

## **Response by the Bermuda National Trust**

**August 30, 2006**

### **Re: Government announcement that the new hospital will be built in the Botanical Gardens**

As the specifics of the Plan have not been shared with the public or the Trust - at this time we can only comment on the process not the plan. It is unthinkable to us, especially in light of the Sustainable Development initiative - which highlights the critical importance of public involvement - that a project of this magnitude could ever reach the final stages without broad public input.

We agree that improving the Bermuda's health care system should be of paramount importance to the people of Bermuda, but we cannot accept that the Botanical Gardens and the hundreds of acres of protected land under the National Parks System should be viewed as an exploitable resource – they are of incalculable public value in their own right.

The Government should lead by example and practice what it preaches regarding public input on the largest public project in decades – anything else presents the Sustainable Development process as a complete charade.

It is ironic that the Sustainable Development project which has been so successful in empowering Bermudians to consider themselves environmentalists should be set aside at this critical juncture.

Even if the plan proposes a net gain in open space from the existing hospital site – how can Bermuda be assured that this will happen at the end of the project.

By letter our dated July 20, 2006, the National Trust called on the BHB to develop the plan to redevelop the facility on the existing KEMH site between Point Finger Road and Berry Hill Road. We are disappointed that we have not received a response to date.

The Trust considers that Bermuda cannot afford the luxury of a total new facility on the greenfield site. We accept that this presents logistical, technical and economic challenges during the construction phase, but Bermuda has no choice but to overcome these and build on the existing site.

As the Cruise Ports Master Plan proved the Government is capable and committed to making the best decisions for Bermuda and plans can be reassessed and revised and we trust that the debate is not closed on this Plan.

Bermuda National Trust  
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