

STATEMENT

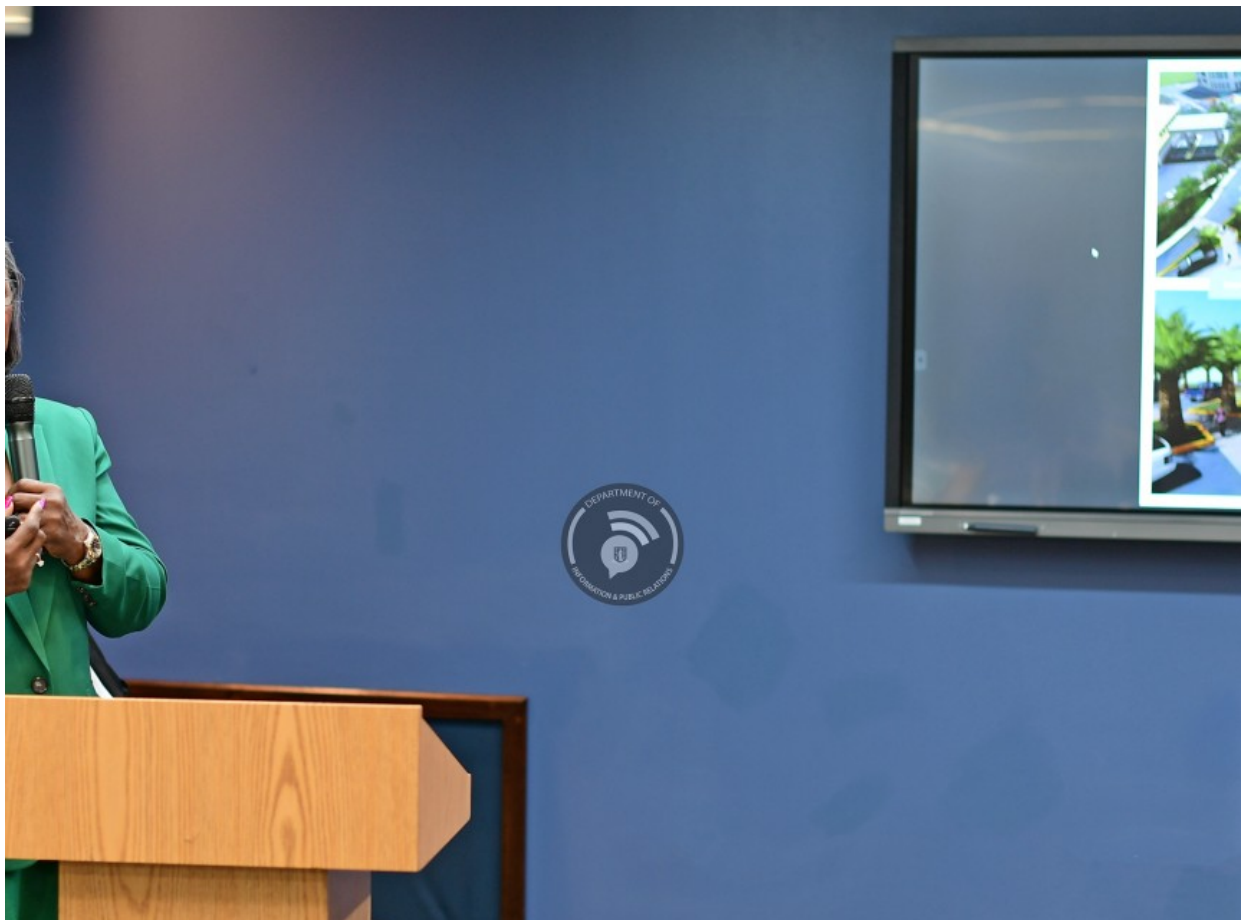
Tel: (284)468-2730

Official Government Website:

<https://gov.vg>

Remarks Hon. Luce Hodge Smith Junior Minister of Culture and Tourism Road Town Partnership Launch

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Hon. Luce Hodge Smith

Junior Minister of Culture and Tourism

Road Town Partnership Launch

4 April, 2025

I recognize the protocol already established.

A pleasant Good Morning to each and every one present with us and those who are joining us via the radio and the online channels.

It is with great enthusiasm that we gather here today to launch the Road Town Partnership, a programme aimed at beautifying and maintaining the cleanliness of our beloved Capital, Road Town. This initiative is not just a project but a movement - a movement that underscores the importance of clean and beautiful surroundings for tourism, for the everyday health and wellbeing of our citizens, and for the prosperity of our businesses.

Tourism is the lifeblood of our Territory. Visitors come from near and far, drawn by our stunning landscapes, our rich culture, and the warmth of our people. A clean and picturesque environment is vital in making their experience memorable and inviting them to return. Exquisite surroundings are more than just visually appealing; they reflect the pride we take in our community and the respect we have for our natural beauty.

But the benefits of a clean and beautiful environment extend beyond tourism. They touch every aspect of our lives. Cleanliness is a cornerstone of public health, reducing the spread of disease and ensuring that our citizens live in a healthy and safe environment. It contributes to our mental wellbeing, fostering a sense of peace and satisfaction. For our businesses, a pristine setting attracts customers, enhances the shopping, dining and sightseeing experience, and boosts economic activity.

It is clear that clean and beautiful surroundings should be everyone's concern. This is not solely the responsibility of the government or the sanitation workers; it is a collective duty. Each one of us has a role to play, from individuals picking up litter to businesses ensuring their premises are well-maintained. The transformation we seek will only be possible through the concerted efforts of all members of our community.

This partnership involves representatives from various government departments such as Public Works, Solid Waste, the City Manager's Office, the BVI Tourist Board, and Town and Country Planning Department, as well as the BVI Chamber of Commerce, Civil Society organisations, and several other stakeholders. By bringing together experts from multiple disciplines, we leverage collective knowledge and resources to ensure the success of our initiatives. This collaborative approach to development planning is crucial for creating a coherent and sustainable vision for Road Town.

A number of corporate citizens have already indicated their interest in the partnership. I recognize their patriotic spirit and I thank them for their support.

Furthermore, it is essential to involve the people in having a say in how the Capital looks. Public participation ensures that the plans reflect the needs and desires of the community. When citizens are engaged in the decision-making process, they feel a sense of ownership and responsibility towards their surroundings, which fosters a stronger commitment to maintaining and improving them.

Today, I issue a call to action for everyone to become involved in keeping our Capital clean, tidy, and organized. And not just Road Town, but the entire Territory. Let us commit to a standard of excellence that will set us apart, not only as a tourist destination but as a community that values and protects its environment. Let us take pride in our surroundings and work together to create a lasting legacy of cleanliness and beauty.

In closing, I thank each of you for your presence here today and for your commitment to this vital cause. Together, we can make Road Town and the BVI a shining example of what community spirit and collaboration can achieve. Your

involvement is key to our success, and I am confident that with your support, we can transform our Capital into a clean, beautiful, and vibrant city.

Thank you.