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Junior Minister for Culture and Tourism Cops Regional Award

Junior Minister for Culture and Tourism, Honourable Luce Hodge-Smith, has been honoured as a regional leader who continues to shape, elevate and redefine the Caribbean's story.

The prestigious award was presented in Miami, Florida over the weekend by the Caribbean Media Exchange Inc, CMEx, a nonprofit organisation dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism in the Caribbean. According to President, Mr. Bevan Springer, an award-winning journalist and seasoned PR and marketing professional, "this gathering is more than a ceremony; it is a reminder of what is possible when our region invests in vision, collaboration and community."

He said the 2025 award recognises visionary leaders whose work spans tourism, media, culture, sustainability, hospitality, storytelling, business innovation and community upliftment. "Each of the honourees has helped advance the region in a way that is bigger than a title or achievement – they have opened doors, strengthened industries, mentored future leaders, and reminded the world that Caribbean excellence is not the exception, but the standard," Mr. Springer added.

Honourable Luce Hodge-Smith is a long-serving public officer with a career spanning nearly four decades in culture, tourism, and public administration. She began her service at the BVI Tourist Board before becoming Education Officer for Culture, and later the Territory's first Director of Culture. In that role she strengthened cultural preservation, heritage development, and regional cultural partnerships.

After retiring from the public service, she transitioned into politics and was elected Fourth District Representative in 2023. She now serves as Junior Minister for Culture and Tourism, promoting the integration of heritage, arts, and tourism in national development. Her leadership continues to champion Virgin Islands identity, creativity, and cultural growth.

"I am deeply honoured to be recognised in this way by CMEx," the Junior Minister stated. "My life's work, both personally and throughout my public career, has been dedicated to service. As a proud Virgin Islander, I remain committed to contributing to the continued development of this Territory, and I am gratified that my efforts are being acknowledged beyond our shores."

The awards ceremony recognised 15 laureates, including May-Ling Chun – Director of Tourism, St. Maarten; Ronella Croes – CEO, Aruba Tourism Authority; Janelle Hopkin – President and Managing Director, Spice Island Beach Resort, Grenada; and Marcus Simmonds – CEO, Tortuga International Holdings Ltd., Cayman Islands.

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About:

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sustainable Development is responsible for advancing the Territory's tourism sector, preserving and promoting cultural heritage, and implementing policies that support sustainable growth and environmental stewardship.