GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

# STATEMENT

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# Remarks by Acting Premier Honourable Vincent O. Wheatley at BVIFA FIFA Ceremony

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A pleasant good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my honour and privilege as Acting Premier, on behalf of the Government and people of The Virgin Islands, to welcome our very special guests, the President of FIFA, Mr. Gianni Infantino, and his team.

We hope that your visit, albeit short, is a pleasant one. I think everyone would agree with me, that you are always welcome to visit anytime.

It is also my duty to apologise on behalf of the Premier, Honourable Natalio Wheatley, some of my ministerial colleagues and also some of my colleagues from the House of Assembly, who are unavoidably on duty travel.

Certainly, I know, they wished that they were here to welcome you and to personally express their gratitude to President Infantino and FIFA, for the support you have been giving to the BVI and to the development of football in our Territory.

It is important to give credit where it is due, and therefore I wish to take this opportunity to publicly commend the BVI Football Association on the magnificent job it has been doing.

The BVIFA has successfully managed the installation of this new artificial pitch – made possible through the generosity of FIFA – as well as a host of supporting work at this facility.

The association has also been conducting a range of training programmes for various age groups. All of this contributes to developing the talent of the BVI and lifting our national standing, and that of our players, in regional and world football.

If I may be allowed to switch hats; as Minister for Health and Social Development, I must point out that an investment in sports and supporting facilities is an investment in health.

It is an investment in youth development.

It is an investment in stronger families, stronger communities, and a stronger Virgin Islands.

Specifically to football, the beautiful game has long been a powerful force for social development. It teaches discipline, teamwork, respect, responsibility, and perseverance. It creates a sense of belonging and purpose. It brings together people of different backgrounds, communities, and experiences around a shared passion and a common goal.

In communities around the world, football has helped to keep young people positively engaged, provided constructive outlets for energy and talent, and built bridges across social and cultural divides.

It has created friendships that last a lifetime and fostered the kind of community spirit that helps societies thrive.

That is especially important for a small Territory like ours.

Here in The Virgin Islands, sport plays a critical role in community life. We have seen how athletics, basketball, sailing, football, and many other sporting disciplines inspire our young people to strive for excellence and to believe in their potential. We have seen how sporting success can unite our people and fill us with pride.

This new facility will help create even more opportunities for that to happen.

President Infantino, these are the kinds of investments that change lives. They are investments in human potential.

They demonstrate an understanding that sport is not simply about competition. It is about development, it is about opportunity, it is about creating pathways for individuals and communities to flourish.

On behalf of the people of The Virgin Islands, I thank FIFA for its continued partnership and support. I thank the BVI Football Association for its vision and dedication. I thank the contractors and all those who worked tirelessly to make this project a reality.

May this pitch – and the stadium that will eventually be built here - become a place where dreams are nurtured, talents are developed, friendships are formed, and communities are strengthened for generations to come.

Thank you and may God continue to bless these beautiful Virgin Islands.

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## Additional Documents or Media

- ag_premier_vincent_wheatley_at_fifa_ceremony.pdf