GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

STATEMENT

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Remarks by the Minister of Communication and Works- PortVision Conference 2026

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Good morning,

I greet you with a pleasant Virgin Islands Good morning.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the beautiful Virgin Islands, the sailing capital of the world, for the inaugural PortVision 2026 Conference.

I am delighted to join you for this important gathering of policymakers, investors, innovators, and stakeholders from across the maritime, transportation, infrastructure, communications, and logistics sectors.

Today is not just another conference. Today is the beginning of a new chapter for the British Virgin Islands Ports Authority, and a new chapter for how we think about our ports.

For the first time, this Authority has convened the brightest minds across our sectors under one roof, and I cannot think of a more fitting way to mark 35 years of service to this Territory. Thirty-five ears of connecting our islands to the world, and now, PortVision, a bold new chapter in that story.

Your presence here reflects something important, that the future of our ports is not a conversation for any one sector alone.

It is a shared responsibility.

For island communities and maritime nations, our ports are not simply points of entry and departure. They are lifelines. They support tourism, trade, construction, food security, employment, and investment. They connect our communities to the goods, services, and opportunities our daily lives depend on.

That reality makes the continued development and modernisation of our port infrastructure a national and regional priority.

Modern ports, however, are about more than concrete and cranes. They increasingly depend on technology, reliable communications, data, cybersecurity, automation, and integrated transportation systems. The port of the future must be connected, intelligent, adaptable, and capable of responding quickly to changing demands. The theme guiding this conference, “Navigating the Future: Innovation and Sustainability in Seaport Operations,” captures that imperative precisely.

Digital technologies can help us improve efficiency, strengthen security, reduce delays, enhance the experience of passengers and cargo operators, and make better use of our infrastructure and resources. I have seen this transformation take root across the Caribbean, and I want the BVI to be amongst leaders.

At the same time, modernisation must be undertaken responsibly. We must ensure that innovation is matched by appropriate regulation, skilled personnel, resilient infrastructure, environmental stewardship, and meaningful collaboration between government and the private sector. Sustainability is not an add on. It is the foundation.

Here in the Virgin Islands, we are not just talking about the future. We are building it.

We are witnessing significant private sector investment in our marine infrastructure. The Nanny Cay Marina expansion, a project exceeding $30 million, will add 112 new berths designed for catamarans and mega yachts, an expanded shipyard, a 150 tonne travel lift, and new commercial and community facilities. Construction began in 2025, and when complete, it will further cement our position as the premier yachting destination in the Caribbean. Our maritime reach is expanding beyond our shores. The Virgin Islands Shipping and Maritime Authority, VISMA, has unveiled a dual pathway strategy to grow beyond yacht registration into merchant vessel flagging, positioning the BVI to compete for a share of the trillion-dollar global maritime market. With more than 3,000 internationally owned ships already registered under the Virgin Islands flag, we have the foundation. Now is the time to build on it.

This is why the conversations taking place at PortVision 2026 are so important.

I encourage all participants to use this conference not only to showcase innovations and share expertise, but also to build partnerships, challenge conventional thinking, and identify practical solutions to the challenges facing our ports and wider transportation networks.

As the government, we have a responsibility to create the enabling environment for innovation and investment. As industry leaders and technology providers, you bring expertise, experience, and solutions. And as stakeholders and members of our communities, we all have a role in ensuring that development delivers tangible benefits for the people and economies we serve.

Our objective must be clear: to build infrastructure that supports economic opportunity, strengthens resilience, embraces innovation, and remains fit for the generations to come.

I am therefore particularly pleased to welcome the diverse range of participants joining us. Your presence reflects the importance of collaboration in addressing the opportunities and challenges before us.

I trust that over the course of this conference, you will have productive discussions, build valuable connections, and leave with new ideas and partnerships you can translate into action.

Let us use this opportunity to look beyond today's challenges and envision the ports and infrastructure systems we want for tomorrow.

Chairman, Managing Director, and team at the BVI Ports Authority: you have kept this Territory moving for 35 years. The charge now is not just to keep moving. It is to move smarter, greener, and more connected. The ports of the future will not be built by concrete alone, but by the courage to innovate, the discipline to maintain, and the humility to listen.

Once again, welcome to PortVision 2026. I wish you a successful, productive, and engaging conference.

Thank you, and I look forward to the discussions ahead.

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