GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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VI Observes World Ocean Day 2024

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The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries joined the global community in observing World Ocean under the theme, “Awaken new depth: catalysing action for

our ocean and climate”.

Director of Agriculture and Fisheries Mr. Theodore E. James in a statement commemorating the day that is observed on June 7, stated that the ocean is a precious resource that sustains life and that it is everyone’s responsibility to protect and preserve the marine environment.

Mr. James said, “Making mindful choices in our daily lives, like reducing single-use plastics, supporting sustainable fishing practices, and advocating for marine conservation efforts, we can all contribute to protecting our world. This significant day aims to raise awareness on the importance of the ocean and the need to protect and conserve this vital resource for present and future generations.”

The director highlighted the interconnectedness of the ocean and climate, pointing out that healthy oceans play an important part in regulating the earth's climate by absorbing carbon dioxide and heat. He urged the community to take proactive steps to mitigate climate change impacts.

"Addressing climate change is intrinsically linked to protecting our oceans,” Mr. James said, adding, “We must work together to reduce our carbon footprint, support renewable energy initiatives, and advocate for policies that promote climate resilience and sustainability. Together, let us work towards a future where our oceans thrive, our climate is stable, and our planet is sustainable for future generations."

World Ocean Day highlights the urgent need to address concerns such as marine pollution, overfishing, habitat destruction, and climate change that threaten the health of oceans. Mr. James said the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries reaffirms its commitment to promoting sustainable practices that ensure the health and vitality of our marine ecosystems.

Residents are urged to participate in World Ocean Day activities and take meaningful actions to protect the Territory’s ocean by championing sustainable practices, which can positively affect the health and resilience of its marine ecosystems.

The ocean produces at least 50% of the planet’s oxygen, it is home to most of earth’s biodiversity, and is the main source of protein for more than a billion people around the world.