



*At the Court at Buckingham Palace*

THE 10th DAY OF JUNE 2004

PRESENT,

THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY  
IN COUNCIL

Her Majesty, by virtue and in exercise of all the powers in Her Majesty vested, is pleased, by and with the advice of Her Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, as follows:-

**Citation and commencement**

1. This Order may be cited as the British Indian Ocean Territory (Constitution) Order 2004 and shall come into force forthwith.

**Interpretation**

2. – (1) The Interpretation Act 1978(a) shall apply, with the necessary modifications, for the purpose of interpreting this Order, and otherwise in relation thereto, as it applies for the purpose of interpreting, and otherwise in relation to, Acts of Parliament.

(2) In this Order, unless the contrary intention appears-

“the Commissioner” means the Commissioner for the Territory and includes any person for the time being lawfully performing the functions of the office of Commissioner;

“the *Gazette*” means the Official Gazette of the Territory;

“the Territory” means the British Indian Ocean Territory specified in the Schedule.

**Revocation**

3. - (1) The British Indian Ocean Territory Orders 1976 to 1994(b) (“the existing Orders”) are revoked.

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(a) 1978 c.30.

(b) S.I. 1976/893; 1981 III, p.6524; see also the British Indian Ocean Territory (Amendment) Order 1994 made on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1994.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of sections 15,16 and 17 of the Interpretation Act 1978 (as applied by section 2(1) of this Order)-

- (a) the revocation of the existing Orders does not affect the continuing operation of any law made, or having effect as if made, under the existing Orders and having effect as part of the law of the Territory immediately before the commencement of this Order; but any such law shall thereafter, without prejudice to its amendment or repeal by any authority competent in that behalf, have effect as if made under this Order and be construed with such modifications, adaptations, qualifications and exceptions as may be necessary to bring it into conformity with this Order;
- (b) the revocation of the existing Orders does not affect the continuing validity of any appointment made, or having effect as if made, or other thing done, or having effect as if done, under the existing Orders and having effect immediately before the commencement of this Order; but any such appointment made or thing done shall, without prejudice to its revocation or variation by any authority competent in that behalf, continue to have effect thereafter as if made or done under this Order.

#### **Establishment of office of Commissioner**

4. - (1) There shall be a Commissioner for the Territory who shall be appointed by Her Majesty by instructions given through a Secretary of State and who shall hold office during Her Majesty's pleasure.

(2) During any period when the office of Commissioner is vacant or the holder thereof is for any reason unable to perform the functions of his office those functions shall, during Her Majesty's pleasure, be assumed and performed by such person as Her Majesty may designate in that behalf by instructions given through a Secretary of State.

#### **Powers and duties of Commissioner**

5. The Commissioner shall have such powers and duties as are conferred or imposed on him by or under this Order or any other law and such other functions as Her Majesty may from time to time be pleased to assign to him and, subject to the provisions of this Order and of any other law, shall do and execute all things that belong to his office according to such instructions, if any, as Her Majesty may from time to time see fit to give him.

#### **Official stamp**

6. There shall be an Official Stamp for the Territory which the Commissioner shall keep and use for stamping all such documents as may be required by any law to be stamped therewith.

#### **Constitution of offices**

7. The Commissioner, in Her Majesty's name and on Her Majesty's behalf, may constitute such offices for the Territory as may lawfully be constituted by Her Majesty and, subject to the provisions of any law for the time being in force in the Territory and to such instructions as may from time to time be given to him by Her Majesty through a Secretary of State, the Commissioner may likewise-

- (a) make appointments, to be held during Her Majesty's pleasure, to any office so constituted; and

- (b) terminate any such appointment, or dismiss any person so appointed or take such other disciplinary action in relation to him as the Commissioner may think fit.

### **Concurrent appointments**

8. Whenever the substantive holder of any office constituted by or under this Order is on leave of absence pending relinquishment of his office-

- (a) another person may be appointed substantively to that office; and
- (b) that person shall, for the purposes of any functions attaching to that office, be deemed to be the sole holder of that office.

### **No right of abode in the Territory**

9. - (1) Whereas the Territory was constituted and is set aside to be available for the defence purposes of the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the United States of America, no person has the right of abode in the Territory.

(2) Accordingly, no person is entitled to enter or be present in the Territory except as authorised by or under this Order or any other law for the time being in force in the Territory.

### **Commissioner's powers to make laws**

10. - (1) Subject to the provisions of this Order, the Commissioner may make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Territory.

(2) It is hereby declared, without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) but for the avoidance of doubt, that, in the exercise of his powers under subsection (1), the Commissioner may make any such provision as he considers expedient for or in connection with the administration of the Territory, and no such provision shall be deemed to be invalid except to the extent that it is inconsistent with the status of the Territory as a British overseas territory or with this Order or with any other Order of Her Majesty in Council extending to the Territory or otherwise as provided by the Colonial Laws Validity Act 1865(a).

(3) All laws made by the Commissioner in exercise of the powers conferred by subsection (1) shall be published in the *Gazette* in such manner as the Commissioner may direct.

(4) Every law made by the Commissioner under subsection (1) shall come into force on the date on which it is published in accordance with subsection (3) unless it is provided, either in that law or in some other such law, that it shall come into operation on some other date, in which case it shall come into force on that other date.

### **Disallowance of laws**

11. - (1) Any law made by the Commissioner in exercise of the powers conferred on him by this Order may be disallowed by Her Majesty through a Secretary of State.

(2) Whenever any law has been disallowed by Her Majesty, the Commissioner shall cause notice of the disallowance to be published in the *Gazette* in such manner as he may direct, and the law shall be annulled with effect from the date of that publication.

(3) Section 16(1) of the Interpretation Act 1978 shall apply to the annulment of a law under this section as it applies to the repeal of an Act of Parliament, save that a law repealed or amended by or in pursuance of the annulled law shall have effect as from the date of the annulment as if the annulled law had not been made.

#### **Commissioner's powers of pardon, etc**

12. The Commissioner may, in Her Majesty's name and on Her Majesty's behalf-

- (a) grant to any person concerned in or convicted of any offence against the law of the Territory a pardon, free or subject to lawful conditions; or
- (b) grant to any person a respite, either indefinite or for a specified period, of the execution of any sentence passed on that person for any such offence; or
- (c) substitute a less severe form of punishment for any punishment imposed by any such sentence; or
- (d) remit the whole or any part of any such sentence or of any penalty or forfeiture otherwise due to Her Majesty on account of any such offence.

#### **Courts and judicial proceedings**

13. - (1) Without prejudice to the generality of section 3(2), all courts established for the Territory by or under a law made under the existing Orders and in existence immediately before the commencement of this Order shall continue in existence thereafter as if established by or under a law made under this Order.

(2) All proceedings that, immediately before the commencement of this Order, are pending before any such court may be continued and concluded before that court thereafter.

(3) Without prejudice to the generality of section 3(2), the provisions of any law in force in the Territory as from the commencement of this Order that relate to the enforcement of decisions of courts established for the Territory or to appeals from such decisions shall apply to such decisions given before the commencement of this Order in the same way as they apply to such decisions given thereafter.

(4) The Supreme Court may, as the Chief Justice may direct, sit in the United Kingdom and there exercise all or any of its powers or jurisdiction in any civil or criminal proceedings.

(5) Subject to subsection (6), the Chief Justice may make a direction under subsection (4) where it appears to him, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, that to do so would be in the interests of the proper and efficient administration of justice and would not impose an unfair burden on any party to the proceedings.

(6) A direction under subsection (4) may be made at any stage of the proceedings or when it is sought to institute the proceedings and may be made on the application of any party to the proceedings or of any person who seeks to be or whom it is sought to make such a party or of the Chief Justice's own motion.

(7) Subject to any law made under section 10 (and without prejudice to the operation of section 3(2)), the Chief Justice may make rules of court for the purpose of regulating the practice and procedure of the Supreme Court with respect to the exercise of the Court's powers and jurisdiction in the United Kingdom.

(8) Without prejudice to the operation of section 3(2), a sub-registry may be established in the United Kingdom for the filing, sealing and issue of such documents relating to proceedings in the Supreme Court (whether or not they are proceedings in which the Court exercises its powers and jurisdiction in the United Kingdom) as may be prescribed by rules of court made by the Chief Justice.

(9) Anything done in the United Kingdom by virtue of subsections (4) to (8) shall have, and have only, the same validity and effect as if done in the Territory.

(10) In this section, "the Supreme Court" means the Supreme Court of the Territory as established by or under a law made, or having effect as if made, under section 10 and "the Chief Justice" means the Judge (or, if there is more than one, the presiding Judge) of that Court.

### **Disposal of land**

14. Subject to any law for the time being in force in the Territory and to any instructions given to the Commissioner by Her Majesty through a Secretary of State, the Commissioner, in Her Majesty's name and on Her Majesty's behalf, may make and execute grants and dispositions of any land or other immovable property within the Territory that may lawfully be granted or disposed of by Her Majesty.

### **Powers reserved to Her Majesty**

15. - (1) There is hereby reserved to Her Majesty full power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Territory, and it is hereby declared, without prejudice to the generality of that expression but for the avoidance of doubt, that-

- (a) any law made by Her Majesty in the exercise of that power may make any such provision as Her Majesty considers expedient for or in connection with the administration of the Territory; and
- (b) no such provision shall be deemed to be invalid except to the extent that it is inconsistent with the status of the Territory as a British overseas territory or otherwise as provided by the Colonial Laws Validity Act 1865.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of the power to make laws reserved to Her Majesty by subsection (1), any such law may make such provision as Her Majesty considers expedient for the purposes for which the Territory was constituted and is set aside, and accordingly and in particular, to give effect to section 9(1) and to secure compliance with section 9(2), including provision for the prohibition and punishment of unauthorised entry into, or unauthorised presence in, the Territory, for the prevention of such unauthorised entry and the removal from the Territory of persons whose presence in the Territory is unauthorised, and for empowering public officers to effect such prevention or, as the case may be, such removal (including by the use of such force as is reasonable in the circumstances).

(3) In this section-

- (a) "public officer" means a person holding or acting in an office under the Government of the Territory; and
- (b) for the avoidance of doubt, references in this section to the prevention of unauthorised entry into the Territory include references to the prevention of entry into the territorial sea of the Territory with a view to effecting such unauthorised entry and references to the removal from the Territory of persons whose presence there is unauthorised include references to the removal from the territorial sea of the Territory of persons who either have effected an unauthorised entry into the Territory or have entered the territorial sea with a view to effecting such an unauthorised entry.

(4) There is hereby reserved to Her Majesty full power to amend or revoke this Order.

THE SCHEDULE

Section 2(2)

Diego Garcia	Three Brothers Islands
Egmont or Six Islands	Nelson or Legour Island
Peros Banhos	Eagle Islands
Salomon Islands	Danger Islands

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

*(This note is not part of the Order)*

This Order makes new provision for the Constitution and administration of the British Indian Ocean Territory.