention to continue to provide public updates on *Project Future* at key milestones. I am therefore pleased to announce that we are preparing a formal update on progress this month, which will commence with my contributions to the Budget address and will extend to a formal publication which will be circulated to all media houses.

I will ensure that the publication is in clear, plain language which even the Editorial Board of the Compass will be unable to misinterpret.