

Opening Remarks by Hon. Natalio D. Wheatley Premier of the Virgin Islands on Fintech on the Seas 2025

Release Date: 25 June, 2025

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Hon. Natalio D. Wheatley

Premier of the Virgin Islands

Fintech on the Seas 2025

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Good morning, and a most warm welcome to the beautiful Virgin Islands.

It is a distinct pleasure to host you here today, as we embark on three days of purposeful dialogue, exploration, and collaboration at the dynamic intersection of innovation and global finance. Whether you have travelled from across the Caribbean or from far-flung corners of the globe, your presence speaks volumes. It affirms the growing international recognition of the Virgin Islands as a rising force in fintech and digital asset innovation.

As you made your way to Necker Island this morning, I trust you took a moment to appreciate the stunning surroundings. These islands are celebrated worldwide for their tranquillity and splendour, but our strengths go far beyond our shores.

Fintech on the Seas is more than a conference; it is a statement of intent. It reflects the Virgin Islands' unique value proposition: a seamless blend of breathtaking natural beauty, deep reservoirs of talent, and a bold, future-facing vision for global business.

For decades, the Virgin Islands have been among the most secure, best-regulated jurisdictions for international business. We have earned this reputation through legal certainty, regulatory integrity, and a steadfast commitment to excellence. You are in the perfect place, as we continue to blaze a trail at our Fin Tech on the Seas Conference.

We must invest in our people. Through the Robert Mathavious Institute at the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College, we nurture the next generation of fintech professionals, ensuring the Virgin Islands competes globally and leads with distinction.

Today, I also express deep gratitude to those whose vision and tireless work have brought Fintech on the Seas to fruition.

To the Honourable Lorna Smith, OBE, Junior Minister for Financial Services, thank you for your unwavering commitment to advancing the Virgin Islands as a global leader in financial innovation. Your wealth of experience, strategic foresight, and steadfast advocacy for the BVI's financial services sector continue to shape our trajectory in powerful ways. Your leadership has brought clarity and confidence to a rapidly evolving space, and we are deeply grateful for your service.

And to Ms. Elise Donovan, CEO of BVI Finance, and her exceptional team, thank you for your tireless work, creativity, and belief in this vision from its inception. It is through your diligence, professionalism, and passion that this event has come to life. You have orchestrated a world-class gathering and reinforced the BVI's standing as a jurisdiction of choice for fintech innovation and digital asset enterprises.

Fintech on the Seas is a celebration of this progress and a launchpad for what comes next. Over the next three days, global thought leaders, innovators, and pioneers will guide us through critical conversations about the future of finance and the role the Virgin Islands can play in shaping it.

From insightful panels to meaningful networking, this gathering represents what our shores offer: ambition, excellence, and a shared commitment to progress.

I thank each of you for joining us on this journey. I look forward to emerging insights, partnerships, and innovations. And I hope to welcome you back next year, stronger, wiser, and ever more connected.

Thank you, and let us begin a truly productive and inspiring conference.