GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Honourable Rymer Updated on Anegada Renewable Energy Project

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Minister for Communications and Works Honourable Kye Rymer led a delegation to Anegada where he was updated on the island's Renewable Energy Project as the Government of the Virgin Islands continues to implement renewable energy solutions.

The minister was accompanied by the Premier and Minister of Finance, Honourable Dr. Natalio Wheatley, Minister for Health and Social Development, Honourable Vincent Wheatley, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Communication and Works, Mrs. Elvia Smith-Maduro, General Manager of BVI Electricity Corporation, Dr. Neil Smith, and Consultant, Mr. Sean Hartley.

Honourable Rymer stated that the project will be commissioned at a date to be announced as the Government delivers on its mandate to have sixty percent (60%) renewable energy by the target date of 2030.

He said, "We are here on Anegada celebrating that there is no generator working. All the running for the homes is done through renewable energy. Today, we are getting an update on this energy farm."

Premier Wheatley applauded the project for being a success story stating that the vision is for the Virgin Islands to be an example to the world as it pertains to utilising the power of the sun and the power of nature, to be able to power the community.

Premier Wheatley said, "Anegada is a model for the world as it pertains to an eco-community," he said. "The power needs of Anegada are mainly being generated through solar power. We might take it lightly, but that is a big accomplishment and is something that we want to build upon."

The Premier Wheatley said that there is currently a project on Tortola to place solar panels on roofs. "Our power needs are more," he said, adding, "It doesn't mean that we cannot cut down on the amount of diesel we use on Tortola, and have more capacity, so that when we are doing maintenance of generators, you have enough capacity where you don't have to do load shedding."

Premier Wheatley said the Anegada project was heavily subsidised by BVI Electricity Corporation. “Now we have made an investment that will give us value for money, and that is a success story,” the Premier said.

General Manager of the BVI Electricity Corporation Dr. Neil Smith said that the process has taken a lot of grit, hard work, ingenuity and cooperation between the contractors and the corporation. “This is a view into the future,” Dr. Smith said.

Dr. Smith added, “We expect to be going significantly into the production of renewable energy in the Territory and this a prime example of what is possible. Anegada is being run on the system for 19 hours daily. We are still tweaking the system and expect it to get better.”

Meanwhile, Consultant Mr. Sean Hartley said the installation was done from the ground up and there are 1.2 megawatts of solar panels, which has the capability to produce 900 kilowatts.

Mr. Hartley said, “There are four containers of energy storage and each is about a megawatt hour—four megawatts to be able to run Anegada. Right now, the batteries are charging from the solar and the solar is supplying Anegada with power. As the sun goes down, it will start to transition to the batteries and the batteries will supply the energy to Anegada.”

The Ministry of Communication and Works continues to ensure the continued development and maintenance of public infrastructure in keeping with international standards so that public utilities are reliable and affordable in support of an enhanced community life for every resident and visitor in the Virgin Islands.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Photo 1: Group photo of Premier and Minister of Finance, Honourable Dr. Natalio Wheatley, Minister for Health and Social Development Honourable Vincent Wheatley, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Communication and Works, Mrs. Elvia Smith-Maduro, General Manager of BVI Electricity Corporation, Dr. Neil Smith, and Consultant, Mr. Sean Hartley and BVIEC representatives.

Photo 2: Photo of the solar panels

Photo 3: Photos of the batteries

(Photo credit: Dean Greenaway)

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