GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

# STATEMENT

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# Statement By Attorney General Honourable Dawn J. Smith Improving Access To Laws Of The Virgin Islands

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ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS

The rule of law is the foundation upon which our society is built. It provides structure, safeguards our rights, and guides governance. Yet, for the law to serve its purpose, it must be readily available and comprehensible to those it governs.

The Attorney General’s Chambers is pleased to announce the completion of the first phase of the Law Revision and Accessibility of Laws Project. This initiative aims to ensure that the laws of the Virgin Islands are current and easily accessible.

On April 21, 2021, the Cabinet of the Virgin Islands endorsed the Attorney General's plan to undertake a long-overdue revision of the laws and make them accessible through an online platform.

The project is structured in three phases, with the first phase now completed. This initial stage involved the comprehensive revision of approximately 90 Acts and their subsidiary legislation, culminating in an Interim Revised Edition effective 1 January 2023. These 93 revised laws, brought into force under the Law Revision Act 2014, are now fully accessible online, marking a transformative step towards digital governance and legal transparency.

The second phase of the Project is already underway. It will focus on revising 101 Acts and their subsidiary legislation, together with a dedicated Financial Services Legislation Interim Revised Edition covering 25 key Acts and their subsidiary legislation. In total, approximately 200 laws will be revised. This phase will also introduce a newly designed online platform featuring enhanced navigation and search functionalities.

The first Revised Edition of the Laws of the Virgin Islands was completed in 1961, followed by a second revision in 1991. An interim revision exercise culminated in the Interim Revised Edition 2013, which included immigration, criminal, and financial services legislation. For many other laws, it has been over three decades since their last comprehensive update. The third and final phase of the Project, set to commence in the last quarter of 2025, will encompass the revision of all remaining laws.

Additionally, the Attorney General’s Chambers is developing a law revision manual to facilitate knowledge transfer and continuity with annual law revision as the

ultimate goal. The Project is being led by Ms. Michelle A.R. Daley, Legal Consultant and also benefits from invaluable guidance and technical support from the Regional Law Revision Centre in Anguilla. The public is encouraged to visit laws.gov.vg to explore the laws of the Virgin Islands.

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## Additional Documents or Media

- statement by attorney general honourable dawn j. smith-improving access to laws of the virgin islands.pdf