GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Virgin Islands Delegation Hosts Annual Diaspora Gathering at BVI House London Ahead of Joint Ministerial Council

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The Government of the Virgin Islands is pleased to announce the successful hosting of its annual Diaspora Gathering at BVI House in London as part of the Virgin Islands delegation's preparations for the 2025 Joint Ministerial Council (JMC). The event brought together Virgin Islands students, professionals, and residents living in the United Kingdom for an evening of meaningful dialogue, connection, and collaboration.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley, led the engagement alongside senior government officials. Attendees were allowed to openly share their perspectives and priorities regarding the development of the Virgin Islands. Topics ranged from educational and economic opportunities to public service, national identity, and strategies for strengthening the global Virgin Islands community.

Premier Wheatley underscored the vital role of the diaspora in national progress, stating:

"Our people abroad are an essential part of the Virgin Islands' story. Your insights, skills, and experiences continue to enrich our Territory, and the Government remains committed to ensuring you have pathways to contribute meaningfully to our collective future."

Participants highlighted a desire to enhance academic support networks, expand career pathways for returning graduates, and explore opportunities for remote collaboration across technology, public policy, health, and culture.

Preparations for the Joint Ministerial Council Continue

Premier Wheatley, who currently serves as President of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories Association (UKOTA), will lead a unified discussion on critical issues affecting the Overseas Territories, including climate resilience, sustainable development, governance, and economic stability.

Under Premier Wheatley's leadership, UKOTA has strengthened its role as the collective voice of the Overseas Territories, providing strategic coordination and advocacy on shared priorities. In the lead-up to the JMC, UKOTA has been

instrumental in shaping joint policy positions, enhancing diplomatic engagement with UK ministers, and advancing collaborative initiatives across the Territories—particularly in environmental management, disaster preparedness, trade, and regional security.

Premier Wheatley emphasised that the cohesion fostered through UKOTA is key to achieving meaningful outcomes:

"Speaking with one unified voice strengthens our collective influence. As OT leaders, our cohesion ensures that the concerns and aspirations of our people are heard and addressed meaningfully. UKOTA's work continues to demonstrate the power of partnership and solidarity among the Territories."

A United Path Forward

The Government of the Virgin Islands extends its appreciation to the diaspora community for its continued engagement and support. The perspectives gathered during this year's event will inform the delegation's contributions at the Joint Ministerial Council and help shape ongoing policy initiatives at home.

Further updates on the Virgin Islands' participation in the JMC will be shared as discussions progress.

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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.

For Additional Information Contact:

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Additional Documents or Media

- vi_delegation_and_the_diaspora.pdf