

PRESS RELEASE

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Premier Wheatley Leads Delegation to 51st USVI-BVI Friendship Day in St. Thomas

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Premier of the Virgin Islands, Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley, led a delegation to St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands on Saturday 15 November 2025 to participate in the 51st Annual USVI-BVI Friendship Day celebrations, held under the theme, **“Binding Our Ties Through Friendship and Culture.”**

During the ceremony, Premier Wheatley extended greetings on behalf of the Government and people of the Virgin Islands, acknowledging USVI Governor Albert Bryan Jr., Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach, and leaders across all branches of government of the United States Virgin Islands (USVI) for their warm hospitality. He also recognised members of his delegation, including the Minister for Communications and Works, Honourable Kye Rymer, Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly Honourable Karl Dawson, Junior Minister for Culture and Tourism Honourable Luce Hodge-Smith, and other accompanying public officers and members of the public.

Premier Wheatley described the annual observance as *“not just an event; it’s a family reunion with official titles attached.”* Expressing gratitude for the longstanding bond between the territories, he reflected on his own family’s connection to the tradition, noting that his grandfather, the late Honourable Willard Wheatley, welcomed the first USVI delegation to the BVI in 1972. *“I suspect he never imagined his grandson would one day stand here doing the same,”* the Premier remarked.

The Premier emphasised the shared history, kinship, and cultural resilience that unite the Greater Virgin Islands people. *“Our connection runs deeper than the waters that separate us. It runs through our family names, our accents, our food, our music, and our shared resilience,”* he said.

Premier Wheatley highlighted the practical significance of the Virgin Islands partnership, noting continued collaboration in education, tourism, security, development, and through the Inter-Virgin Islands Council.

The Premier extended appreciation to Governor Bryan and the USVI Administration for their consistent support, particularly during challenging moments in the BVI’s democratic journey, when the United Kingdom threatened to impose direct rule

through an Order in Council. He emphasised that the solidarity shown by the leadership and people of the USVI not only strengthened the Territory's resolve but also contributed meaningfully to the eventual withdrawal of the proposed measure.

Closing his remarks, Premier Wheatley reaffirmed the shared commitment to unity, cultural pride, and cooperation. *"The ties that bind us are stronger than any border. Our friendship is our strength. Our unity is our legacy. May the spirit of love and friendship that unites the Virgin Islands continue to flourish today, tomorrow, and always."*

During the day's celebration, there were cultural presentations and a luncheon during which the traditional gift exchange took place among leaders.

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About:

The Government of the Virgin Islands is committed to promoting good governance and the sustainable development of the Territory with a view to ensuring a well-informed, prosperous, cohesive and stable society. The Premier's Office serves as the focal point for coordinating cross-sectoral policies and programmes and promoting the sustainable development of the Virgin Islands to ensure a well-informed, prosperous, cohesive and stable society.

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