

# STATEMENT

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## Remarks By Minister for Communications and Works Hon. Kye M. Rymer on the Opening Ceremony of the Entrepreneurial Zone

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**REMARKS BY**

**HONOURABLE KYE M. RYMER**

**MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS**

**ON THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ZONE**

**HUNTUM'S GHUT, TORTOLA**

**FEBRUARY 27TH 2025**

Good Day to everyone present!

It was on October 21, 2020, where we broke ground on this project with a clear mission, to provide first-step and startup businesses in a nurturing environment for development and growth, ultimately benefiting our local economy.

Despite the delays and challenges we faced due to Covid-19 and funding constraints, and I heard the Premier mention that this is just the model. But today, I am thrilled to announce that we have reached a pivotal moment where

applications are now open for those seeking a home in this Entrepreneurial Zone.

We say, better late than never! It's never too late to realise a vision, and today marks a new beginning for our people of these Virgin Islands. Originally, we planned to construct three single-storey buildings, but we adapted our vision and we changed into two, two-storey resilient buildings.

Building one, is measuring 60 feet by 20 feet, and will accommodate up to 14 businesses, while the second building is a bit larger and it's 70 feet by 20 feet, and it will provide space for up to 20 businesses.

Though these structures have been designed with durability in mind, featuring a concrete block reinforced lower level and a metal frame panel for the upper level, ensuring they stand the test of time.

The scope of this project goes beyond just buildings. We have completed and completely renovated the existing bathroom facilities, we have constructed new roadway access and parking for vendors and customers, and we have revitalised the basketball court with a new bleacher and new surfaces.

To date, we have invested a total of \$1,202,794.06, and we have engaged up to ten contractors who have helped bring this vision to life.

I thank the contractors, sometimes it was budgetary confinement, sometimes it was just change in scope, but I want to acknowledge them. Accurate for building the buildings, different contractors for doing the roads, and now we are with K and M, who is completing the entire project.

As we launch the First Step Programme for Entrepreneurs, let me emphasise that this initiative is about empowerment and opportunity for our people. We are offering a space for entrepreneurs to establish and grow their businesses, with the understanding that they will need to submit a solid business plan for selection.

Our dream is that these businesses will flourish and eventually expand, paving the way for new entrepreneurs to step in and create their own ventures.

Huntums Ghut already boasts a vibrant mix of businesses—we have bars and restaurants to supermarkets, electronic shop, and the list goes on and on.

So, I encourage all applicants to embrace innovation and creativity in their business ideas. A diverse range of offerings is essential for success.

Let me be clear this program is not a handout. It comes with conditions to foster responsibility and sustainability. We are here to empower individuals and help them take the crucial first step toward entrepreneurship.

We understand the challenges that starting a business you can have. Hence, we are here with the Departments of Trade, Departments of Labour, Premier's Office, the entire Government, to make sure that your business thrives and it gains momentum, so there's no limit to what you can achieve.

I am proud to be part of this Government that believes in the potential of our people. Each member of our team, the Premier who has dedicated the funding, all the elected officials, they have all committed to ensuring that The Virgin Islanders, our Virgin Islanders are at the heart of our economy.

It is vital that you own your own business that drive our economy.

Now, I know while foreign investment is essential, we must also uplift our local families by investing in someone's idea, creating pathways to turn those thoughts into reality and eventually foster financial security. Now it is time to invest in our greatest resource—our people—and create opportunities for them to build a stake in our economy.

We all know that small businesses are the backbone of economic growth, and it is our duty to provide the support needed to help them thrive. With every successful business we nurture, we are shaping a brighter future for generations of Virgin Islanders.

We are planting the seeds of hope for a more secure tomorrow.

This is my vision and this was my committee's vision and I just want to acknowledge the members present.

It is our vision as a Government to make our Virgin Islands a stronger and a more resilient Territory, empowering our people.

As we celebrate the opening of this Huntums Ghut Entrepreneurial Zone, I hope it serves as a true incubator for economic growth and empowerment. For those interested in occupying a space here, I encourage you to register at the Department of Trade for more information on the application process.

May the success stories that emerge here inspire all Virgin Islanders and encourage similar initiatives to be birthed.

Together, by supporting one another, we can and will achieve remarkable things.

May God bless these beautiful Virgin Islands and my neighbours in District 5, who have entrusted me to carry on this task and to represent them.

I am happy that we can do this for this community and definitely work towards the other communities.

Thank you!