



YOUR GOVERNMENT AT WORK

GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
June 2015 - December 2016



We are setting our compass on a course of prosperity for all and Building a Better Virgin Islands

Premier and Minister of Finance
Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE

We are building a great little Nation.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour
Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering



Do nothing and nothing happens.

Minister for Communications and Works
Honourable Mark Vanterpool



We are creating a culture of excellence.

Minister for Education and Culture
Honourable Myron Walwyn



We are working towards a healthier Virgin Islands.

Minister for Health and Social Development
Honourable Ronnie W. Skelton



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INTRODUCTION

Dear Fellow Residents of the Virgin Islands:

Thank you for securing a copy of this e-Magazine designed to give you a graphical view of 'Your Government at Work'.

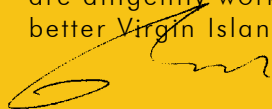
This magazine which is produced by the Department of Information and Public Relations provides an opportunity for you to see 'at a glance' what my Government was able to accomplish in its first two years in office.

We continue to be driven by our mission: Putting you the people of these Virgin Islands first!

We continue to work for you, driven by seven broad areas:

1. Stimulate/Fix the Economy
2. Improve the Standard of Living
3. Improve Overall Social Services Programmes and Healthcare
4. Strengthen the Educational Sector
5. Protect our Borders and Enhance Law, Order and Public Safety
6. Public Sector Reformation, Communications and Infrastructure
7. Re-establish/Strengthen Regional and International Relationships

I invite you to read for yourself on how we are diligently working towards building a better Virgin Islands for you.



Dr. D. Orlando Smith, OBE
Premier of the Virgin Islands

Stimulating & Fixing the Economy



PREMIER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE DR. THE HONOURABLE D. ORLANDO SMITH, OBE “DESTINATION BVI ON THE MOVE”

Destination BVI is on the move! Less than nine months ago we were just a few steps away dedicating the expanded and extended cruise pier and the inaugural call of Norwegian Cruise lines. And we did promise to be back!

Here we are today at another landmark achievement—Tortola Pier Park: a significant milestone dedicated to you the people of the Virgin Islands for your tremendous commitment to this Territory that we all so love!

Our journey began on January 17 2014, when we took the significant step forward towards greater stability and growth for the Virgin Islands, with the signing of the berthing agreements between Norwegian Cruise Lines Holdings Limited and Disney Cruise Lines for a long-term relationship.

These agreements marked the first time in the history that the BVI would have a guaranteed number, more than 400,000 cruise passengers

coming to our shores all year round.

With these berthing agreements, we demonstrated, as a Territory, that Destination BVI was on the move! Then four months later, on May 8, 2014, we broke ground signaling a new day!

It was a new day for our tourism product; and a new day for our cruise tourism industry. And, that is why we spared no communications effort in telling people to get ready!

Tourism continues to have some of the strongest connections to the other sectors of our economy.

It is the sector that holds the biggest investment opportunities for our people.

And, it is the sector that tells the world who we are culturally.

Gone are the days when white sandy beaches, our crystal clear blue sea, and beautiful sunsets were the marketing tune.

After all, everybody in the region has caught that fever!

In order to stay ahead of the game, we had to move in a new direction, and do more to offer a unique

difference and standout.

Speaking from personal experience — and I have travelled far and wide on business and for pleasure — I can say without fear of contradiction that what we have created here today is unsurpassed anywhere.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there is no other destination offering the quality and variety of offerings that we do today.

We have authentic businesses opened today selling a wide variety of merchandise from jewelry to a very wide variety of clothing, to art to exotic drinks...you name it — it's here at this Pier Park!

These 23 retail shops, along with the many more that will be added, are living testimony to the creativity, the innovative spirit and yes the daring spirit of our business community. This park is our first opportunity to create that lasting impression as cruise passengers meet the Territory, and some of them for the first time.

Our collective responsibility when they get here is to captivate them, and provide an authentic visitor experience, so that they become tomorrow's overnight visitor.

All persons working at our ports of entry must be of the same mindset. Our Taxi drivers must be on that same page.

Our restaurants and shops must be committed to this, if we are to remain among the top destinations in the world, renowned for our guest experiences.

Now is the time for us to display the best of what we have to offer, whether it is local cuisine, drinks, cultural entertainment or unique Virgin Islands souvenirs.

Ladies and gentlemen, Destination BVI is on the move!

But, this Pier Park is also meant to be enjoyed equally by the residents of the BVI.

Indeed it would be a travesty if we were to close down this beautiful park when the cruise ships have gone away for the evening.

There is some work that we will have to do to level the playing field for all our merchants, be they inside or outside the park but we will get there shortly.

I am thrilled that the new array of stores are being patronised by both locals and visitors. In their own unique ways, these businesses have captured the essence of BVI craft, souvenirs, food, drink, artwork and much more.

Last night after spending the whole day in the Standing Finance Committee of the House of Assembly I stopped by the Pier Park to check out how well our merchants were coming along as they rushed to get ready for today.

I can tell you I caught the bug of excitement!

I cannot think of a time when I was more proud of my people!

I encourage everyone to continue to support these businesses to help build our economy.

I also want to thank our local entrepreneurs for having the confidence and foresight to be tourism business ambassadors in our pier park.

With the vision to be the premier shopping, dining and entertainment facility in the region, I know that our Pier Park will surpass the competition. I am extremely satisfied with the volume of cruise passengers visiting the Territory since the opening of our expanded cruise pier.

Let's keep our shopping facilities sufficiently exciting that there would be no need to look beyond these shores.

Fellow Virgin Islanders, residents and friends, we are making progress together.

My Government is advancing the development of this Territory, and the people of the Virgin Islands remain at the centre of our plans for shared sustainable growth and sound infrastructural development. The expected benefits throughout the entire Territory – Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Anegada, Jost Van Dyke and all of our outer islands - will be tremendous.

We ARE Destination BVI, a unique travel experience like none other in the Caribbean.

We are supporting our local business partners that share this vision and understand customer satisfaction. We are embracing innovation in our tourism industry, and high quality products that support this.

I commend the Minister for Communications and Works, Honourable Mark Vanterpool, for delivering on this project. He has taken a lot of unnecessary licks for

this one but he steadfastly kept his eye on the prize - the prize of today!

I thank the Board of Directors of the BVI Ports Authority and the staff of , the BVI Ports Authority team who all assisted in different ways to bring my Government's vision for the Tortola Pier Park to fruition.

I especially acknowledge the financial support of the Social Security Board, CIBC First Caribbean and the people of the Territory who have all made significant contributions to our Tortola Pier Park.

We could not stand here today, if you did not share the tourism dream with us.

We also have two very special guests sharing our celebrations -- Director for Destination Development, Norwegian Cruise Lines, Mr. Andrew Duckworth; and Director for Marine Port, Security Operations, and Maritime Affairs, Disney Cruise Lines, Mr. Russell Daya. Mr. Duckworth and Mr. Daya, I am truly delighted that you could share this historic moment with us.

We hope that your passengers will feel so special here in the BVI that they will return again and again Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, I am so proud of this Pier Park! Here is a place that you can come to window shop, to shop, to enjoy a drink or some good food, or just a place to hang out.

But most importantly we are building a better Virgin Islands for generations to come.

I am excited and your numbers here today say that you are too. I wish everyone and our merchants in particular the wisdom to make decisions that will give you the best possible return on your investment.

Stimulating & Fixing the Economy



MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS HONOURABLE MARK VANTERPOOL "THE INTEREST OF THE FUTURE"

As a Government and as a people, we have come through 2015, having overcome many a challenge, but we can also be very proud of the many advancements that we have made. We will provide an update on the seven major areas under the portfolio of the Ministry of Communications and Works.

These include Water, Sewerage, Telecommunications, Roads, City, Energy and Sea Ports. As part of the ongoing improvements to the Water Distribution Network, Government signed a contract with Aqua Designs for the upgrade of the water plant on Virgin Gorda, in October 2015. The upgrades to that facility should be completed within the next few months.

On Tortola, we have completed the loop system on McNamara, to ensure we are able to supply upper and lower McNamara with water on a sustained basis. We have increased the size of the booster pumps at Diamond Estate, which has allowed us to distribute water to Cane Garden Bay and Sea Cow's Bay, simultaneously.

We continue to experience some challenges with broken pipes in Sea

Cow's Bay and along the Ridge Road. We will continue to repair these broken pipes as they arise.

The Water and Sewerage Department intends to move forward with the expansion of the distribution network through Brewers Bay and into Havers and will continue to look at and expand the network in other areas.

Sewerage

The Sewerage Treatment Plant in Road Town is now fully operational and sewerage is being treated to a tertiary level, which is, environmentally, a lot safer and cleaner.

The focus of the National Sewerage Programme is now on completion of the sewerage project in East End/Long Look. The Sewerage Treatment Plant at Paraquita Bay has passed the inspection test and we are proceeding with the installation of force mains from Long Swamp to Paraquita Bay. Once completed, this will allow for the connection of households, later in this year.

The Ministry of Communications and Works also intends to revisit and possibly revamp the sewerage network within Cane Garden Bay, to accommodate a new design, which will require fewer pumps and facilitate greater connections of properties in the area.

We expect all sewerage works within

the City to be completed by the end of the first quarter of this year, including the completion of force mains and the commissioning of the Road Town Pump Station.

Telecommunications Regulatory Unit

As Minister for Communications and Works, I continue to encourage the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC), to work with all licensed operators, to ensure that the Territory can benefit from far greater broadband speeds. More optimal broadband speeds are available globally and we must be able to benefit from this technology locally as well and also at more affordable prices.

Roads

The Ministry of Communications and Works, through the Public Works Department, continues to execute our Major Road Improvement and Development Programme.

The works involve the installation of kerbs, slipper drains, sidewalks and edge of road; lengthening of culverts; construction of manholes and road paving. We have completed and continue road works from East End to West End on Tortola, including Spring Ghut to Belle Vue, Carrot Bay, Slaney to Sea Cow's Bay and Soldier's Hill to Windy Hill.

On Aneгада, roads works are being done in The Settlement, Salt Heap Point and towards Cow Wreck, covering approximately 3 miles.

On Virgin Gorda, road improvement works including sidewalks on Millionaire road continue. Improvement of drainage and resurfacing of Waldo road is set to start within the second quarter of this year. Lee Road Phase I is expected to be retendered shortly, while Phase II which includes drainage, sidewalks and resurfacing of Lee Road, from the Catholic Community Centre to Pump Well will also begin within the second quarter of this year.

On Jost Van Dyke, we intend to move forward with drainage improvement works from Rudy's Bar and Restaurant through to Foxy's Restaurant, Bottom Road. Discussions are also underway to improve the road, drainage and the parking area at the Dog Hole Jetty.

We have spent a total of \$6.8 million so far on the Territory-wide Road Improvement Project and we expect to continue road works on the East End/ Long Look area down to Paraquita Bay, following the sewerage improvement works.

We will also be completing the Sea Cow's Bay sidewalks and road realignment from Duffs Bottom to the Ebenezer Thomas Primary School and down to Pockwood Pond, following the BVI Electricity Corporation's Phase V transmission line installation phase.

To improve the road infrastructure in the Territory and to ensure the continued safety of our road network, we continue to execute projects under the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) Loan funded projects.

City Manager

For 2016, we expect to complete infrastructure works in the Capital City of Road Town, including sewerage works and road improvements. We also hope to start the Main Street Rehabilitation and Focus, once we have consulted with the public and key stakeholders in the area.

Electricity/Energy

The British Virgin Islands Electricity Corporation (BVI EC) continues to operate under a slim reserve margin. We saw an increase of approximately 9MW added to our total system demand in 2015, including Biwater's Water and Sewerage Treatment Plants, Tortola Pier Park, Mooney Bay Development and Clarence Thomas Limited's new store development. This increase has brought our peak demand to 33.7MW for 2015.

We have since commenced our Phase V Development Programme, which would give us an additional 26.1MW of capacity. The Phase V Power Development Programme comprises two packages: Package A is the Generation contract, which remains on track for delivery of the first two engines in April of this year. Package A also includes excavation works to facilitate expansion of the Power Station at Pockwood Pond, which is now 90% complete.

Package B is the Transmission and Distribution contract, which comprises a second transmission line connecting Pockwood Pond to Long Bush, via the Paul P. Wattley Road. This is expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2016.

The two engines will be online at the end of December 2016 and with the addition of the third generator, the overall BVI EC Phase V Power Development Programme will be complete in February 2017.

The Government of the Virgin Islands, through the Ministry of Communications and Works, is working on the implementation of an Energy Policy for the Territory.

As a Government, we have forged ahead with a number of initiatives towards this end, including modernising and approving legislation governing energy development and implementing various conservation methods and Renewable Energy systems.

We also expect to see savings with a streetlights programme, replacing the

traditional streetlights with solar or LEDs, which has already begun in the Capital.

The first 50 solar streetlights earmarked to be installed in Tortola, from Pockwood Pond to West End, on Virgin Gorda between North Sound and Handsome Bay, on Jost Van Dyke and Aneгада, have already been shipped.

We expect delivery in BVI to be towards the end of February and installation before the end of April. Homeowners will also now be able to realize savings through Net Metering/Net Billing, which allows licensed entities to generate their own power, feeding unused excess power which they produce, back into the National Grid.

In the meantime, preparations for implementation of the Renewable Energy components, are ongoing. Legislation to incorporate Renewable Energy was approved by the House of Assembly in mid-2015.

We are continuing our work with the Attorney General's Chambers to complete the Regulations, so that installations can be brought online in an organised manner. We expect this to be completed before the end of April 2016. The overall aim of our Government's Energy Policy, is to diversify the way we produce our energy and reduce consumption of electricity by some 30 percent, by the year 2023.

Ports

We embarked on a project to strengthen, widen and lengthen the existing cruise pier to accommodate ships with a tonnage of up to 180,000 Gross Registered Tonnage (GRT) and the development of the landside to include a welcome shopping centre.

The Tortola Pier Park has already begun to yield positive economic results and our Government is confident it will produce strong economic results in many areas, now and in the future, to benefit the Territory of the Virgin Islands

Stimulating & Fixing the Economy

TOURISM

1. TORTOLA PIER PARK DELIVERS AS AN UNMATCHED EXPERIENCE

The Tortola Pier Park called an 'unmatched shopping, dining and entertainment facility' was officially opened in February 2016.

The eventful day offered the public an opportunity to tour the Pier Park as well as receive a first class experience of the Territory's prime tourism product.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE, stated at the official opening ceremony that destination BVI is on the move.

Premier Smith said, **"In order to stay ahead of the game, we had to move in a new direction, and do more to offer a unique difference and standout. Speaking from personal experience — and I have**

travelled far and wide on business and for pleasure- I can say without fear of contradiction that what we have created here today is unsurpassed anywhere."

The Premier said that the Pier Park offers an impeccable selection of unique merchandise, jewelry, drinks, clothing and more that cannot be found anywhere else. He added that since the opening of the cruise pier, many persons have made positive comments about the development of the Pier Park including heads of state, leaders in the tourism industry, captains and tourists.

Minister for Communications and Works, Honourable Mark Vanterpool, said he was elated to see the completion of the project. He stated that it is a well-executed project and

a worthy investment for the people of the Virgin Islands.

Honourable Vanterpool added, **"To those of you who are visiting this facility for the first time, I am sure that you are amazed and pleased at what your Government is doing to guarantee the long term sustainability of the Cruise Tourism Industry in the Virgin Islands."**

Following the opening of the cruise pier in April, 2015, there has been an increase in the number of cruise ship passengers visiting the Territory. A record number of 700,000 passengers are also expected to have visited in 2016. Tortola Pier Park now holds about 47 retail stores while the Terminal Building is occupied with 100% locally owned businesses.



2. QUEEN ELIZABETH II PARK OPENS

Members of the community were on the move at the opening ceremony of the Queen Elizabeth II Park (QEII Park) and children's playground in May 2016.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE, in his remarks at the opening said that work on the project commenced during his last administration where the perimeter of the park was enclosed and land reclamation was improved. He said the property was completely transformed into a fully functional green space and recreational park for all to enjoy.

Premier Smith stated that as a tourism attraction, the park is a vital link for visitors who wish to explore and enjoy Road Town. This, he said, will result in further economic stimulus with spending in businesses and services in the Road Town area.

The Premier added, **"The QEII Park is a part of my Government's vision for revitalising Road Town and ensuring that activities in the city reflect its economic and historic importance. The QEII Park is also part of our wider vision to improve the quality of life for all residents in this Territory, and helping to make Road Town pedestrian and environmentally friendly."**

Premier Smith said that the park is not just another beautiful place, and its value as a functional green space within our community is immeasurable.

He said, **"I anticipate that it will serve our community with many benefits including health benefits – both mental and physical; as well as social and even economic benefits. With the opening of our renovated**

children's playground, we are encouraging our little ones to move at an early age, and keep moving. By doing this, we are taking bold steps to reduce the instances of childhood obesity in future generations."



Stimulating & Fixing the Economy

TOURISM

3. PREMIER SMITH ANNOUNCES A GAME CHANGER: DIRECT FLIGHTS TO MIAMI

Direct flights from the Virgin Islands to Miami and back, will soon be available through the services of BVI Airways.

This is the first service of its kind, and is themed 'A Game Changer': BVI Direct. It is anticipated to have great significance to the development of the Virgin Islands, especially in the area of tourism and financial services.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE made the announcement during an official ceremony held on January 12, 2016. He stated, **"Today, it is my special pleasure to announce that we have made good on that promise of direct flights to and from the United States mainland, by partnering with BVI Airways to have direct flights between the Terrance B. Lettsome International Airport and the Miami International Airport."**

Direct flights for BVI means that travelers should be able to get to a major international hub, from which direct flights from major metropolitan centres around the world can connect to flights that fly directly to and from the British Virgin Islands.

The Premier pledged to the people of this Territory in 2015 that within his tenure of the next electoral cycle, his government would solve the problems of air access to and from the British Virgin Islands. He pledged to provide for direct flights to and from the United States mainland from the T.B. Lettsome International Airport and stated that his Government will continue to work tirelessly on the extension of the runway.

The service aircraft is a regional RJ85 which will be converted to accommodate 86 passengers with a two and half hour flight to Miami. There will be afternoon flights coming from the United States Mainland to the British Virgin Islands, and morning flights originating from the British Virgin Islands connecting to destinations in the US mainland, parts of the Caribbean, Central and South America and Europe.



4. BVI TOURIST ARRIVALS INCREASE

The British Virgin Islands continues to see positive growth in the tourism industry with initial tourism figures for January to July 2016 showing an overall increase of 27.3 percent for all visitors, when compared to the same period in 2015.

Premier and Minister for Tourism, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE is pleased with the figures and stated, **"The success rate is as a result of the collaborative effort where Government, businesses and the people are working together, and I thank BVI Tourist Board for their strategic marketing efforts in promoting our destination."**

The Premier encouraged tourism stakeholders to continue to do their part in **"making sure that our visitors have the same memorable 'One BVI' guest experience"**.

Data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) of the Government of the Virgin Islands revealed that there were 280,876 overnight visitors to the Territory from January to July 2016, compared to 270,325 overnight visitors for the same period in 2015. This reflects a 3.9 percent increase in overnight visitors over that period.

The Territory welcomed 444,200 cruise visitors from January to July 2016, compared to 300,750 for the same period in 2015, an impressive 47.7 percent increase. Furthermore, the number of day-trippers to the Virgin Islands over the same period was 10,011 as compared to 6,427 for the same period in 2015. This represents an increase of 55.8 percent.

The data also reveals an additional 157,585 more travelers to the Territory in 2016 resulting in 735,087 total visitors when compared to 577,502 travelers for the same period in 2015.



Stimulating & Fixing the Economy

TOURISM

5. VIRGIN ISLANDS SHIPPING REGISTRY REWARDED FOR EXCELLENT RECORD

The Virgin Islands Shipping Registry (VISR) has won Quality Shipping in the 21st Century (Qualship 21) programme recognition for the year 2017. The department received a Certificate of Achievement confirming that the United States Coast Guard (USCG) officially recognised the VISR for having qualified for inclusion in the USCG Qualship 21 programme.

The United States Coast Guard places a large focus on eliminating substandard shipping and enforces compliance with both international and US standards. The Qualship 21 initiative rewards high-quality flag state administrations and ships. It provides incentives to encourage quality operations. It also seeks

to improve the quality of vessels visiting US ports to having few or no deficiencies. The BVI was one of only 16 flag states that qualified for the Qualship 21 programme in 2016.

In his congratulatory message to the VISR, Commander A.H. Moore Jr., of the United States Coast Guard said, **"Your commitment to quality shipping was evident as merchant vessels flagged by your registry that called on US ports, have compiled an excellent Port State Control record in the past three calendar years. As a result, your Administration's three year detention percentage is below the 1.0% threshold that**

is required for inclusion into Qualship 21 programme."

Acting Director of the Virgin Islands Shipping Registry, Captain Raman Bala said, **"This is a very big news and positive development for VISR. The Qualship 21 recognition is a badge of honour and indeed a great achievement for the flag. It means that ships registered with the VISR will find it easier to operate in the United States ports in regard to the USCG port state control compliance and owners will find the VISR more attractive to register their ships."**





6. BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS - TOP FIVE OF WORLD'S BEST AWARDS

Jost Van Dyke and Virgin Gorda placed second and third in Travel + Leisure's 2015 World's Best Awards in June. Jost Van Dyke was awarded the No. 2 spot while Virgin Gorda followed in the No. 3 ranking for Top Islands in the Caribbean, Bermuda and the Bahamas. These spots were awarded based on surveys conducted by readers who marked their rankings based on natural attractions, beaches, activities, sites, restaurants, food, people, friendliness, and value.

Scrub Island Resort & Spa and Rosewood Little Dix Bay were also

among the Top 25 World's Best Hotels based on readers' rankings of rooms, facilities, locations, service, restaurants, food, and value of hotels and resorts in the Caribbean, Bermuda and the Bahamas.

Premier and Minister for Tourism, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE stated, **"We are indeed excited about this recognition because it is a reminder to the world that Destination British Virgin Islands is the ideal vacation spot to enjoy life. For us to be lauded by Travel and**

Leisure, a major publication in the United States, speaks volume to the commitment that our people, our industry and my Government have placed on tourism. I congratulate the people and businesses on Jost Van Dyke and Virgin Gorda for ensuring that our visitors are exposed to exceptional and memorable experiences."

Stimulating & Fixing the Economy

TOURISM

7. TAXI DRIVER RECEIVES TOUR GUIDE EXCELLENCE TRAINING AWARD

Local taxi driver, Mr. Keithley Liburd was the recipient of an Aquila's Tour Guide Excellence Training Award.

Mr. Liburd received the award at the 2015 Seatrade Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The Aquila Programme was completed in the Territory and was organised by Ms. Victorene Creque at the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board. The training was part of a collaborative effort between the Tourist Board and the Taxi and Livery Commission.

Minister for Communications and Works, Honourable Mark Vanterpool and representatives from Tortola

Pier Park Limited, Taxi and Livery Commission, and the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board also attended the conference.

Honourable Mark Vanterpool, stated **"Cruise passengers have indicated, through surveys and various means, that based on the experiences they have had when they came to the BVI, they want to come back to the British Virgin Islands perhaps more than most other places in the Caribbean... because the taxi drivers in the BVI have been good ambassadors for us in the Territory".**

The minister added that the Government of the Virgin Islands commended Mr. Liburd for his commitment to excellent customer service and that the award was a reflection of the positive reinforcement for the need for better customer service in the Territory.

Aquila's Center for Cruise Excellence offers training programs to help cruise destinations and tour operators around the world achieve excellence in their ports, tours, guides and businesses. About 30 local taxi drivers participated and completed this programme.



8. VIRGIN ISLANDS SHIPPING REGISTRY WELCOMES 'DREAM MOVER'

The newly established category one Virgin Islands Shipping Registry (VISR) continues to make strides with the registration of vessels, including those operating and based in the British Virgin Islands.

The department participated in the dedication ceremony of the 'Dream Mover', the newest addition to the fleet of the locally owned New Horizon Ferry Service Limited. Acting Director at the Registry, Captain Raman Bala said the owners chose to register the vessel with the Virgin Islands Shipping Registry and they were involved from the planning stage of the project.

Captain Bala said, **"We were able to provide technical advice**

on the maritime regulations that would apply to the vessel as well as the documentation required for registration. With proper planning, all the necessary documentation in regards to the Dream Mover was facilitated and copies provided to VISR."

He said this collaboration reduced the cost to the company, and that the VISR Marine Inspector was also present in St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands at the vessel's arrival to complete the certification so that it could sail to the British Virgin Islands. The 'Dream Mover' is owned and operated by Mr. Sendrick Chinnery and Mr. Gerald Chinnery of Jost Van Dyke. It is a multi-purpose cargo



ship capable of carrying passengers, containers, cars, lorries, fuel, water and cargo in bulk.

The Virgin Islands Shipping Registry seeks to ensure that Virgin Islands ships can safely, securely and efficiently enjoy the freedom of the seas, and the department also supports an effective and vigorous Maritime Administration.

9. THE BRANDYWINE BAY PROJECT - A NEW LEISURE DESTINATION

Work on the Brandywine Bay project that commenced in 2015 is moving forward as the Government of the Virgin Islands moves to create a new leisure destination for residents and visitors.

Presently, the project's activities include dredging and widening and reclamation of the beach front with dredged sand and levelling of the beach.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick D. Pickering said that the end game would be to produce another leisure destination for tourists and locals alike.

Minister Pickering said, **"Persons need to understand that the**

project is not just reclamation, but includes landscaping, beach utilities, vendors and other conveniences. The project will be an enthusiastic addition to our tourism product and our economy and we are working towards our goals here using the most environmentally sound methods so that the least

amount of impact is being taken at every turn."

Minister Pickering also added that the Brandywine Bay beach has long been earmarked as an alternative to add to the tourism product for cruise ship passengers to reduce the strain of overcrowding on other beaches such as Cane Garden Bay and Brewer's Bay.



Stimulating & Fixing the Economy

TOURISM



10. MEMBERS APPOINTED TO THE BVI TOURIST BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cabinet approved the re-appointment of Mr. Russell Harrigan as chairman of the BVI Tourist Board.

Mr. Harrigan has held the position since 2011 and he will be supported by committee members Messrs. Julien Johnson, Clyde Lettson, Denniston Fraser, Romney Penn, Sendrick Chinnery, Mike Rowe and Ms. Tanya Whistler for a period of four years (until 2020). Ex-officio members of the board are the Permanent Secretary in the Premier's Office and the Managing Director of the BVI Ports Authority. All members represent a cross-section of disciplines in various industries.

Premier and Minister of Finance,
Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando

Smith, OBE said that the Cabinet decision reflects the Government's confidence in the board of directors to maintain the Territory's reputation as a prime tourism destination, and a leader among our global tourism counterparts.

Premier Smith has charged the Board with growing tourism annually, diversifying our offerings, to improve the experience of all tourists, locally, regionally and internationally.

Section 3 (3) of the Tourist Board Ordinance Cap. 280 (as amended) provides for a board membership of up to fifteen members to serve for a period of four years.

11. TAXI DRIVERS RECEIVE ADDITIONAL SAFETY TRAINING



The Taxi and Livery Commission, the Department of Disaster Management and the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board (BVITB) collaborated on an initiative for a more effective safety

programme for taxi drivers in the Virgin Islands in March 2016.

The programme includes educating and training taxi drivers on fire suppression, emergency management and emergency preparedness. This safety programme will also be combined with the existing Taxi Academy programmes which include training in customer service, defensive driving and Virgin Islands history.

The Government announced that some 700,000 cruise passengers are

expected to visit the Territory in 2017 and the objective of this collaborative effort is to provide drivers with the necessary skills and knowledge to better handle disasters that may occur on the road.

The Taxi and Livery Commission and the BVI Tourist Board have been working together for several years and welcomed the new relationship with the Department of Disaster Management to enhance the Virgin Islands product.

12. CAPTAIN AND CREW OF NORWEGIAN IMPRESSED WITH PIER AND THE “BIG VILLAGE”



Captain of the Norwegian Breakaway, Mr. Michael Hilden said that he was pleased with Tortola Pier Park when his ship made its inaugural call to the Port at Road Town in December 2015.

The cruise liner had a crew and guests of approximately 6,500. Plaques were exchanged onboard, and Minister for

Communications and Works, Honourable Mark Vanterpool said the Government of the Virgin Islands is committed to putting facilities in place to enable visitors to have a memorable and world-class experience when visiting the Territory.

Honourable Vanterpool said, **“We are doing a lot to improve a number of the areas, the infrastructure, the roads and the sidewalks, the destinations on land and on the other beautiful small islands that your guest will enjoy.”**

Captain Hilden said, **“It was really nice to approach this morning to see the nice big pier you have built for us and also to see the big village (Tortola Pier Park) we have in front of us. I wish you all the best...”**

The Tortola Pier Park was officially opened in February 2016.

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13. BVI TRANSPARENCY STANDARDS RECEIVES COMMENDATION

The British Virgin Islands was rated “Largely Compliant” for its approach to tax transparency and exchange of information in 2015. The rating appeared in the Supplementary Peer Review report published by The Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes (“Global Forum”), a taskforce set up by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris.

The Global Forum’s peer review of the BVI, analysed the practical implementation of the jurisdiction’s exchange of information framework. The review commended the quality of the BVI’s responses to exchange of information requests, as well as the timeliness of responses in relation to the number of requests received.

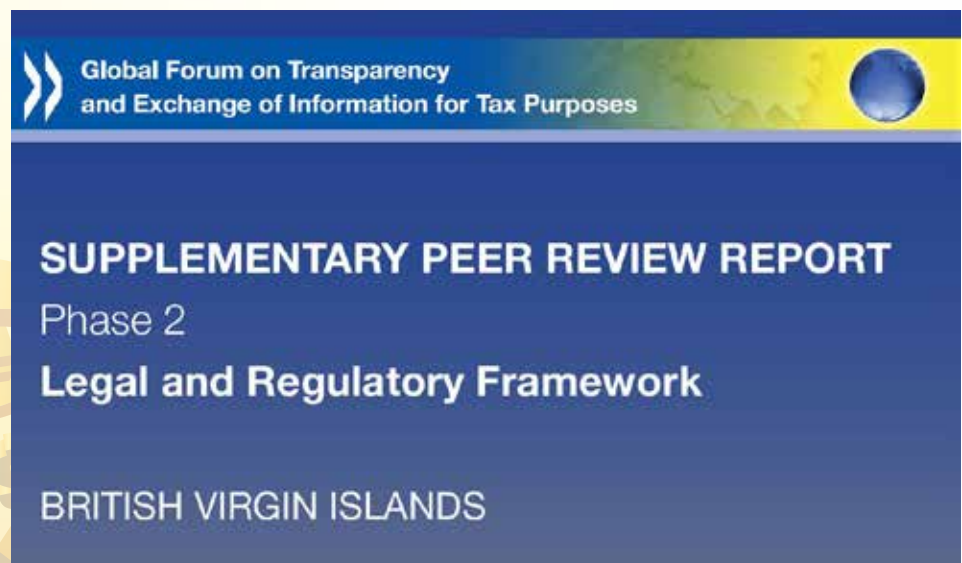
The BVI is a constructive and co-operative partner on Transparency and Information Exchange within the OECD. The Government has signed 27 Tax Information Exchange

Agreements (TIEAs) to date, and is an early adopter of the new global standard on the automatic exchange of information.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE said the Territory has a long track-record of meeting and exceeding the highest international regulatory and transparency standards and continues to do so.

“The BVI has been a pioneering global financial centre for over 30 years and this latest endorsement demonstrates

how the jurisdiction continues to evolve and maintain its competitive advantage. We remain committed to engaging the OECD and our other international partners to help exceed and enhance international standards of tax transparency and regulation”, Premier Smith said.



14. BVI MAKES CAPTIVE INSURANCE HISTORY

The BVI made history in the captive insurance industry in August 2015 with the appointment of the Marketing Manager of BVI Finance, Ms. Alicia Green to the Executive Board of the International Center for Captive Insurance Education (ICCIE).

The ICCIE is a leading provider of captive insurance education in North America and Ms. Green is the first ICCIE alumna to be appointed to the Board in its history. The organisation was founded in 2004 to develop and educate qualified professionals in order to sustain and grow the captive insurance industry. It was developed in collaboration with the University of Vermont (UVM), and the courses

offered through ICCIE are domicile neutral and taught by captive insurance specialists.

Ms. Green said, **"I am delighted to have the opportunity to work with leaders in the industry to promote the captive business and the BVI's international offer. I look forward to working with the existing board and utilising my marketing expertise to further grow the organisation."**

Ms. Green currently serves as Marketing Manager for BVI Finance, an organisation solely responsible for marketing and promoting the BVI financial services industry. She

received her Associates of Captive Insurance (ACI) from the institution in 2013, bringing the total number of ACI alumni fellows from the Virgin Islands to five.



15. BVI REMAINS A TRUSTED PARTNER IN ASIA PACIFIC REGION

BVI House Asia celebrated its second anniversary in Hong Kong in September 2015. Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE said he was pleased that the Territory remains a trusted partner in the Asia Pacific Region.

The Premier in an address to business leaders at the Business BVI Asia 2015 Second Annual Regional Conference in Hong Kong stated, **"We are still in the right place and at the right time. The BVI is immensely proud and fortunate to have been working with Asian businesses and individuals as they achieved economic success and Asia experienced incredible growth over the last 25 years."**

The Honourable Premier said Asia will continue to make its mark

with vitality, financial success and innovation. He said despite some current concerns, the economic experts predict a reasonably good outlook for Asia's future.

Premier Smith said the Territory's characteristics, such as a familiar legal system based on English

common law, internationally compliant regulations and tax neutrality, make the BVI an especially attractive jurisdiction for pooling capital globally and investing it in markets where legal barriers or political risks would otherwise deter investment.



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16. FINANCIAL SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION UNIT TEAM ON THE JOB

The Financial Services Implementation Unit (FSIU) is now fully staffed and operational.

The establishment of the unit in September 2015 was among recommendations outlined by international consulting firm, McKinsey and Company which was commissioned to develop a strategic plan to chart the future of the financial services industry.

Premier Smith stated, **“The creation of the Financial Services Implementation Unit is indicative of the much needed emphasis being placed on securing the future of the financial services industry. While the new team under the**

astute leadership of Mr. Kedrick Malone is responsible for delivering on their mandate, the success of their mission depends largely on the cooperation of the sectors they will be working with during the implementation phase.”

The implementation unit is comprised of a six-member team headed by Mr. Kedrick Malone, who previously served as Director of the BVI London Office and most recently, as Executive Director of the International Finance Centre, now BVI Finance.

The other members of team are Senior Delivery Specialist, Mr. Toby Clayson; Delivery Specialist, Ms. Monique Hodge-Bell; Data analyst,

Ms. Aida Biberic; Communications Specialist, Ms. Philomena Robertson and Administrator, Mrs. Policia Clyne.

The team is tasked with driving the implementation of the other nine recommendations which came out of the McKinsey led consultancy, which are to revamp the International Finance Centre, already rebranded as BVI Finance; enhance customer service at the Financial Services Commission; attract value-added services; reform Immigration and Labour; build BVIlander capabilities; pursue tax initiatives; invest in infrastructure; strengthen business development and engage the population.

17. BVI LEADS DISCUSSIONS AT FINANCIAL SERVICES MEETING IN BRUSSELS

The Government of the Virgin Islands sought further clarification from the European Union (EU) on the inclusion of the Territory and a number of Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) associated with the European Union on a pan-EU blacklist of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions published in 2015.

BVI London Office Director and EU Representative, Mr. Benito Wheatley, co-chaired an EU/OCT Financial Services Partnership Working Party meeting held in Brussels in December, and discussed

the approach taken by the EU to the pan-EU blacklist in the context of cooperation between the EU and OCTs under the Overseas Association Decision (OAD)

Both sides agreed that the inclusion of OCTs on the list had to be further considered in the context of the cooperation provided in the area of financial services contained in the OAD.

“There was a clear understanding that the EU and OCTs are bound together

by the Overseas Association Decision which provides for our cooperation as partners, which entails consultation via policy dialogue on any matters affecting the OCTs’ sustainable development”, Mr. Wheatley said.

He added that he was pleased that at a technical level, the European Commission supports the cooperative approach set out in the OAD that will be taken into consideration as the EU further considers its list of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions.



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18. BVI REMOVED FROM FRENCH LIST OF NON-COOPERATIVE TAX JURISDICTIONS

The British Virgin Islands was removed from the French list of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions in December 2015. The decision was signed by French Minister of Finance and Public Accounts, Michel Sapin.

Minister Sapin said the cooperation between France and the Virgin Islands progressed very significantly which resulted in almost all of the requests receiving a successful response.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE said he was pleased with the announcement. **"The Government of the Virgin Islands is pleased with this positive step from France which demonstrates our commitment to exchange of information and also demonstrates our compliance with the international standards"**, Honourable Premier said.

Premier Smith added, **"As a jurisdiction, we have always, through the continual review and reform of the appropriate**

legislative and administrative frameworks, strived to ensure that our regime is fit for purpose, internationally compliant, and can serve the legitimate business needs of our industry's clientele."

The Premier said the BVI has long given due regard to the developing global trends which impact or have the potential to impact the Territory's financial services sector including the current global issues related to transparency. He added that his Government will continue to do what is necessary to strengthen law enforcement, international cooperation and effective exchange of information in the areas of tax, to keep in tune with developments and guard against activities considered inimical to the financial services sector and the reputation of the Territory.

The announcement came after the progress made in the Virgin Islands was also recognised by the Global Forum on Tax Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes in August 2015 which saw an upgrade of the Territory's non-compliant rating to 'largely compliant'.

19. TERRITORY ADVANCES TO NEXT PHASE OF NATIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Phases I and II of the National Risk Assessment exercise was completed in September 2015. The results and recommendations will form the basis of the Territory's first National Risk Assessment Report which, upon completion will be presented to the National Risk Assessment Council.

Chairman of the NRA Communications Committee, Mrs. Arlene T. Penn said the response rate was positive and has helped to identify the money laundering and terrorist financing risks and ensure these risks are addressed prior to the next Territorial assessment by the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in 2017.

the threats, weaknesses and vulnerabilities to the Territory's anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism regime and will provide recommendations for mitigating the identified risks."

Each member country of the FATF and its associated regional bodies are required to ensure that they can identify, assess and understand the money laundering and terrorist financing risks for their country, as part of the new Financial Action Task Force International Standards on Combating Money Laundering, and the Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation.



Mrs Penn stated, **"The results of this assessment will identify**

20. BVI HOUSE ASIA HOLDS "LEADING FROM THE FRONT" SEMINAR IN HONG KONG

BVI House Asia held a "Leading from the Front" seminar for more than 25 financial services practitioners at the Central Plaza Building in Hong Kong in November 2015.

The purpose of the event, led by Director of BVI House Asia, Ms. Elise Donovan, was to update practitioners on the BVI's latest developments, and to discuss communications plans for 2016 that target and engage financial, business and government stakeholders.

Ms. Donovan provided an overview of recent positive developments for the BVI, such as the largely compliant OECD rating and the removal of the BVI from the French blacklist and implementation of BVI Forward initiatives.

The seminar was focused on what was described as an innovative and game-changing new bank initiative. Mr. Carson Wen and Mr. Chad Holm, architects of the Bank of Asia (BVI) Limited, which recently won license approval from the BVI Financial Services Commission, spoke about the structure and goals of the bank, and introduced members of their team present at the seminar.

Ms. Donovan closed the seminar by citing a number of new BVI initiatives, concluding that 2016 will be an exciting year for BVI House Asia as well as for practitioners who work with the BVI.

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21. BVI COMMITTED TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ON TAX AND TRANSPARENCY



Premier and Minister of Finance Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE in April 2016 welcomed the statement made by Former Prime Minister the Right Honourable David Cameron, MP in the House of Commons in which he commended the British Virgin Islands (BVI) and other Overseas Territories (OTs) and Crown Dependencies (CDs) for

enhancing cooperation with United Kingdom (UK) law enforcement authorities in relation to beneficial ownership and for previous commitments made on international tax information exchange. He also called on others to celebrate their success as financial centres that are part of the British family.

The Prime Minister further commended the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies during the debate saying to potential critics that instead of attacking them, they should be praising them and thanking them for what they have done.

Premier Smith said, **"I welcome the comments made by the Prime Minister as he made clear on several occasions, the commitments we and our colleagues in other Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies have made will**

be far in advance of many other countries, including the U.S. The new agreement between the UK and the British Virgin Islands will improve on existing exchange of information processes on beneficial ownership and ensure that information is shared between UK and British Virgin Islands law enforcement authorities quickly and efficiently. This builds on our strong partnership with the UK and further enhances our relationship."

22. BVI/UK INFORMATION SHARING ARRANGEMENTS ON BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

The British Virgin Islands (BVI) published the Exchange of Notes and Technical Protocols agreed with the United Kingdom (UK) Government relating to beneficial ownership of companies in April 2016.

The agreement was part of a determination to ensure that the BVI, as one of the pre-eminent jurisdictions for company incorporation, continues to have a best in class regime for beneficial ownership.

Under the agreement the BVI and the UK have mutually recognised the need to share beneficial ownership information for preventing and detecting illegal activity in both jurisdictions as well as the importance of sharing the information expeditiously.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE said, **"The new agreement will further enhance the BVI regime which already surpasses that of many other jurisdictions in the world. It will also ensure that in order to protect our business and the interests of BVI, when it comes to transparency and information exchange, BVI's rules and regulations are totally fit for purpose. As the UK Prime Minister said recently the commitments we and our colleagues in other Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies have made will be far in advance of many other countries, including the United States.**

The Premier added that the BVI has worked for over 30 years to carefully and legitimately build an industry that is well regarded and trusted by clients, global regulators and other international authorities. This agreement he said, will play its part in ensuring that this continues to be the case.



23. BVI FORWARD COMMUNICATIONS KICKS INTO HIGH GEAR



The Financial Services Implementation Unit (FSIU) moved its BVI Forward education and awareness campaign into high gear in April 2016, to increase awareness and engage the population. This was recommended in the report following the consultancy facilitated by McKinsey and Company.

The FSIU is seeking to develop a greater understanding of financial services, its importance to the BVI economy and its impact on the daily

lives of residents, and will be utilising all forms of media as part of its education and awareness campaign to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information.

FSIU Director, Mr. Kedrick Malone said, **"The BVI Forward campaign will utilise a range of spokespersons who will be sharing information on various aspects of the financial services industry and its relevance to the BVI population. We want**

persons to develop a real understanding of this economic pillar and how its benefits filter through the entire society, directly and indirectly."

Apart from informing and educating the public, the campaign will also provide opportunities to engage and have exchanges on financial services issues, their involvement in the industry and its impact on their lives, among other areas.

BVI Forward is a campaign comprising of ten initiatives which have been identified to help strengthen the financial services industry in the Territory and ensure its sustainable future.

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24. BVI GOVERNMENT EXPANDS PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Government of the Virgin Islands moved to expand its greater public-private partnership in the financial services industry in 2015.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE proposed this as the way forward when he addressed members of the Financial Services Advisory Committee who were instrumental in formulating the recommendations emerging from the financial services consultancy which was facilitated by McKinsey and Company.

Premier Smith thanked the committee members for supporting Government's initiative to strengthen and reposition the financial services sector, and gave his administration's full commitment to an expanded partnership.

"The key to our future prosperity in financial services is our partnership. This partnership produced the BVI Forward recommendations; this partnership got us going through some very challenging times; this partnership is now allowing us to make significant and lasting changes. Our partnership is our strength and the key to our success", Premier Smith stated.

Premier Smith, in providing updates on the ten priority initiatives included in BVI Forward, identified the revamping of the International Finance Centre as a major area for public-private partnership.

Already rebranded BVI Finance, the plan is to transform the Government agency into a corporate entity, allowing it greater autonomy in fulfilling its role as the marketing and promotional arm of the industry.



25. OFFSHORE 2020 INDUSTRY REPORT: 'BVI IS MOST IMPORTANT JURISDICTION'



Offshore 2020 Report 2015: The New Normal

The British Virgin Islands was ranked as the most important offshore jurisdiction for the sixth consecutive year by Offshore 2020, an independent industry report in November 2015.

More than 300 global financial services industry participants contributed to this report, which explored key trends and issues facing the global offshore financial services industry.

Industry practitioners highlighted the Virgin Islands for its ease of doing business, speed and efficiency, legal and commercial certainty, as well as its robust regulatory standards. The report explains that the BVI offers a well-entrenched conduit for corporate vehicles and funds and it expects that this positive trajectory will continue into 2020. This underscores a major trend from last year's report, which was that the demise of offshore had been predicted every year, but despite this, the BVI as a jurisdiction, continues to lead the way.

Director of BVI House Asia, Ms. Elise Donovan welcomed the findings of the report and stated, **"We are pleased to receive such recognition once again from industry practitioners around the world. This is clear recognition of the depth and breadth of our offering, and most importantly, this report challenges the common perception that the BVI is being used for tax driven purposes."**

She said the BVI was an early adopter of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development's Common Reporting Standard. In addition, the OECD has rated the BVI as a "largely compliant" jurisdiction in relation to the criteria set out in the 'Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes'.

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26. BVI FINANCE APPOINTS SENIOR INDUSTRY FIGURE TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ROLE

BVI Finance recruited Gary Hales as its new Head of Business Development. Mr. Hales joins from Jersey Finance where he was Business Development Director for over four years with a particular focus on the Gulf Cooperation Council and India.

In his new role Mr. Hales will be responsible for helping to generate new business for the BVI by drawing upon his expertise and experience from working at Jersey Finance. As well as promoting the BVI as a leading international finance centre, Mr Hales will also support initiatives aimed at maintaining and developing new relationships with key stakeholders locally and internationally.

His appointment comes at an important time, as BVI Finance transitions to BVI Finance Limited – a new a public/private partnership that will see the creation of a new structure and a private company. The new entity, which will take over from the existing BVI Finance, aims to better support financial services promotion and business development. Mr. Hales will play an

important role in driving growth of this new body, once it goes live in January 2017.

Mr. Hales brings a wealth of experience having worked in the banking and financial services sector for more than 20 years across the UK, Europe, Middle East, Asia Sub-Saharan Africa and Russia/CIS.

Commenting on the appointment, Lorna Smith, OBE, Interim Director of BVI Finance said, “I am delighted

that Gary has joined BVI Finance and I believe that he will play a key role amongst a wider team in helping to continue promoting the BVI as a place to do business. Having built a leading international finance centre over the last 30 years, based upon the core pillars of a world-class governance and regulatory structure, as well as a business-friendly environment, Gary joins at an exciting time as we look towards the future with great optimism and the launch of BVI Finance Limited.”



27. BVI FINANCE LIMITED LAUNCHES TO SUPPORT FINANCIAL SERVICES

BVI Finance Limited, a new public/private initiative that will see the creation of a company to better support financial services promotion and business development, is set to launch in January 2017.

The new entity, which will take over from the existing BVI Finance, is part of an ongoing Government programme which aims to strengthen and reposition the financial services industry. It will operate in keeping with best practice and along similar lines as Jersey Finance, Cayman Finance, Bermuda Development Association and other agencies charged with the promotion of financial services.

As a corporate entity under a fundamentally new structure, BVI Finance Limited will have greater autonomy and flexibility in fulfilling its role as the marketing and promotional arm of the financial services industry.

Under a partnership agreement to be entered between the Government and the private sector, the new organisation will be responsible for promoting financial services as an industry to customers, intermediaries and regulators abroad, as well as by developing new business opportunities to pursue through legislative, regulatory and product changes and innovation.

A number of carefully considered objectives are coordinating the efforts of all key private sector stakeholders within financial services, encouraging sustainable growth of financial services through excellence,

innovation and balance, as well as promoting and encouraging capability building within the financial services industry.

Commenting on BVI Finance Limited, Lorna Smith, OBE, Interim Executive Director of BVI Finance said, **"I am delighted to report that preparations for BVI Finance Limited are progressing well and that come January 2017 the new entity will start delivering on its objectives. Having built a leading international finance centre over the last 30 years, BVI Finance Limited will play an important role in ensuring the sustainable future of our financial services industry."**

Moreover, through the establishment of a public/private partnership, BVI Finance Limited will play an even more collaborative and effective role in the way financial services are promoted and marketed."

Brodrick Penn, Permanent Secretary in the Premier's Office said, **"BVI Finance Limited represents another positive step that we have taken to improve representation for the private sector and should be seen as a sign that the BVI is determined to continue creating value and**



enabling growth by providing a world-class destination for international business and commerce. I am grateful to members of the private sector for serving on the BVI Finance Ltd task force and for contributing their knowledge and experience to the design of a new entity that is fit for purpose and which has been approved by Government."

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28. PREMIER DISCLOSES PLAN TO CREATE INVESTMENT POLICY

The Government of the British Virgin Islands (BVI) plans to develop an investment policy that will help to attract value-added services to the local economy.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE made the disclosure as he presented an update on the occasion of the first anniversary of BVI Forward, Government's action plan to strengthen and reposition the financial services industry. In his speech he said the investment policy is intended to expand and diversify the economy and make the BVI more attractive to investors.

He said, **"A full Investment Policy will be developed by the Investment Promotion Agency (IPA) and the Premier's Office. The IPA and Investment Managers will be set up to facilitate targeted investments and investment promotion activities will be initiated in key product areas and in key markets."**

The Premier noted that the policy will facilitate attracting the new areas the BVI is seeking to develop, those that generate economic activity within the Territory or what the industry calls "substance".

It is hoped that through the creation of more substance-based businesses, the policy will help to address substance and transparency issues arising from the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) initiative of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).



29. TERRITORY GETS LARGELY COMPLIANT RATING

The Government of the Virgin Islands was successful in getting recognition of the Territory's 'largely compliant rating' by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Global Forum in August 2015. An agreement was also made by the United Kingdom to restate that it is not appropriate for the Overseas Territories to be labelled 'tax havens'.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE in a statement delivered during the First Sitting of the Fifth House of Assembly in December 2015 provided an update on the Beneficial Ownership Registry.

The Premier stated, **"The crux of the beneficial ownership issue is to ensure that we know who**

beneficially own BVI companies and have the ability to share that information with competent authorities and law enforcement authorities in a timely manner, if and when the need arises."

The Premier said the Territory's relevant Anti Money Laundering/ Countering of the Financing of Terrorism legislation have already been amended to require beneficial ownership information to be held in the British Virgin Islands (BVI) from 2016 onward.

The next stage in the development of the British Virgin Islands' successful Corporate Service Provider model will be the design of a technology based solution that would ensure the timely access and sharing of beneficial ownership information held by Trust



and Company Service Providers (TCSPs). The design will be done in full consultation with the financial services industry.

This step is consistent with the BVI's record – under successive governments - of keeping pace with evolving standards and thereby ensuring that the Territory's regime remains effective.

30. BVI REMAINS UNDISPUTED MARKET LEADER IN THE OFFSHORE FINANCIAL INDUSTRY

The British Virgin Islands (BVI) continued to be the undisputed market leader in the offshore financial services industry and the preferred jurisdiction in the Asia Pacific Region in 2015.

The Territory was ranked as the most important jurisdiction by survey respondents both inside and outside Asia for the sixth consecutive year.



The Territory's dominance as a jurisdiction in investments holding companies is now reinforced by a trend where clients are using more sophisticated and complex structures and transactions such as special purpose vehicles, funds and trusts, financing, listing, mergers and acquisitions.

Chief Executive Officer of Vistra Group, Mr. Martin Crawford, in a presentation on behalf of BVI Finance at the 2015 China Offshore Summit said the Territory held about 50 percent of the market share of new offshore companies formed globally, and of the active companies on the BVI's registry, about 60 percent were from Asian clients. He also noted the BVI's top-ranking as the most competitive offshore financial centre in the Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI).

Mr. Crawford stated that the BVI remains the market leader because of a number of factors, including its ease of doing business, legal and commercial certainty, and its robust regulatory standards.

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31. BVI FEATURED AT MIAMI AND CANADIAN TRUST SUMMITS

The BVI Finance partnered with, and was showcased at the 11th Annual Canadian Captives and Corporate Insurance Strategies Summit held in Toronto in May 2015, and the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP) Miami Summit held in Miami in June. At the summit held in Toronto, the Finance Centre captured an attendance of quality risk managers, brokers and corporate entities.

The summit was designed to source practical strategies on risk mitigation and captive management in addition to identifying innovative ways to cut costs, transfer risks and manage premiums. The STEP Miami Summit, was held in Miami, Florida and reviewed the latest issues concerning international private client planning, presented by the leading professionals in the area. Representatives also shared best practices among industry practitioners.

BVI Finance
your international business partner

32. ALVA MC CALL SECONDED AS DEPUTY FINANCIAL SECRETARY



Alva Mc Call has been seconded to the post of Deputy Financial Secretary in the Ministry of Finance.

Ms. Mc Call's secondment from the Financial Services Commission to the Government of the Virgin Islands is for a period of two years and took effect on September 19, 2016. She formerly served the Government of the Virgin Islands in the posts of Deputy Clerk and Clerk with the House of Assembly.

As Deputy Financial Secretary, Ms. Mc Call will advise the Financial Secretary on all matters pertaining to finance and general economic policy.

Ms. Mc Call will ensure legislation under the Ministry of Finance is reviewed and upgraded periodically. She will also assist with the preparation of the Ministry's Annual Budget, research, analyse and prepare reports, and provide advice on major issues relating to economic and social policy and national development.

Ms. Mc Call holds a Master's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance from Wright State University. She also obtained a Bachelor of Science degree with distinction from Virginia State University, and holds certificates in legislative drafting and legal writing from the International Law Institute.

33. BVI LAUNCHES CONSULTATION ON KEY ELEMENTS OF OECD'S BEPS INITIATIVE

The Government of the Virgin Islands announced the launch of a private sector consultation on the impact of country-by-country reporting as part of ongoing initiatives currently being undertaken by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The consultation was held in September 2016 to update the international tax system.

Country by country reporting is a key element of the BEPS initiative and if implemented would require multinational enterprises incorporated in the BVI with annual group revenues of €750m or more to file a detailed return annually with the territory's tax authorities. In addition, these reports would be automatically shared between countries signed up to the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting initiative to provide greater transparency on the tax affairs of companies operating across borders.

This consultation sought to further develop an understanding of the impact of country-by-country reporting in BVI and assess how the territory's private sector defines economic substance providing BVI Government with greater clarity on the future opportunities this may create for the Territory.

As part of the consultation, the Government sought views on the issue of economic substance to align the amount of organisational and economic activity undertaken by a multinational corporation with the taxable profits declared in each jurisdiction in which it operates.

Lorna Smith, OBE, Interim Director of BVI Finance said, **"We recognise the importance of international collaboration between jurisdictions to ensure that the global tax system remains robust and effective and we welcome the OECD's work in this area."**

We pride ourselves on our track record of engaging stakeholders in the private sector and to ensuring that our regulatory framework is fully supportive their needs. We look forward to receiving responses to our consultation and to further progressing our work on this important international initiative."



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34. BVI FORWARD COLLECTS DATA ON STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TO FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Financial Services Implementation Unit (FSIU) in partnership with the Ministry of Education, pressed ahead with plans to strengthen financial services education in the Territory to improve the future industry related skills of the BVI workforce.

The FSIU collected data at the secondary level in 2016 through a survey administered at the Elmore Stoutt High School (ESHS) to better inform its work on the Building

BVIlander Capability Initiative as part of the BVI Forward campaign.

The survey was designed to capture sample baseline data on the attitude and perspectives of Grade 11 students who have been exposed to at least one term of financial services education.

The activity sought to gather information on the overall value of the course to students, their understanding of key concepts, course delivery and the general

learning experience as well as their motivation to learn about financial services, among other areas.

The Business Department at the ESHS facilitated the actual administration of the survey. Principal, Mrs. Sandy Underhill said, **"As teachers and administrators, we are always grateful when things are moving forward. I am especially pleased with this partnership to reform the financial services curriculum and I commend the FSIU for doing the necessary work because as we all agree, the financial service industry is a pillar of the BVI economy."**

Following the completion of the survey and analysis of results, the FSIU hosted a Focus Group Discussion for business teachers, advisors and career counselors. The aim of this discussion was to gather data on the delivery of financial services course content as well as knowledge and comfort level on providing career advice related to the financial services industry.



35. FINANCIAL SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION UNIT REACHES OUT TO TEACHERS

The newly established Financial Services Implementation Unit (FSIU) engaged teachers in the British Virgin Islands as part of the BVI Forward campaign.

Director of the FSIU, Mr. Kedrick Malone identified potential areas of partnership when he met with principals of primary schools.

He told the educators that the idea was to help primary school students become aware of the financial services industry and its importance to their daily lives. He said by opening up young minds to the industry, a seed will be planted that will grow over time.

He added that various methods to achieve this objective include field trips to law firms and trust companies, designing illustration and colouring books for this particular age groups and providing in-class presentations.

Mr. Malone also mentioned the possibility of identifying champions within the primary schools who can serve as ambassadors among their peers.

He said, **“As part of the BVI Forward campaign, we have identified a number of well-known and respected persons within the community whom we call champions and who will use their influence to promote awareness of the industry and the benefits to be derived by the average person. Through an essay competition, we were able to identify a teenage champion and it is our intention to similarly identify a younger spokesperson who will help to engage students at the primary level.”**

BVI Forward is a campaign designed to further strengthen the internationally recognised financial services sector in the BVI and increase the awareness and engagement of its population in the process. The campaign is part of efforts to build upon the successes of the financial services industry and encourage greater involvement by key stakeholders in ensuring its sustainable future.



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FINANCIAL SERVICES

36. BVI AND CXC LAUNCH FINANCIAL SERVICES SYLLABUS

The Ministry of Education and Culture, in collaboration with the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) launched the Financial Services Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) Syllabus in November 2016.

Acting Premier at the time, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick D. Pickering; Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn; Interim Executive Director of BVI Finance, Mrs. Lorna Smith, OBE; CXC Registrar, Mr. Glenroy Cumberbatch; and CXC Assistant Registrar, Dr. Annette Piper delivered remarks at the ceremony held at the Eileene L. Parsons Auditorium at the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.

Financial Services was introduced as a compulsory subject into the curriculum of Virgin Islands secondary schools in the latter part of 2012. Later, the Ministry of Education and Culture initiated discussions with CXC for the development of a Financial Services Syllabus at the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) level. With the help of technical experts from the Virgin Islands and around the region on the subject, the CAPE Financial Services Syllabus will be ready for examination in 2017.



37. BVI FORWARD FOSTERS INTEGRATION OF FINANCIAL SERVICES IN EDUCATION



The Financial Services Implementation Unit (FSIU) is partnering with the education community to identify ways for young people to be better prepared to capitalise on opportunities in the financial services industry.

The FSIU team met with representatives from the Ministry and Department of Education and Culture, the Elmore Stoutt High School and the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College to discuss ways to accommodate greater financial services content into the education process. Similar meetings were planned with private schools in the Territory.

FSIU Director, Mr. Kedrick Malone stressed the importance of enhancing the educational experience of students to better prepare them to take up roles in the industry.

Mr. Malone said, **“As we reinvigorate and strengthen the financial services industry through the BVI Forward campaign, it is important that we also take definitive action to better enable BVI Islanders to capitalise on opportunities in the industry, both as employees and entrepreneurs. A key starting point for any such effort is within the school system which is why we sought discussion with the relevant officials.”**

Education officials welcomed the opportunity to partner with the FSIU and financial services industry professionals to bring practical and industry relevant experience to improve the delivery of the subject to students and increase awareness of opportunities in the industry.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Culture, Dr. Marcia Potter said, **“The ministry welcomes this opportunity to give our students greater exposure to the industry and its practitioners as it fosters stronger connections to the industry, enabling them to make more informed career choices.”**

Stimulating & Fixing the Economy

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

38. EU 'DIRECT ASSISTANCE GRANT SCHEME' LAUNCHED WITH TRAINING IN BVI



The Government of the Virgin Islands continued its efforts to strengthen and develop small and medium enterprises in the Territory by conducting training in the application process for the Caribbean Overseas Small and Medium Enterprises (COSME) Direct Assistance Grant Scheme.

The Assistance Grant Scheme is part of the 41 month COSME programme which will disperse an overall €15 Million Euros to projects/initiatives benefitting participating Caribbean Territories.

The total amount for the Assistance Grant Scheme under this project is €500,000.00 euros which will be disbursed via two 'Grant Calls

for Proposal'. The first was the call which will make available €200,000.00, and the second will be for a proposal for the remaining €300,000.00.

Deputy Secretary in the Premier's Office, Mrs. Elvia Smith- Maduro stated, **"The global object of this initiative is to provide direct assistance grants and identify actions to strengthen the operations of selected Business Support Organisations and Small and Medium Enterprises in the 12 Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)."**

The initiative will help the OCTs to become more diversified in their product offerings, be more

sustainable in relation to global economic changes, and mitigate changes or challenges faced as a result of climate change which may affect their businesses through natural or man-made disasters. It will also contribute to the overall economic prosperity of the OCTs so that Small and Medium-sized Enterprises will become more competitive in the global market.

39. PREMIER SMITH: 'OUR GOAL MUST BE SELF-DETERMINATION'



Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE has outlined his vision for moving the Territory towards self-sustainability.

Premier Smith, while delivering the Territory's 2016 Budget Address at the House of Assembly said he envisioned a society that is

environmentally friendly, a clean capital and main town, the internet that is freely accessible to anyone within its boundaries, infrastructure that meets and exceeds the needs of the people and visitors that come to the Territory's shores, where children and senior citizens are protected and taken care of and where crime is nonexistent.

The Premier added that in order for the people of the Territory to realise their full potential, everyone's goal must be self-determination.

He stated, **"We must do our work now and grow in maturity as a people. Our future continues to depend on our ability to meet the challenges as they present themselves and to adapt, but to do so, without losing our uniqueness."**

Premier Smith also commended the hard working men and women of the security organisations, led by the Police at the forefront, with Customs and Immigration on border control, backed up by the Financial Investigations Agencies and the Courts for their work to keep the British Virgin Islands safe and protected.

The Premier pledged to provide them with the support they need to continue to operate efficiently and credibly. He noted that there is a bright future ahead, and that it will take commitment to country and selfless sacrifice. Premier Smith further urged all citizens to work as a community to ensure the Territory's future and that of our children.

40. TERRITORY ON PATH TO ECONOMIC GROWTH WITH 2016 BUDGET

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE said the Territory is on the path to economic growth following the delivery of the 2016 Budget in February.

Premier Smith in his presentation stated that the budget is a continuation of the last few years, as the Territory continues along the path of economic growth with Shared Sustainable Growth.

The budget projects some \$330,846,500.00 in revenues. The recurrent expenditure will be in the region of \$286,512,400.00, with

the resulting recurrent surplus of \$29,334,000.00 that is expected to meet debt service obligations on existing loans to the amount of \$12,484,000.00.

Premier Smith said that much of the Territory's developmental projects will be funded from loans that were approved over the last two preceding years, in addition to some funding from the consolidated fund in the amounts of \$21,100,000.00 and \$20,550,000.00 respectively.

The Government will also contribute \$15,000,000.00 to the reserve fund, bringing it to a total of over

\$64 million dollars in 2016. This will allow the BVI to meet its requirements under the Protocols for Effective Financial Management by the end of the 2017 financial year.



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41. HON. PENN PLEDGES SUPPORT TO BUILD BVI SMALL BUSINESSES



Junior Minister for Trade and Investment Promotion, Honourable Marlon A. Penn told staff at the Department of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs that he was eager to see greater awareness of local entrepreneurs to

promote investment in the Territory; especially inward investment.

Honourable Penn in an introductory meeting with the staff February 2016 pledged his full support to the work of the department. He also stated that he recognised the great support the department lends to the economy of the Virgin Islands.

He said, **“We have to ensure that our small businesses get the support they require, and the funding and the necessary training to make them grow into medium and large and even international businesses, and that is our objective.”**

Honourable Penn said one of the

areas of key interest is an assessment of the business community in some of the key sectors such as tourism, financial services and construction. He said this will be done so that the Government of the Virgin Islands can identify the business needs, then train and develop BVI Islanders to take advantage of them.

The Junior Minister said an analysis of the business environment has to be done to improve the processes of the businesses among other areas. He added that with the assistance Government is giving to local entrepreneurs, the Virgin Islands business sector will improve from strength to strength, thus making the economy more robust.

42. BVI PARTICIPATES IN EU FUNDED REGIONAL STUDY ON DIVERSIFICATION

The Territory participated in a regional study on diversification of the Caribbean Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) in February 2016.

The study was conducted by the European Union funded Caribbean Overseas Small and Medium Enterprises (COSME) Programme.

It was designed to determine the extent to which the economies of the Caribbean OCTs needed diversification and provide concrete recommendations to do so.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE welcomed the initiative and stated that it was aligned with his Government's economic strategy to diversify the long term sustainability of the current and emerging sectors of the economy.

Premier Smith added that it was vital to create effectiveness and build capacity in the Territory's human capital to improve their skill set and education, as well as training them to help reduce the economic volatility of the British Virgin Islands.



The Premier said that through the rebranded Department of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs, the Government of the Virgin Islands remains committed to promoting a vibrant, diversified economy to empower the people of the Territory and incorporate their business ideas into all sectors of the economy.

43. GOVERNMENT FOCUSED ON EXPANDING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Government of the Virgin Islands finalised the three-part Youth Entrepreneurship Workshop Series as it remained focused on expanding youth entrepreneurship in the Territory in February 2016.

Government through the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports collaborated with the Caribbean Overseas Countries and Territories Small and Medium Enterprises (COSME) programme, and hosted the first in the series of training workshops as part of the Territory's business development strategy to help established and aspiring young business persons. The sessions were funded by the European Union.

Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn said employment and entrepreneurship

are two of the many goals of the Virgin Islands National Youth Policy.

The Minister said, **"It is our goal to provide our youth with access to decent work and livelihood opportunities that provide them with long term economic security and meaningful lives. This workshop has illustrated this sense of initiative and the Ministry's obligation to youth development and advancement."**

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE in his 2016 Budget Address said that youth development remains at the top of his Government's agenda. He also emphasised the role of the National Business Bureau in providing youth entrepreneurs



with guidance and help in accessing training, business development assistance and funding.

The Premier said the Government takes a very futuristic approach to governing this Territory, and to providing every possible opportunity for the development of young people.

44. TWO DAY JOB FAIR TARGETS ROSEWOOD LITTLE DIX BAY EMPLOYEES

Approximately 62 businesses were represented at a two-day job fair organised to assist employees of Rosewood Little Dix Bay who are affected by the closure of the hotel for renovations.

The multi-agency select committee mobilised by the Government of the Virgin Islands to assist employees, through the Labour Department, partnered with Rosewood Little Dix Bay in hosting the two days of activities for the employees. Day one of the fair featured tourism industry related positions, while day two highlighted non-tourism

and construction related vacancies. Interviews were conducted on the spot for some positions.

Labour Commissioner, Mrs. Janice Rymer said, **"It is important to the Government that persons are placed and we will continue to ensure that new work permits for the affected employees are expedited so that they can transition smoothly into new jobs."**

The Labour Commissioner explained that the department's Employment Services Unit has a list of vacancies



from businesses throughout the Territory, and the unit will be present to register employees and assist in aligning them with available job opportunities.

Stimulating & Fixing the Economy

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SUMMARY OF THE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

The Business of the Year campaign initiative is the brain child of Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE and was designed to fuel the entrepreneurial spirit. The initiative was spearheaded by the Department of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs. The following are the culmination of the Business of the Month promotion in 2015.



45. F&M'S HALAL OUTLET IS MARCH'S BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

F & M's Halal Outlet was the first recipient of Government's Business of the Month award when the Department of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs launched its Business of the Month and Innovative Business of the Year campaign.

F & M's Halal Outlet is owned by Mr. Musa Muhammad who operates a poultry farm in Paraquita Bay. His business has been operational for 14 years and is a benefactor of a loan by the National Business Bureau. F&M's Halal Outlet was the winner of the several businesses that were shortlisted as one of those that were performing well.

Mr. Muhammad was awarded a cheque of \$1500 and received support by way of Government providing free advertisements of the business for the month of March. These included a GIS interview with owner; sponsored commercials for the month on radio and television; a

business profile on the Government's web site and the online media; a featured article in our local newspapers; profile on BVICCHA website; one year's free membership with BVICCHA; and framed certificates for Business of the Month.



46. AKIYA BREWLEY DESIGNS WINS APRIL'S BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

Akiya Brewley Designs was the winner of April's Business of the Month for her exemplary customer service; generous donations to the local community; and innovative service in graphic design and illustration.

Ms. Brewley's work was described by Director of Trade, Investment

Promotion and Consumer Affairs, Mrs. Karia Christopher, as having demonstrated innovation and vision. Mrs. Christopher added that her illustrations and graphic designs represent the energy that is required in this robust knowledge-based economy.



47. GREENCRETE BVI IS MAY'S BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

Greencrete BVI, operated by Mr. Hubert Akeem Lennard Jr., was announced as the winner of the Business of the Month in May.

Greencrete BVI, which officially began operations on January 27, 2013, specialises in concrete, recycled glass, conch and whelk shell items.

The business creates items for homeowners such as countertops, floors, light fixtures, benches, and tables, along with creating souvenirs for persons to purchase.

Mr. Lennard Jr. currently holds a certificate in concrete artistry and intends to continue his learning experience to gain the skills to produce and offer more items to his clientele.



48. P3 PAPER, PLASTICS AND PRODUCTS IS THE JUNE BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

P3 Paper, Plastics, Products Inc., owned by Mr. Sinclair Flemming Jr., was the Department of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs' June Business of the Month.

P3 Paper, Plastics, Products Inc., is a wholesale company that has been in operation for three years and specialises in disposable hotel, restaurant and office supplies. The company aims to satisfy its customers through competitive prices, extraordinary customer service and free delivery.



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49. THE ROCK CAFÉ AND SAM'S PIANO BAR WIN JULY'S BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

The Rock Café and Sam's Piano Bar on Virgin Gorda captured the July Business of the Month title. The business is owned by Virgin Gordian business owner, Mr. Dwite Flax and his wife Mrs. Paola Moretti-Flax.

The Rock Café and Sam's Piano Bar, is a dual entity which has been in operation for twenty years, and

specialise in fine Italian cuisine and Caribbean dishes and provides entertainment on Virgin Gorda and to the Territory. The Rock Café and Sam's Piano Bar also provide their guests with a distinctive outdoor dining experience.



50. MI AMOR JEWELLERS IS THE AUGUST BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

Mi Amor Jewellers was the Business of the Month in August as the Department of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs continues its efforts to promote and assist small businesses in the Territory.

Mi Amor Jewellers opened its doors to respond to the overwhelming need for affordable jewelry and watches in the local market following the closure of Colombian Emeralds International. Its style is categorised as a European boutique jewelry store meets modern retro Caribbean flavour.

The business offers their customers exclusive and unique jewelry, as well as the option to redesign or alter jewelry. Mi Amor specialises in certified loose diamonds, Zambian

and Colombian emeralds, sapphires, rubies, gent's jewelry and gold fashion jewelry. Simultaneously, the boutique has sought to differentiate its products from other jewelers.



51. TRÈFLE IS SEPTEMBER'S BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

Trèfle owned by British Virgin Islander and rising swimwear fashion designer, Ms. Kristin Frazer was September's Business of the Month.

Ms. Frazer said she has always had a passion for sewing, fashion, art, design, and culture, which has been transformed and serves as the foundation on which she developed the brand. Ms. Frazer added that she has nurtured her business from a dream to a reality, by incorporating her heritage from her late grandmother, Ruth Clover Anthony, and her mother Ruth Frazer.

Ms. Frazer has played a significant role in speaking at various schools, workshops and other events that encourage young people to follow their dreams. Ms. Frazer stated that it is her goal to continue to strengthen other artists who have the same passion because the British Virgin Islands has a lot to offer in terms of creativity, style, art, and fashion.



trèfle
BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

52. PEARLS VI IS OCTOBER'S BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

Pearls VI was October's Business of the Month. The business is owned and operated by local Salt Island descendant, Ms. Alexandra Durante and has been in operation for the past five years. The business is noted for its beautiful local handcrafted jewellery pieces, bath and body products, seasoning made from Salt Island salt, as well as art works rendered by local BVI artist.

Ms. Durante said that she has forged relationships with local producers in an effort to support and promote local products, ranging from locally made hot sauces, cane rum and guavaberry wine to local books, painting and prints. She added that her Tortola and Virgin Gorda locations continue to make a small taste of the BVI available to locals and visitors alike.



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BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

53. SOLÉ SPA NOVEMBER'S BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

Solé Spa was named the November Business of the Month. The business established in 1995 is owned and operated by Ms. Toni Simpson. Ms. Simpson and her dedicated team developed and maintained a standard of excellence in offering classic and exclusive treatments and products over the years. The business was also featured in the Virgin Islands Property and Yacht magazine.

Solé Spa incorporates the blessings of Nature's Little Secrets in its innovative and often original treatment options. Clients are treated

to a variety of pleasurable and healing treatments in the tranquil atmosphere of Solé Spa. Services include massages, body wraps, body scrubs, facials, hair removal and yoga sessions, whether through an appointment or a service call.

In addition to providing impeccable quality in their services and products, Solé Spa has made generous contributions to the wider community including VISAR, Rotaract, the H. Lavity Stouff Community College, as well as local primary and secondary schools.



54. BELLA BLOOMS AWARDED DECEMBER BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

Bella Blooms, a family-owned and operated floral business established in 2010, was recognised as the December Business of the Month.

Bella Blooms was founded on the desire to provide fresh and innovative floral designs to the Virgin Islands consumer. The business offers an array of services ranging from fruit and gift baskets to everyday floral arrangements for weddings, corporate events, private parties and funerals.

Bella Blooms' spacious location allows easy access for walk-in customers who can choose from a wide range of selections to cater to their individual needs. Their e-commerce website also provides the ability to reach customers off island, and gives local customers the convenience of ordering from the comfort of their home or office.



55. PEARLS VI CAPTURES 2015 BUSINESS OF THE YEAR TITLE

Ms. Alexandra Durante of Pearls VI was awarded the **2015 Business of the Year and Most Innovative Business of the Year**.

Nine businesses vied for the titles as part of the competition held by the Department of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs following the 2015 Business of the Month initiative.

As part of her winnings for the **Most Innovative Business of the Year**, Ms. Durante receives a cash prize of \$5000.00 dollars for injection into her business; one hour of legal advice and service from Harneys, along with complimentary incorporation of one BVI company inclusive of all incorporation fees; and a free energy audit from the BVI Electricity Corporation.

Her winnings as the 2015 Business of the Year would be a \$12,500.00 cash injection into her business from the Government of the Virgin Islands.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE, while speaking on the outcome of the competition results stated, **"I think the whole thrust for developing new and different types of businesses is working. I think that the Department of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs has done very well."**

Premier Smith added that he is also grateful for the enthusiasm of the other members of the community who have partnered with the Government to develop businesses like these. He said, **"It bodes well for the community and for the Territory, because as these businesses develop and grow into larger businesses, they will also become a part of the economic development of the Territory."**



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56. BVI FISHERIES SECTOR LAUNCHES FISHING COMMITTEE

The Government of the Virgin Islands is steadily moving forward to make fishing a third economic pillar and sustainable sector in the Territory with the launch of the Fisheries Advisory Committee.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick D. Pickering in October 2016 revealed the names of the eight persons who were appointed to carry out the functions of the Committee as required under section 4(1) of the Fisheries Act, 1997.

The Minister said, "The establishment of the Fisheries Advisory Committee will assist us in transforming our industry through an invigorated partnership between the fishing community, the private and scientific sectors."

The Committee members will serve for a period of two years as required in section 7(1) of the Act with effect from September 1, 2016 until August 31, 2018. The members are:

1. Mr. Ron Potter (Chairman)
2. Mr. Jerome Emanuel, (Representative of the Fisherman Association)
3. Mr. Dean Titley, (Representative of the Fisherman Association)
4. Mr. Elton Gordon, (Representative of the Fisherman Association)
5. Mr. Romney Penn, (Representative

of the Hotel and Commerce Association)

6. Mr. Laurens Blok, (Person with a scientific background)
7. Mr. Kelvin Penn, (Chief Conservation and Fisheries Officer)
8. Ms. Abbi Christopher, (Secretary and Public Officer from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour)

Minister Pickering said the members will help to steer the industry dialogue and assist the Ministry of Natural

Resources and Labour in setting the direction for the fishing industry.

In accepting the chairmanship, Mr. Ron Pottersaid that the committee aimed to advise on "policy matters, relating to the development and the management of fisheries as a viable industry in the Virgin Islands; to advise the Minister on the management and development plan for fisheries; to advise on guidelines and the setting-up of fish profiling establishments."



57. COMPLIANCE ENCOURAGED FROM ALL BUSINESSES

The Department of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs has embarked on an educational campaign on the importance of business compliance. Director of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs, Mrs. Karia Christopher stated, "The goal of this campaign is to educate the business community, inclusive of all businesses, on the importance of being compliant and raise awareness on the trade licencing process."

Mrs. Christopher added, "It is important that the business community understand that all businesses in the Territory are subject to "Spot-And-Check" inspections. We are encouraging all businesses

to ensure that their trade licences accurately reflect the goods and services being provided, and are in good standing."

The series of "Spot-And-Check" inspections conducted by Trade Inspectors commenced in October 2016.

Mrs. Christopher explained, "We are encouraging all business owners to have their valid trade licence appropriately displayed and to cooperate with trade inspectors, when the checks are conducted. We also encourage them to ensure that the goods and services being offered are representative of a valid trade licence on display, as failure to do so



will result in immediate penalties for the business.

She further explained that while the department is very supportive of the small business community and entrepreneurs, it is fundamental that the all business owners understand and comply with the law so that their enterprises can continue to expand and thrive where feasible.

58. LOCALS OFFERED JOB OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SVITZER AMERICAS BVI OFFICE

Twenty local persons received further insight on employment opportunities available in the maritime industry following a presentation by Virgin Islands Shipping Registry and SVITZER Americas.

The presentation highlighted the opportunities available for persons seeking a maritime career, and how this would be done through the company's local office, in collaboration with the Shipping Registry and the School of Marine Studies at H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.

Acting Director of the Virgin Islands Shipping Registry (VISR), Captain Raman Bala stated, "This is a very fine example of the

successful model of private/public partnership. A need in the private sector was identified, and the government bodies concerned responded to address that need. This resulted in an idea that has been converted into a successful project. The VISR is looking forward to working with the maritime community to address their needs in a pragmatic manner."

A SVITZER office was first established in the Territory in May, and the company has now started to coordinate its regional operations from the British Virgin Islands which includes recruiting potential seafarers to work on its vessels in some of the nearby Caribbean islands. SVITZER



has provided safety and support at sea since 1833.

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59. ENTREPRENEURS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE POWER M.O.V.E. COURSE

Forty-five persons graduated from the Department of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs' second Power M.O.V.E. Entrepreneurship Development Training Programme.

The graduates were trained in areas including dynamics of entrepreneurship, acquisition versus originality, establishing a global presence, management and social responsibility. The training was part of a programme by the Government of the Virgin Islands to assist entrepreneurs and strengthen the economy.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith,

OBE, said he envisioned a bureau that would keep entrepreneurs attuned with the evolving customer expectations, rapid change, and positive and negative global trends. The Premier added that Government has made provisions so that business operators have the necessary requisite tools to address and navigate social, economic, environmental and cultural trends in order for them to remain globally competitive.

"We are in a time when the bottom-line strategy requires businesses to retrench its long-term strategy and refocus its short-term goals to remain profitable. And, a time when the

status quo of profits is hinged on how well you can adjust to change, plan to execute, drive to discover and define to become extraordinary business men and women", Premier Smith stated.

These ideas, Premier Smith added, are the basic and intrinsic tenets of why the National Business Bureau was commissioned. He is also pleased that the entrepreneurs could benefit from the surmountable opportunities to build a defensible and sustainable enterprise.



60. ENTREPRENEURSHIP BENEFIT FROM BUSINESS ACADEMY TRAINING

Forty persons participated in the first of twelve sessions of the SMART Business Academy Entrepreneurship Training Series hosted by the Department of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs.

The session exposed participants to the dynamics of entrepreneurship; identifying the distinct difference between a business owner and an entrepreneur, the stages of business and understanding business relationships and productive ways to network.

Director of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs, Mrs. Karia Christopher said that the training was designed to teach aspiring entrepreneurs and current business owners how to bring structure to their ideas and enhance their business' performance.

Mrs. Christopher added that entrepreneurship is a key driver to building a sustainable economy, as a vast majority of jobs are created by small businesses. These businesses, she said, are started by entrepreneurial minded individuals, many of whom go on to create larger businesses.



Stimulating & Fixing the Economy

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

61. DISASTER RECOVERY WORKSHOP FOR BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Over 70 persons from the private sector attended a disaster recovery workshop designed to bring about awareness of the need for businesses to focus on business continuity and recovery planning.

The workshop was organised under the theme **"Ensuring a Resilient Economy through Partnership in Disaster Recovery"** and was financed by the Caribbean Central American Action (CCAA) and Tropical Shipping.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE commended the CCAA and Tropical Shipping for bringing this type of training to the region and now the BVI.

Premier Smith said, **"One of the mantras of my Government is to ensure that all businesses have greater access to training, and I am pleased this business recovery workshop is one such opportunity that has been extended towards that goal. The more prepared our people are, the better they are with facing**

the unknown. In essence, today is about strengthening and developing business capacity."

Meanwhile, Chief Executive Officer and President of Tropical Shipping, Mr. Rick Murrell, highlighted the importance of strong leadership during times of disasters, and encouraged the business representatives to consider three important factors when developing their business continuity and recovery plans.

"Employees must be treated like family," he said, "You must find a way to take care of your employees and their families so that human resources are available during disasters. This is important to ensure resumption of critical business

services. Always ensure that you have at least 10 days of essential food items in your home; believe that co-workers are your family and therefore plan for them and work closely with the DDM to ensure the leadership that is needed in times of disasters is in place."



62. TRADE DEPARTMENT SPONSORS BOOTHS AT TRADE EXPO



The Department of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs continued to promote and assist small businesses in the British Virgin Islands and fuel the entrepreneurial spirit throughout the business community, and provided sponsorship for five booths at the 2016 CCT Buy BVI Trade Expo.

The move came as the department's Director, Mrs. Karia Christopher said, **"The BVI small business community exudes vibrant individuals who are working tirelessly to provide our community with exceptional products and services and the Department will continue to partner with organisations such as the BVI Chamber of Commerce and Hotel Association to ensure that small businesses get exposure."**

The event showcased an array of products and services that are available locally. It was designed to encourage the expansion of trade within the community, and reduce the level of imported products, while highlighting unique business opportunities in the local economy.

Improving the Standard of Living

DEPUTY PREMIER DR. THE HON. KEDRICK PICKERING "OUR FRAGILE ECOSYSTEMS IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS MUST BE PROTECTED."

The environment is our mandate, and to consistently meet the sustainable needs of the Territory, the Department has developed and implemented several environmental programmes. It has devoted much of its time to rehabilitation programmes, public awareness, and education campaigns. These plans and campaigns assist in the restoration of the environment and education of the people of the Virgin Islands on various marine species and relate important sustainable concepts for the future. These programmes include the:

- Coral Reef Nursery Programme which aims to rehabilitate our coral population; and
- the Sea Turtle Monitoring Programme that is used to assist in maintaining a sustainable turtle population.
- Mangrove replanting projects in the Brandy Wine Bay and Slaney area.

Over the past year, we have experienced several challenges. The Conservation and Fisheries Department took a multi-pronged approach to address those challenges while improving our environment. The response by the Department included water quality

testing at areas coinciding with high Sargassum influxes. Results at these areas, which included, 2015 Sea Cows Bay, Road Town and East End Harbour yielded unhealthy dissolved oxygen levels which led to some of the massive marine life die-offs. The department also tested other areas, such as East End Bridge and Little Mountain dock on Beef Islands where the dissolved oxygen amounts were very good and which served as good comparisons.

The influx of Sargassum seaweed left many beaches and bays covered with seaweed and impacted marine life. The department mobilised community support to assist in the removal of seaweed from coastal areas and, through the participation over eight (8) organizations, nine hundred and thirty (930) bags of seaweed were collected and delivered to the Agriculture Department for use in the agricultural sector. Public Awareness campaigns, which educated communities, highlighted the impacts, its benefits and some suggested uses of Sargassum seaweed were undertaken.

The Department also remains effective through consistent revision of its policies and legislation for the



better management of our natural resources and fishing industry. The Ministry and the Department have begun to vigorously implement our Climate Change Adaptation Policy. The partnership fostered with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States under the Global Climate Change Alliance project has begun to yield fruits. We remain at the vanguard in our response to Climate Change.

The Climate Change Trust Fund established in March 2015 is the principal tool to mobilise, manage and administer funds for climate change adaptation and mitigation on behalf of the Territory. It is envisaged to serve as a mechanism to access international resources available for climate change to assist in minimising impacts from rising temperatures, stronger hurricanes, flood events, droughts and rising sea levels.

The Virgin Islands Natural Resources Management and Climate Change Bill is undergoing major revision

and it is anticipated that public consultation on the principles of the bill will be a major drive and focus during the upcoming period.

The Virgin Islands' natural environment must be protected. As new challenges emerge, we will continue to search for solutions so as to ensure that we pass on a natural environment of which we can be proud. The Conservation and Fisheries Department and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that our natural resources are conserved for future generations while ensuring that they provide those services which are crucial for our continued growth and development.

"Increasing the Territory's Minimum Wage"

In October of 2015, Cabinet reviewed and accepted the Minimum

Wage Advisory Committee Report on the proposed new minimum wage; this report was subsequently tabled at the House of Assembly on 2nd November, 2015. The Attorney General was thereafter requested to draft the legal documentation to formally bring this minimum wage into force which will take effect on 1st October, 2016.

The new Minimum Wage payable for employment shall be \$6.00 per hour.

After careful consideration the Cabinet decided to delay the coming into force of the new minimum wage to allow the business community time to implement the National Health Insurance. The Cabinet was also mindful that the implementation of both the Minimum Wage and the National Health Insurance at the same time may have created some unnecessary hardship on businesses.

I would like to, once again, take this

opportunity to thank the Minimum Wage Advisory Committee for working assiduously to provide a report that reflects a minimum wage grounded in comprehensive research. Thanks also to the business community for cooperating with the Committee and for remunerating employees at a rate that they thought was fair in absence of a legally established minimum;

1. The community at large for coming out to the various town hall meetings, and calling in on the various radio and television shows. The information provided during these sessions made this a very worthwhile exercise; and
2. The public servants who supported the committee in researching information needed for this exercise.



Improving the Standard of Living

EMPLOYMENT/WORK

63. MULTI-AGENCY COMMITTEE SET UP TO ASSIST LITTLE DIX WORKERS

A multi-agency select committee is being led by Junior Minister for Tourism, Honourable Archibald Christian to assist employees of Rosewood Little Dix Bay following the hotel's closure on May 1, 2016.

Honourable Christian is leading the committee charged with mobilising a mitigation strategy to assist the workers. The committee will also assess the economic impact of the development on the Territory and the means of mitigating the impact, along with facilitating the transition of any of the workers to other employment opportunities.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE had announced during the Sixth Sitting of the First Session of the Third House of Assembly that a working group would be set up and chaired

by Honourable Christian. The group would report directly to the Honourable Premier.

The committee will monitor the construction phase of the project including applications, coordination and employment/labour placements to ensure that the Virgin Gorda community benefits from the development, and the resort reopens in a timely manner. It will also provide Cabinet with recommendations and incentives to ease the financial burden on affected workers.





64. GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO SUPPORT BIRAS CREEK EMPLOYEES

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE led a delegation of Government officials and met with former employees of Biras Creek Resort in June 2016. The Premier engaged in open dialogue with the more than 70 employees whose jobs were made redundant when the resort closed its doors.

The Premier reaffirmed his Government's commitment to provide assistance with the transitioning of any of the workers to other employment opportunities, and held conversations with several hotels who indicated the potential for several dozen positions to be filled. The Labour and Immigration Departments were also to provide

special assistance to affected employees both in processing permits and transfers as well as in immigration time.

"I am optimistic that we can find a way to re-open the property and we are working with resort owners, through their local representative to explore all avenues to do just that", the Premier said.

A Help Desk was also established to provide personal assistance to all the affected employees and coordinate opportunities that arise for new employment as well as handle other queries and concerns. This was done in conjunction with the Labour department.

Improving the Standard of Living

EMPLOYMENT/WORK

65. MINIMUM WAGE REPORT COMPLETE

The Territory's Minimum Wage Report and findings made by the Minimum Wage Advisory Committee were presented to Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering in July 2015.

The report advised the Minister on whether the minimum wage warranted an increase and if so, what the new minimum wage should be.

The Committee was appointed in November 2014 pursuant to powers conferred on the Minister by section 38 (1) of the Labour Code 2010 (as

amended). The Terms of Reference issued required the Committee to examine the current minimum wage and provide advice on whether or not it should be revised, and if so, what the new minimum wage should be.

Chairman Simon Potter said the group sorted through research material and conducted public consultations during its six month mandate.

Minister Pickering commended the Chairman and members of the Minimum Wage Advisory Committee for the report which would be submitted to Cabinet for prompt



review and action.

The Committee was also required to examine whether or not the minimum wage should be set at the same level for all employees or whether it should be set by category of employees.

66. MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1

On October 1, 2016 the Territory's minimum wage was raised from \$4.00 to \$6.00 per hour.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering made the announcement for the change on Monday, July 4, via radio broadcast and indicated that the new minimum wage payable for employment would be \$6.00 per hour.

An awareness campaign was done from mid-August to the time of

implementation which encouraged employers to start making the necessary budget allocations to prepare for the new minimum wage.

Minimum wage means simply that all employees cannot be paid less than the new rate of \$6.00 per hour. Businesses are expected to comply as the Labour Department has added plans for enforcement through work permit crosschecking, employer orientation sessions and encouraged employee awareness and reporting.

Labour Commissioner, Mrs. Rymer said, **"The change directly affects approximately 800 employees in the Virgin Islands and it is our hope that ultimately persons can make the necessary adjustments to ensure a smooth transition."**

The Labour Department has updated software to support the new minimum wage, and personnel available to respond to business persons making the transition.

67. NEW WORK PERMIT APPLICATIONS REFLECT NEW \$6.00 MINIMUM WAGE



New work permit application fees for minimum wage earners are being calculated based on the new minimum wage of \$6.00 per hour as of October 1, 2016.

This particular fee change will only affect employees who are being paid less than \$6.00 per hour.

Labour Commissioner, Mrs. Janice Rymer said, **“Work permits are typically issued for a year and due for renewals at the end of the year, so this change anticipates and pro-rates for the upcoming year. This particular fee change only affects employees from October 1. This is the beginning of the transition and another way to enforce and ensure persons are remunerated appropriately when the official wage change occurs.”**

She added that persons collecting new and renewal work permits will note the difference in their fees right away.

68. SVITZER RECRUITMENT PROGRAMME ROLLS OUT FIRST RECRUITS

Four junior deckhands were awarded certificates and documents after successfully completing the Svitzer Recruitment Programme.

The men completed their customised safety training, medical fitness tests and seafarers documentation in the programme spearheaded by the Virgin Islands Shipping Registry, in collaboration with Svitzer America and the H. Lavitty Stoutt Community College (HLSCC) Centre for Applied Marine Studies. It was also designed to recruit BVI Islanders as Junior Deckhands for employment onboard Svitzers’ international tugs.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE, said he looked forward to continued progress in the marine sector as it is an area of great potential for the economy.

The recruits were trained in a newly developed three-day Deck Hand Safety Course at the HLSCC Centre for Applied Maritime Studies and were taught the skills that would be necessary to work as deckhands onboard tugs. They also received a two-day training in SVITZER Safety and Familiarisation Course.

They were assessed for medical fitness at the Peebles Hospital by Dr. Paula Trotman-Hastings under

the UK Seafarers Medical Fitness regime. Dr. Trotman-Hastings was recently approved by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, United Kingdom, to examine candidates and issue the United Kingdom Seafarers Medical Fitness Certificate called ENG 1 on their behalf. ENG 1 is an internationally accepted medical fitness certificate which is valid for two years.



Improving the Standard of Living

EMPLOYMENT/WORK

69. GOVERNMENT PLEDGES SUPPORT TO ROSEWOOD LITTLE DIX EMPLOYEES



Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE led a delegation of Government officials to Virgin Gorda and met with the employees of Rosewood Little Dix Bay in January 2016.

The workers were informed by the hotel management that the facility will be closed from May 1 for an 18 month period for renovations. The Premier said, **“Little Dix Bay has been the flagship property in the tourism business for the BVI for quite a long time, and many of the resort’s employees have been a part of that success for Little Dix Bay over the years. I want to publicly thank these workers for their contribution to**

the BVI tourism industry while working at Little Dix Bay.”

The Premier reaffirmed his Government’s commitment to providing support to the employees, and assist with their transition into other employment opportunities.

Premier Smith said the Labour and Immigration Departments will provide special assistance to affected employees both in the processing of permits and transfers as well as in immigration time.

A Help Desk facilitated by Human Resource Specialist, Mr. Albert Wheatley was also established to provide personal assistance to all affected employees.



70. CRAFT ALIVE VILLAGE VENDORS HOST FIRST CRAFT SHOW

Vendors in the Craft Alive Village showcased their locally made products at the first craft show to be held at that location in July 2015.

The craft show, was a collaborative effort between the Office of the City Manager, the BVI Tourist Board and the Craft Alive Village vendors, and was designed to showcase local talent.

City Manager, Mrs. Janice Braithwaite-Edwards said the show as a unique opportunity for the vendors to showcase their products to the public. She added that the initiative was spearheaded by the business operators in the village, and displayed local hand-made products by the different merchants.

The public was offered a variety of items and souvenirs indigenous to the Virgin Islands such as leather goods, embroidery, clothing items, local cuisine and other hand-made products.



71. ADULT ENRICHMENT SEMINAR ENDORSED BY PREMIER'S OFFICE

The National Council of the Girls' Brigade hosted its annual Adult Enrichment Hospitality Host and Hostess Seminars for persons 18 years and older in September 2015. The event was followed by an awards ceremony for participants held under the patronage of Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE.

Premier Smith stated that he was pleased to collaborate with the National Council of the Girls' Brigade and that he was delighted to see council of the Girls Brigade continuing its partnership with professionals within the hospitality and tourism sectors to facilitate the annual seminar.

The Premier said, **"These types of seminars are essential in helping our people to build or refine their hospitality skills, thus enhancing personal development. I encourage members of the community to take advantage of the hospitality training sessions. Even if persons do not directly interact with tourists daily, the hosting skills learned will enrich and expand their life experiences."**



Improving the Standard of Living

ENVIRONMENT

72. BVI TO DEVELOP CORAL REEF RESTORATION NURSERIES

The Cabinet of the Government of the Virgin Islands approved the development of Coral Reef Restoration Nurseries throughout the BVI's fishing waters in September 2015.

Dr. Pickering also added that coral reef restoration efforts have been successful in replenishing and restoring degrading reefs in other parts of the region. He said this restoration project will be able to address damage inflicted on the corals in the Territory.

Works have commenced with the establishment of two nurseries. This initiative is a partnership between the Government, the Association of Reef Keepers, the Nature Conservancy and the business sector.

Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick D. Pickering said the Ministry continues to seek ways to improve the natural environment because the BVI is economically dependent on the tourism and fisheries industries. He added that restored coral reefs will help the Territory's coastal disaster resilience and will form part of the Territory's Climate Change adaption framework.

The Minister said, **"The development of the nurseries will be funded through public and private donor sources. The funding will be used to establish and monitor the sustainability of the nurseries, to study and monitor the survival and growth of the out-planted corals within the restored reefs and to provide educational outreach programmes."**



73. INCREASE FISH SUPPLY A RESULT OF MORE FISHERMEN INVOLVEMENT



Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering denounced claims that there was wide spread fish kills in the Virgin Islands as a result of the Sargassum Seaweed.

Minister Pickering in response to questions posed by journalists at a press briefing held in October 2015, stated that it was factually incorrect that there was wide spread fish kills in the Territory. He added that there was also no correlation between the dead fish found on the beaches to that of the increased supply of fish at the BVI Fishing Complex.

Minister Pickering stated, **“The oversupply of fish at the fishing complex is a direct result of the fishermen getting involved in the fishing industry, and are learning new techniques. Fishermen are taking advantage of the Fish Aggregated Device System that has been put in place, and are now willing to embark on that part of the industry.”**

The Minister added that Government is embarking on marketing strategies to promote the Territory’s fishing industry. These include price reduction, extended operating hours and a radio programme featuring updates on the stock of fish at the Fishing Complex.

74. COASTAL CLEAN-UP DATA RAISED AWARENESS ON WASTE MANAGEMENT

In 2015 the Conservation and Fisheries Department collected data following the clean-up of the Territory’s beaches which will be used to raise awareness among the general public on waste and environmental issues.

The information will also be used by students as part of their research assignment. Several organisations collected trash from coastal areas to help improve the cleanliness of the Territory’s beaches, coastal region and surrounding areas in observance of the 2015 International Coastal Clean-up activities.

Fisheries Extension Officer and Coastal Clean-up Coordinator, Mrs. Jasmine Hodge-Bannis said the data collected via data cards will be analysed and compiled by the official sponsors Ocean Conservancy, a nonprofit environmental advocacy group based in Washington, DC. She added that the information will also be made available for use by policy makers to develop solutions for problems caused by marine debris.



“I encourage residents to be better environmental stewards and keep our beaches, coastal areas, all waterways including ghuts clean, as we rely on our Territory’s waters for food and recreation,” Mrs. Hodge-Barns said.

Improving the Standard of Living

ENVIRONMENT

75. DEPUTY PREMIER CALLS FOR SUPPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering called on the United Nations in December 2015 to provide technical and other support to small island developing states to assist them with adapting to the negative impacts of Climate Change, regardless of political status.

The Deputy Premier in an address at a high-level panel at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP21) in Paris said, **"Climate Change does not discriminate against one island or the other based on political status. The rise in CO2 emissions has placed small island developing states at risk. Our way of life is under threat and we deserve the international community's support to help us to adapt to the challenges posed by global warming."**



Honourable Pickering attended the UNFCCC COP 21 where world leaders negotiated a global climate change agreement aimed at reducing CO2 emissions. He was joined by Director of the BVI London Office, Mr. Benito Wheatley.

76. DATA RECORDING FOR CANE GARDEN, BREWERS BAY COASTAL PROJECTS

Scientists have collected samples and recorded data for the Coastal and Watershed Stabilisation project in Cane Garden Bay and Brewers Bay.

The project is being implemented under the umbrella of the European Union-funded Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) Project on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in the Eastern Caribbean managed by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). This specific pilot project has a total value of 842,000 Euro (approximately \$890,000).

Environmental Officer (Climate Change), Angela Burnett Penn said

through the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) project, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour has begun the process to execute the pilot climate change adaptation project in the area. She said that in order to ensure the pilots are properly designed and engineered a hydrologic study of the watersheds and a coastal dynamics study of the bays are now being conducted.

Ms. Burnett Penn stated, **"Those studies will help us to understand exactly what is happening in terms of rainfall events and the flow of storm water and flood water through the watersheds. On the coastal dynamic side we will understand wave**

energy and sand movements in the bays, including during swell events. The end goal of the project is really to design some solutions that will help to reduce flooding and sedimentation in both areas as well as protect the shoreline and rebuild the beaches."

Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering had announced the initiation of the North Shore Integrated Coastal and Watershed Stabilisation Project in the House of Assembly in January.

77. GOVERNMENT RECEIVES TECHNOLOGY TOWARDS CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

The OECS Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) Project in the Caribbean has provided technical assistance to the Government of the Virgin Islands to support and enhance its efforts towards Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Sustainable Land Management (SLM).

The Departments of Conservation and Fisheries, and Agriculture received Geographic Information System/ Global Positioning System (GIS/ GPS) technology for effective use of geo-spatial data necessary to inform decision making, policies and strategies. The Department of Disaster Management also received an Automatic Weather Station and additional associated training to enhance the local capacity for critical

weather and climate data collection, analysis and forecasting.

The technical support was a result of needs and objectives identified by the OECS Member States participating under the GCCA project umbrella, which is a formal group of governments working to improve the territory's and region's natural resource base resilience to the impacts of climate change. This would be done through effective and sustainable land management policy, capacity, awareness, and practices; and implementation of specific physical adaptation measures, including soil and land stabilisation, river and sea defense, forest and ecosystem restoration.



78. 'BEST' GRANT TO PRESERVE BVI'S GREAT TOBAGO NATIONAL PARK



Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering highlighted the BVI's receipt of a 'BEST' grant to assist in the preservation of the Great Tobago National Park while attending the World Conservation Congress in Hawaii in September 2016.

'BEST' is the European Union (EU) initiative promoting conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services in EU Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs).

During his remarks at the BEST initiative event, Minister Pickering highlighted BEST's significant contribution to the Virgin Islands, in the form of a grant to the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands towards the ongoing conservation work at the Great Tobago National Park, which is a globally recognised Key Biodiversity Area.

The grant will go towards supporting the management of Invasive Alien Species at the Great Tobago National Park, one of the most important colonies of the Magnificent Frigate Bird in the Eastern Caribbean.

Improving the Standard of Living

ENVIRONMENT

79. PREMIER LAUDS EMAP ACCREDITATION AT DISASTER COUNCIL MEETING

The international accreditation conferred upon the National Disaster Management Programme (NDMC) was lauded by Premier, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE as *"an outstanding achievement and one we must celebrate and be very proud of."*

"This is indeed a significant step in showing the world that although we are a small group of islands we have the knowledge and skills to achieve big things. Our disaster management programme can match any other", the Premier stated.

The Premier said his government is committed to ensuring that the various sectors are true partners in the process of comprehensive disaster management and providing continued leadership to the NDMC in the areas of mitigation and recovery.

Government will continue to support the vision of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy in creating a SMART footprint aimed towards resiliency and safe-guarding lives, livelihoods and the sustainable development of the BVI. Full engagement of communities is also needed in identifying solutions to mitigate risks.

"My Government is cognisant that any development initiatives must incorporate resilience measures as core components of their design to ensure that disaster management is mainstreamed into development and that these efforts are aligned with the climate change adaptation portfolio", the Premier said.

The restructuring of the NDMC in 2014 has allowed ministries to have direct oversight of the work of the sub-committees and to engage more directly with the sectors and communities. The Permanent Secretaries now sit at the helm of these committees with technical guidance being provided by the Department of Disaster Management.

The NDMC is the body mandated to provide oversight of the Territory's disaster management programme. At its annual meeting, members receive the State of Preparedness Report and provide updates on the work of the various committees.



80. THE SARGASSUM SEAWEED ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS HIGHLIGHTED

The environmental and agricultural benefits of the Sargassum seaweed were outlined in a public education campaign launched by the Conservation and Fisheries Department in October 2015.

Acting Deputy Chief Conservation and Fisheries Officer, Mr. Mervin Hastings said the Sargassum seaweed provides a nursery for over 120 species of fish and invertebrates and provides protection similar to that of a mangrove. He added that the seaweed is an important nursery habitat that provides shelter and food for endangered species such as sea turtles and for commercially important species of fish such as tunas and mahi-mahis.

Hastings said, **“The seaweed is a natural occurrence and it is believed that the recent influx is related to massive Sargassum blooms occurring in particular areas of the Atlantic and are not directly associated with the Sargasso Sea.”**

Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer, Mrs. Arona Fahie-Forbes said the aim was to remove the seaweed from the Territory’s waters without harming the environment. She added that the seaweed can be used as a Bio-fertilizer.

“The seaweed-based fertilizers have been used in developed countries with much success. It is the hope of the Department of Agriculture to empower the local farming community with the knowledge to make use of this resource whilst boosting agricultural production of subsistence and cash crop thereby improving financial and food security”, Mrs. Fahie-Forbes said.



SARGASSUM SEAWEED FERTILIZER



Improving the Standard of Living

ENVIRONMENT

81. JOST VAN DYKE RECYCLING PROGRAMME

Residents of Jost Van Dyke are said to be enjoying the many recycling benefits of a transfer station located on the island.

The station located in Sandy Ground and was introduced by the Department of Waste Management on the island in 2014, to reduce the negative impact of glass on the incinerator and help increase the longevity of the landfill.

An estimated 5.35 tons or 10,700 pounds of glass were recently transported from the transfer station to its partners Clean and Green VI for recycling.

Manager at the Department of Waste Management, Mr. Greg Massicote said that the business "Soggy Dollar," which has an effective sorting system in place, has produced the largest amounts of glass bottles. He urged other businesses to take similar steps in recycling.

Mr. Massicote said his department has been receiving positive feedback from the residents regarding the waste diversion activity and the promotion of recycling. He said, **"We have seen a tremendous reduction in flies and elimination of smoke on Jost Van Dyke since the transfer station became operational. The cleanliness of the facility**

encourages individuals to deposit waste. The bins' waste types are easily identifiable and there is always someone to assist if necessary. Additionally, the implementation of the transfer station has provided the department with the opportunity to alter our operations to make way for recycling initiatives such as this glass recycling initiative."

The recycling programme currently focuses on commercial establishments but the department's goal is to eventually extend the initiative to the residents of Jost Van Dyke in the first instance and then to the rest of the BVI.



82. ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMER PROGRAMME MAKES HUGE SUMMER SPLASH

The Territory's children received an education on the importance of Virgin Islands turtles, fishing techniques, swimming and life-saving techniques at the 2015 Conservation and Fisheries Environmental Summer Programme.

Special emphasis was placed on natural marine and terrestrial habitat education and appreciation.

Programme Co-coordinator and Environmental Education Officer, Mrs. Grenelvia Farrington said, **"The work that we have put into the curriculum is really based on department's mandate to increase awareness and education on matters of environmental importance. The environment is one of our most treasured resources, as a small island. We have to protect it and teach the younger ones to cherish it, as early as possible."**



83. ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE OF TORTOLA LAUNCHED

A document titled, "An Environmental Profile of the Island of Tortola and A Natural History Characterisation of Tortola's sister Islands" was launched and is available to public sector resource managers.

The document is based on the environmental profile of Tortola, and will be used as a framework for the creation of policies, programmes and research.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick D. Pickering said the environmental profiles fills

the Territory's need to have access to methodical and comprehensive data to assist in evaluating the impacts of growth on the environment and chart the way forward.

Dr. Pickering said, **"In the BVI, prior to the profiles, there was no consolidated publication or integrated resource that provided ease of access to environmental information, whether generated by the public or private sector."**

The document will also provide data to assist in protecting and managing



the environment. This is the fourth volume of the environmental profiles based on the Virgin Islands launched by the Islands Resources Foundation.



Improving the Standard of Living

ENVIRONMENT

84. TWO-YEAR MAPPING PROJECT AND HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY COMPLETED



An 18 month sea-bed mapping project and hydrographic survey on a specified 13.5 square miles (or 35 square kilometres) area off the coast of Tortola is complete.

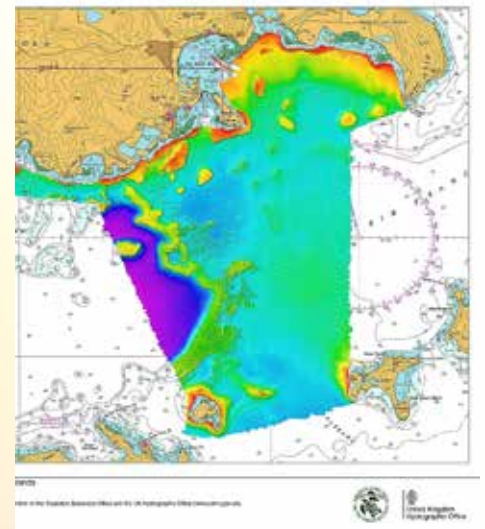
The project encompassed the underwater mapping of critical areas related to biodiversity conservation. These include the Wreck of the Rhone marine park, the hurricane shelter at Paraquita Bay which is part of the disaster management framework, a Hans Creek fisheries protected area and Road Harbour, the principal passage of cruise ships and cargo vessels into the Territory.

The approach entailed the acquisition of both the measurement of the depth of the sea (or bathymetry) and marine habitats along the Sir Francis Drake Channel.

“The Virgin Islands has advanced not only the acquisition of data for bathymetry, but also for marine habitat mapping. In addition to meeting the Territory and the UK’s commitments under the (Convention on Safety of Life at Sea) SOLAS, the process has resulted in meeting obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity at the same time,” he said.

The project entailed the partnership of the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands (NPT), the UK Hydrographic Office and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences (CEFAS). It was the first seabed survey of its kind to be undertaken in the British Virgin Islands.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering said that this Darwin Initiative Plus Project has done more than enable CEFAS to work in collaboration with the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands and the UK Hydrographic Office.



85. RESEARCH CONTINUES INTO PAST WAVE OCCURRENCES IN ANEGADA

Research continued to ascertain what caused an unusual flood from the sea that brought ashore large coral heads in Anegada around the 1400's.

Geologist Dr. Brian Atwater from the United States Geological Survey said historical records provide evidence of great earthquakes occurring along the Antilles Subduction Zone in the 1700s and 1800s and the research being undertaken by Dr. Atwater and his team of scientists is to distinguish the geologic records of tsunamis from those of storms. Anegada was selected for this research because of its evidence for catastrophic overwash in 1200 to 1450 AD and 1650 to 1800 AD.

Dr. Atwater spent time on the island in February 2011, six months after the passage of Hurricane Earl, and worked to identify storm-surge limits and examine geologic effects. Comparisons were made with Hurricane Donna and with erosional and depositional features from overwash in 1650 to 1800 and earlier.

Anegada is described as having abundant geologic evidence for overwash from the north that overtopped beach ridges at least three miles high. This evidence dates back to the interval 1650–1800, and has been ascribed to a tsunami or, perhaps, a major storm.



86. HYDROLOGIC STUDY UNDERWAY IN CANE GARDEN BAY AND BREWERS BAY



Residents of Cane Garden Bay and Brewers Bay can look forward to pilot solutions to minimise flooding and sedimentation in their communities.

Work began on the development of hydrologic models to better

understand storm water flows and pollution runoff in these watersheds.

The work is being implemented out under the North Shore Integrated Coastal and Watershed Stabilisation Project and coordinated by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour.

Residents of both communities have been learning about the project and are providing valuable local knowledge about flooding and runoff in the community. The end goal of the hydrologic modeling is to develop detailed designs for practical pilot scale solutions that will help to reduce flooding, sedimentation

and nutrient pollution in both communities.

The solutions designed will also be implemented under the project which is part of the wider European Union-funded Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) Project on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in the Eastern Caribbean managed by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

The watershed assessment follows work on a coastal dynamics model also being developed under the project to inform solutions to reduce coastal erosion and restore the beaches in the area.

Improving the Standard of Living

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

87. CONTRACT SIGNED TO PRODUCE MORE WATER ON VIRGIN GORDA

A Water Solution Agreement was signed between The Government of the Virgin Islands and Aqua Design (BVI) Ltd. in October 2015 for residents of Virgin Gorda to be provided with 480,000 imperial gallons of water daily. The contract is for a period of seven years with the option of renewal for another seven years.

The contract is to build, own and operate a new water plant on Virgin Gorda, and to replace the existing plant, which is old and has come to the end of its useful life.

Minister for Communications and Works, Honourable Mark Vantertpool said, **"With a production of 480,000 imperial gallons per day, the total savings that we expect for the Territory will be approximately \$1.3 million per annum, at a cost of \$12.46 versus \$20.00."**



Work has commenced on the project and will raise the current production level of 320,000 imperial gallons to 480,000 imperial gallons of potable water to residents on the sister island.

In addition to realising an increase in volume of water that will be produced, the Government will pay Aqua Design \$12.46 for each 1,000 gallon produced. Aqua Design (BVI) Ltd. has been conducting business with the Virgin Islands since 1988. The Company owns four plants in the Territory, with two other plants in Sea Cows Bay and Capoon's Bay.

88. NEW GENERATORS ARRIVE SAFELY TO POCKWOOD POND POWER STATION

As part of the Phase V Power Development Programme, the Government of the Virgin Islands purchased three Wartsila generators that were offloaded at the port in August 2016.

The first of the three new Wartsila diesel-fired generators arrived safely at the BVI Electricity Corporation's Pockwood Pond Power Station on August 22. A trip made from BVI Ports Authority in Port Purcell to the BVIEC Power Station in Pockwood Pond via remote controlled self-propelled modular trailer. The remaining two arrived on August 29 and August 31.

Minister for Communications and Works, Honourable Mark Vanterpool

said that the investment that the Government of the Virgin Islands is making in the national electricity supply through the British Virgin Islands Electricity Corporation (BVIEC) will benefit the Territory tremendously.

Minister Vanterpool said, **"It provides additional power for future development and the present developments that we have; it can ensure a stable infrastructure in reference to power supply."**

The installation of the generators is expected to be completed by January 2017 with two of the generators being installed by December 2016. Phase V also included the installation

of a 34.5 KV transmission cables from Pockwood Pond to Long Bush which was completed in June.

Initially two generators, a sum of 16 Megawatts, were purchased however an extra generator was bought which will add 24.4 Megawatts to the current national electricity grid before old generators are retired.

After the completion of Phase V, the Territory's electrical power supply will be at a capacity of 57.5 MW which is a 47 percent increase after units 1, 2 and 11 (sum capacity 5.5 MW) are retired.



Improving the Standard of Living

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

89. ADINA DONOVAN HOME GETS A MAKEOVER

Residents at the Adina Donovan Home for the Elderly now have a safer and more welcoming environment following the installation of new floor tiles at the home.

The tiling project was a collaborative effort of the Rotary Club Sunrise and James Todman Construction Limited and was part of on-going efforts to upgrade the ambience and standard of the institution.

President of Rotary Club Sunrise, Mrs. Jeanette Scatliffe-Boynes said that Rotary is always happy and willing to assist when the need arises. She added that the club made a contribution of over \$3,000 for the tiles and the materials. James Todman, also a member of Rotary Club, offered the services of his workers to complete the work.

Renovations were done in the reception area, two dining rooms, kitchen and front porch. Mrs. Scatliffe-Boynes said she looks forward to Rotary Club Sunrise's continued support of the Adina Donovan Home.

Manager of the home, Mrs. Marilin Malone-Bass said the staff and residents appreciated the kind

gesture and that the renovations helped to create a cleaner and more welcoming environment.

The Adina Donovan Home continues to ensure an optimum quality of life for all residents by providing an environment that caters to their unique spiritual, emotional, physical and mental well-being.

This renovation of the Adina Donovan Home for the Elderly is another example of the beneficial public and private sector collaboration that results when the Government of the Virgin Islands partners with private organisations.



90. NEW BURT POINT SEWERAGE TREATMENT PLANT OPERATIONAL

The sewerage treatment plan at Burt Point is now operational and producing treated effluent.

Minister for Communications and Works, Honourable Mark Vanterpool, stated in the House of Assembly that the historical commissioning and taking over of two modern state-of-the-art tertiary sewerage treatment plants in Burt Point and Paraquita Bay was completed.

Minister Vanterpool also announced that receipt of sewage to the Road Town Sewerage System had commenced and as at October 31, 2015, sewerage in the Road Town basin and its environs was now being treated at a tertiary level for the first time in the history of the Virgin Islands.

Samples of the effluent are clear, odorless and have been lab-tested in accordance with the quality requirements in the Water Purchase Agreement.



The Ministry signed and accepted the Burt Point Plant as complete in November 2015.

The Ministry of Communications and Works and the Water and Sewerage Department, formally took over the Treatment Plant, through a joint signing of the Taking-Over Certificate in November 2015.

HEALTH CARE

91. ANEGADA CLINIC REMODEL COMPLETE, NEW AMBULANCE PURCHASED

Renovations to the Anegada Community Clinic are complete and a new ambulance was purchased to improve the quality of healthcare services offered to residents.

The project included works and improvements to the clinic's roof, windows, electrical, exterior wall and floor finishing. The enhancements are expected to improve the level of compliance with electrical, fire

and disability codes and acts. The ambulance was purchased to cater to the emergency needs of the people.

The ambulance is a custom made two wheel drive 2016 Ford Transit 250 that has a cost \$79,764, with differential slip to aid driving on flat and sandy roads on Anegada. The ambulance is also fitted with a six-point seatbelt which is the latest feature compared to earlier models.



Improving the Standard of Living

COMMUNITY

92. USE OF STATISTICS IMPROVES THE LIVES OF BVI RESIDENTS

The Government of the Virgin Islands and its regional counterparts raised awareness on the importance of statistics on the occasion of Caribbean Statistics Day, observed annually in October 2015.

The observance is being held under the theme: 'Improving the Lives of People - Advancing the Action Plan for Statistics in CARICOM'.

Director of the Central Statistics Office, Mr. Raymond Phillips said the annual observance of Caribbean Statistics Day helps to raise the profile of statistics and its daily use. Additionally, the observance highlights the importance of agencies producing timely and accurate statistics, and also provides an opportunity to educate the public on the need to critically analyse the statistics generated.

Mr. Phillips explained that statistics are widely used to support policy development and in measuring the social and economic health of countries. He noted that in many instances, where there is a lack of understanding on the usefulness of statistics in the public and private sectors, the information is often taken for granted.

He added, **"We continue our work to foster increased collaboration with data producing or statistical units in agencies and departments of government, and to sensitise the public on the importance of statistics for making informed policy decisions."**

In May 2016, the Central Statistics Office launched its live statistics page on the Government's website at <http://www.bvi.gov.vg/statistics>,

where persons can access various types of statistics such as the consumer price index, tourism statistics, births, deaths and financial services.

The creation of the page illustrates the department's commitment to being the primary source of statistical information in the Virgin Islands and being equipped to meet the needs of clients in the provision of timely and accurate information.



93. AMNESTY GRANTED FOR PROPERTY OWNERS TO SETTLE TAX ARREAS



Property owners were invited to utilise the property tax amnesty granted by Government in October 2015 and settle outstanding property tax payments.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE granted the amnesty which ended December 2015.

Property owners on Tortola, Anegada, Jost Van Dyke and Virgin Gorda were urged to pay outstanding arrears which had a waiver in interests and penalties.

94. MOBILISING COMMUNITY POWER THROUGH WORKSHOPS

Efforts were made to revitalise and mobilise community organisations and individuals in the Territory through a series of Community Mobilisation Workshops.

The workshops were hosted by the Social Development Department under the theme Mobilising Community Power, while building capacity for social action and participation.

Community Development Unit Supervisor, Mrs. Roxane Toussaint said the department, through its interaction with various focus groups, noted some concerns about sustained participation of members, organisation or group sustainability and involvement in

community groups and other service organisations.

Ms. Toussaint stated, **"The overall purpose of mobilising the groups is primarily to assist them with identifying issues within their respective communities and collaborate or partner to find solutions to these. At a later stage, it is**

the vision of the department to structure a national body representative of the different organisations within the Territory."

The workshops were facilitated by speaker, author and resource person, Mr. Jim Diers from Seattle, Washington.



Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare



MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT HONOURABLE RONNIE W. SKELTON “IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE SYSTEM”

The historic National Health Insurance System became fully operational on January 1, 2016 and is providing health coverage for all registered beneficiaries regardless of age, health condition, or financial status. We have taken another bold step in fulfilling the Government’s pledge that every resident, from Anegada to Jost Van Dyke, will have affordable access to quality healthcare services when they need it.

We take great pride in this achievement of Universal Health Coverage, upholding the 1948 World Health Organization (WHO) Constitution and other international instruments that declare health a fundamental human right.

In celebrating this achievement, we also celebrate the journey that

brought us to this milestone. Many useful suggestions were shared publicly and privately by members of the insurance and healthcare industries, and residents from all walks of life – all of whom share the goal of a health system that will operate in the best interest of the entire population.

Legitimate concerns were raised regarding the medium to long-term solvency of the NHI Fund. I am pleased to say that a new actuarial study has been completed and its projections are consistent with the NHI Financial Model Report prepared in 2012. Both reports showed the Fund to be sustainable, provided that its inherent risks are managed skillfully. I will shortly be seeking authorization from the Cabinet to table these reports in the House of Assembly.

Various risk management mechanisms are built in to the NHI design, including reinsurance

to protect against catastrophic claims over Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand dollars (\$250,000.00). After evaluating three tenders, an agreement has been reached with Caribbean Insurance (Health) Limited to provide reinsurance coverage in affiliation with international partners with effect from January 1, 2016.

We are grateful to local insurance agencies for participating in the tender process, and for accommodating the needs of residents who wish to purchase supplemental health insurance policies. Supplemental policies may be used to defray out-of-pocket expenses on co-payments and additional billing when annual limits have been exceeded; or in cases where the fees charged by private healthcare providers exceed NHI rates.

Local healthcare providers are also doing their part to make the

implementation of NHI a success. The following providers have signed Participating Partner Agreements and are now a part of the NHI network:

Arrangements are also in place for residents to access specialized healthcare overseas on referral, or in cases of emergency when travelling abroad. An Agreement with the Florida-based JIPA Network and its affiliation with Aetna, Inc. and other international partners provides preferred access to hundreds of high quality medical facilities in the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States. Through an affiliation with Europ Assistance, world-wide medical assistance will be provided in emergencies.

We will continue to engage with private insurance companies, healthcare providers and other key partners to monitor utilisation and make any further adjustments necessary to improve the NHI System as we move forward together.

I also commend the many employers and residents who took the opportunity to sign up during our community registration drive, and strongly encourage those who haven't yet registered, to do so without delay in order to access benefits and avoid legal penalties. Since the start of registration on September 1st, over twenty-five thousand, five hundred (25,500) men, women and children have been

registered, and the numbers are climbing daily.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development remains focused on its mission to continually improve and strengthen the health system to ensure that it delivers services at internationally recognized standards of quality. But building a healthy community requires much more than removing financial barriers or improving the quality of health care. It requires each of us to take responsibility for preventing and controlling chronic and infectious diseases; reduce the risk of accidents and injuries; seek treatment early when we do get sick; follow the advice of our doctors to manage chronic conditions; and generally make responsible use of the benefits that National Health Insurance will provide.



Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

95. NHI IMPLEMENTED

In October 2015, Minister for Health and Social Development, Honourable Ronnie W. Skelton signed an agreement to provide access to thousands of preferred healthcare providers overseas, including members within the Territory.

The agreement was signed with Chief Executive Officer of JIPA Network, Dr. Kester Nedd D.O. JIPA Network is a premier association of healthcare providers which reaches throughout the Caribbean, Central and South America and the United States.

Honourable Skelton said one of the greatest concerns of residents regarding the National Health Insurance is the availability of a variety of quality healthcare providers locally and abroad. He said the signing of the agreement was part of the implementation process of the National Health Insurance.

Minister Skelton stated, **“Let the signing of this agreement today with JIPA Network health providers serve as reassurance to the residents of the Territory that the Government of the**

Virgin Islands, through the Ministry of Health and Social Development, is doing and will continue to do everything within its powers to ensure that all of our people have access to quality healthcare regardless of their pre-existing condition, age, gender and employment status from birth to death.”

Dr. Nedd congratulated the Government of the Virgin Islands on setting an example for the advancement of healthcare in the Caribbean region.

He added, **“Our goal is to work with the local physicians and the local healthcare community to keep as much of the healthcare that should be offered in the**

country and continue to uplift the standard that you have already set here in healthcare. And for the ones who are not able to provide care, to find an orderly manner in helping patients find access.”

The JIPA Network has a multi-specialty network of over 16,000 providers, including diagnostic facilities, treatment centers and hospitals. The network provides access to over 303,000 physicians, more than 5,000 hospitals, over 90,000 ancillary facilities and over one million healthcare professional service locations.





96. MORE PRIVATE HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS JOIN NHI NETWORK

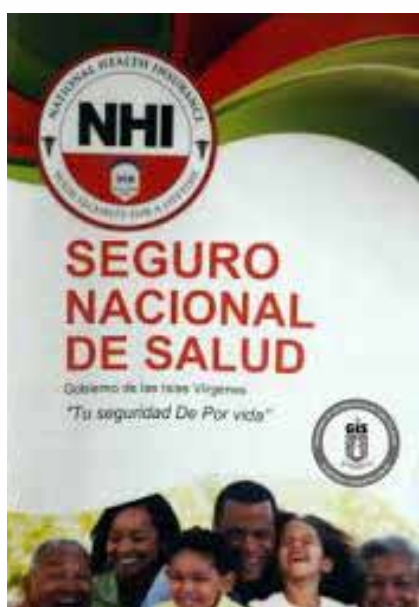
Eight new private healthcare providers joined the National Health Insurance (NHI) network in December 2015 as registration moved to the 'Go Live' date of January 1, 2016.

Director of the Social Security Board, Mrs. Antoinette Skelton and the representatives signed the Participating Provider Agreement. Mrs. Skelton described the contract signings as a **"signal of the local providers' ongoing commitment to play a key role in meeting the healthcare needs of the population."**

Dr. Heskith Vanterpool spoke on behalf of the group of private healthcare providers. He said, **"It has always been a concern for doctors that certain persons were not able to access the best of healthcare because money is**

always an important factor and some people were unable to access healthcare on an equal basis with others. I have for some time been a supporter of the National Health Insurance idea and to see it come to fruition, I think is fantastic for the entire population of the British Virgin Islands."

The terms of the Participating Provider Agreement states that, private providers are required to notify beneficiaries of any additional charges prior to the delivery of services, should their fees exceed the amount to be reimbursed by NHI. Residents were also reminded to present their NHI card when accessing services from NHI in-network providers. The in-network providers list can be accessed at www.vinhi.vg.



97. LATIN COMMUNITY RESPONDS POSITIVELY TO NHI

The Latin community in the British Virgin Islands was educated on the benefits of the National Health Insurance (NHI) in December 2015 which took effect on January 1, 2016.

Deputy Director of the Social Security Board with responsibility for the NHI, Mr. Roy Barry said the presentation was delivered in Spanish with printed brochures to assist in the education process to bridge the language barrier.

President of the Dominican Association, Mr. Santiago Robles said, **"On behalf of the Dominican Association and the wider Latin community, I would like to say thank you for bringing the information to us in our language and further having a presentation to ensure that we understand and are comfortable with the information."**

Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

98. NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE SYSTEM IS NOW IN EFFECT

The Social Security (Amendment) Act, 2014, which establishes the National Health Insurance (NHI) System in the Virgin Islands, took effect in December 2015.

Minister for Health and Social Development, Honourable Ronnie W. Skelton made the declaration by a notice published in the Gazette on November 30, 2015, in accordance with Section 1 of the Act. The legislation was passed in the House of Assembly and assented to by the former Governor in April 2014.

Minister Skelton stated that the Government enacted the legislation in fulfillment of its pledge to ensure that all BVI residents are provided comprehensive and affordable health care coverage. The NHI System is Government's financing and purchasing mechanism for health care services provided in accordance with the Act.

The Social Security (Amendment) Act, 2014 also establishes the NHI Division which will be directly responsible for managing, monitoring and administering the NHI System; carrying out the registration of beneficiaries; maintaining a record of all beneficiaries and contributors; collecting contributions; processing claims and paying from the NHI Fund benefits as are agreed between health care providers and the Board; supervising and controlling expenditure; making payments from the NHI Fund; and carrying out registration of health care providers and facilities under the NHI System.

The legislation also governs the establishment of the NHI Fund; certification and registration of health care providers; and beneficiary entitlements. With the Act now in place, the regulations required for the efficient administration of the Act are being published.

The enactment of this law is among a series of measures undertaken by the Government to achieve universal health coverage, the hallmark of its commitment to improve the well-being of all the people in the Virgin Islands.



99. NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE REIMBURSES BENEFITS

The National Health Insurance (NHI) Office commenced reimbursement of benefit claims as a function of the system in February 2016.

Minister for Health and Social Development, Honourable Ronnie W. Skelton presented a cheque to Mr. Richard Lake, the first individual to be compensated via the system.

Minister Skelton stated, **“We are doing this to let people know that the NHI is working and will be one of the best insurance systems for healthcare in the Virgin Islands and may be an example for other countries to adopt. We might go through teething problems but we are committed to solving those problems and make sure that**

the people of the Virgin Islands get the best healthcare they possibly can.”

Mr. Lake is registered with NHI and

visited the ophthalmologist before receiving his NHI card and opted to pay out of pocket and filed his claim instead.



100. GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY HEALTH CARE

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE said that the National Health Insurance (NHI) system is the most significant advancement of the Territory's civil protection network, since the introduction of the Social Security system some 30 years ago.

Premier Smith, while delivering the 2016 Budget address, outlined the developments in the Health Sector and the way forward. He said that in many parts of the world, healthcare is based on an individual's ability to pay.

He pledged that once his Government is at the helm he will



work to ensure that the people of the Virgin Islands will never be faced with such a situation.

The Premier stated that through the combined assistance of Minister for Health and Social Development, Honourable Ronnie W. Skelton and

his team, along with persons in the public and private sector, everyone legally residing in the Virgin Islands now have access to high quality healthcare.

“If making this tough decision, ensures that everyone in this Territory has access to high quality healthcare, then that is what I feel duty bound and committed to do. Under the National Health Insurance programme, every citizen of the BVI now has access to high quality healthcare, regardless of their ability to pay”, Premier Smith said.

Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

HUMAN RIGHTS

101. BVI ADVOCATES FOR PEACE DURING INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

More than a hundred persons marched and advocated for peace, equality and justice in the Virgin Islands in observance of International Human Rights Day.

The day culminated the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence that began in November 2015.

Following the march, participants from several schools, organisations and uniformed bodies gathered in the Breezeway of the Central Administration Complex for the Celebration of Life Ceremony which

honoured 39 victims of violence in the Territory over the past 15 years. The victims' were remembered by the reading of their names.

Deputy Secretary for the Ministry of Health and Social Development, Ms. Tasha Bertie said, **"As we continue to advocate for the advancement of human rights in every facet of our society, may today's demonstration and all your participation be a lasting impression on the lives of every individual not only for today but for years to come."**

International Human Rights Day was declared and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 1948 in receiving the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which was the first global expression of rights to which all human beings are inherently entitled. The day was observed in December 2015.



102. GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS THE FIRST OECS CHILD RIGHTS SYMPOSIUM

Minister for Health and Social Development, Honourable Ronnie W. Skelton led a delegation to the first Child Rights Symposium held in St. Kitts and Nevis hosted by the Organisation Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

The symposium was geared towards the promotion of greater application of human rights standards in policy, law and programme formulation for children and adolescents, in particular those in conflict with the law.

Minister Skelton said that the symposium was timely and in line with BVI Government's agenda. He added that the topics discussed will allow the Territory to take the next step in creating a holistic youth justice system in addition to the current Youth Court as part of the OECS model.



The symposium was supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

103. RECRUITMENT DRIVE SEEKS FOSTER CARE VOLUNTEERS

The Foster Care and Big Brothers/Big Sisters Mentorship Programmes have launched a series of recruitment campaigns to raise the number of volunteers and also provide the public with awareness on matters related to foster care and mentorship.

Head of Family, Children and Protective Services at the Social

Development Department, Mrs. Stacie Stoutt-James said the department acknowledges mentoring relationships through Big Brothers/Big Sisters improves on educational measures; it improves a number of social and behavioral outcomes; and shows promise in helping young people develop healthy and safe behaviors.

Mrs. Stoutt-James said, **"The goal of recruitment is to build visibility and sign up enthusiastic and appropriate adults as potential candidates for mentorship."**

She added that some children come into Social Development's care due to allegations of abuse, neglect and abandonment, and from parents who may lack the necessary parenting skills to nurture and discipline their children effectively. The goal is also to inform persons about the different types of foster care and recruit potential carers for the programme.



Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

HUMAN RIGHTS

104. VIRGIN ISLANDS REPRESENTED AT 2016 HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

Acting Permanent Secretary in the Deputy Governor's Office, Mrs. Carolyn Stoutt Igwe, represented the Virgin Islands at the 2016 Overseas Territories Human Rights Conference that was held on September 13 and 14 2015, at Lancaster House, London.

The conference explored key priorities, opportunities and challenges faced by Overseas Territories Human Rights Commissions or equivalent organisations, in the execution of their responsibilities. It also examined critical topical human rights issues such as women and children's rights and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals.

In a report delivered at the conference, Mrs. Igwe presented a summary on human rights in the Territory, including the provisions of the Virgin Islands Constitution Order, 2007 and some of the Conventions that have been extended to the Virgin Islands. She also spoke to the progress made in terms of recent legislation and policy documents aimed at ensuring compliance with

those Conventions and highlighted some human rights challenges. The Acting Permanent Secretary highlighted legislative reviews conducted on the Territory's compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Pending amendments to prison legislation to ensure compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights was also mentioned.

Mrs. Igwe felt that the conference was timely as the Territory moves toward reintroducing the Human Rights Commission Act in the House of Assembly and said, **"We are in a good place as the networks have now been established among the Overseas Territories, so we can learn from the work of the existing Commissions."**

Rights Commission Act in the House of Assembly and said, **"We are in a good place as the networks have now been established among the Overseas Territories, so we can learn from the work of the existing Commissions."**



She added, **"As a Territory, we have been making progress with addressing various human rights issues across Government and fulfilling our reporting obligations on compliance with various Conventions"**.

105. EARLY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS TRAINED ON REPORTING ABUSE

Childhood practitioners and proprietors were made more aware of their roles and responsibilities in the protection of children in the British Virgin Islands.

The practitioners met at a session as part of activities in observance of Child Abuse Prevention and Autism Awareness Month in April 2016.

Education Officer, Mrs. Jerelyn Callwood said the workshop was spearheaded to make proprietors and practitioners aware of their roles and responsibilities as it relates to child abuse and neglect. She said that there were a few cases of failure to report which was a serious cause for concern. To prevent incidents from reoccurring, measures were put in place including training of practitioners and proprietors.

The aim also was for the child carers to identify the signs of abuse, to know their role in the reporting process, to know who to report to and when to report, how not to address parents directly and a number of steps and procedures.

Topics explored included defining the types of abuse, highlighting common physical and behavioral signs,

highlighting the status of the British Virgin Islands, the responsibilities of an educator and the Child Abuse Prevention Protocol.

The Child Abuse Prevention Protocol is a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary guideline for the handling of child protection matters across various government agencies.



106. BVI RECEIVES SUPPORT TO STRENGTHEN CHILD JUSTICE LEGISLATION

The Ministry of Health and Social Development has obtained legal support to improve the administration of child justice legislation in the British Virgin Islands.

Deputy Court Administrator of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court based in St. Lucia, Mr. Francis Letang visited the Territory from August 23 to 27, 2016 and met with the Child Justice Reform Committee and the Sexual Offences Legislation Committee to formulate plans for this important initiative.

Deputy Secretary, Ms. Tasha Bertie explained that Mr. Letang's visit was a part of the technical assistance provided by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission, and the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court to develop a comprehensive Child Justice Policy Framework that is multi-disciplinary and child-focused in nature.

She said that the additional support will also aid in strengthening the Children and Young Persons Act, 2005 along with other child-related legislation and the development of other modern legislation surrounding children in line with the OECS model bills. The examination and effective implementation of these laws will serve to promote the wellbeing of children and families in the Territory.



Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

HUMAN RIGHTS

107. RESIDENTS URGED TO BE CONSIDERATE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Residents were urged to be more considerate to persons with disabilities as the Ministry of Health and Social Development collaborated with the Autism Centre and BVI Services to produce an awareness campaign.

This was done to address the overall goal of promoting an understanding of disability issues and mobilise support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

Deputy Secretary for the Ministry of Health and Social Development, Ms. Tasha Bertie said it was important that persons exercise courtesy and have consideration for persons with disabilities.

She said, **“As we observe International Day of Persons with Disabilities, let us remember to be courteous to these persons, not only as part of the commemoration, but always. Let us adhere to the handicap signs posted throughout the Territory, in order for disabled persons to have an easier experience given their difficulties.”**

The crucial aim of celebrating the day was to increase the awareness and understanding of the general population towards the issues of disabled persons. It also aimed to support disabled persons to get their self-respect, rights, welfare and security in the society.





108. BVI RECEIVES UNITED NATIONS SUPPORT TO REDUCE FAMILY VIOLENCE

The Territory received assistance in its efforts to reduce family violence from the United Nations (UN) organisation dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women (UN Women).

Stakeholders participated in a series of meetings on the effectiveness of the court mandated Partnership for Peace Violence Intervention Programme in its legal context.

Stakeholders also participated in work groups to discuss the do's and don'ts regarding reform on sexual offences.

Gender Affairs Coordinator, Ms. Lorolie Connor said that due to a growing concern in the levels of violence against women and girls particularly in the Caribbean region, UN Women offered support to the Virgin Islands to begin the process of legislation reform, towards the development of a Sexual Offences Bill.

The Territory will also receive assistance in implementing principles of equality and non-discrimination in the Territory's justice system.

HEALTH

109. AGEING ENRICHMENT SEMINARS HELD

A series of Ageing Enrichment Seminars were held to educate caregivers on ageing and elderly matters.

The aim was to provide the public with a better understanding of some of the challenges and illnesses that plague the ageing population as well as lend support to their loved ones and caregivers.

The first seminar discussed the topic of 'Living with Alzheimer's...What Every Caregiver Should Know,' and addressed the present forms and causes of dementia, warning signs, risk factors, safety issues and current medical treatment.



Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

HEALTH

110. SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES IS BANNED

Owners and managers of public establishments and the general public were reminded that smoking in public places is unlawful as legislated by the Tobacco Products Control Act 2006 and regulated by the Tobacco Products Control Regulations, 2007.

The regulations stipulate that a fine of \$50.00 will be charged to any persons smoking tobacco or holding lighted tobacco within 30 feet of the entrance, exit or open windows of offices and office buildings, including public areas, elevators, stairways, and restrooms within the buildings. This stipulation also applies to health institutions, educational institutions, sports facilities, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, facilities rented out for events, premises in which children are cared for, beaches accessible to the public and any other facilities.

Minister for Health and Social Development, Honourable Ronnie W. Skelton said there are too many complaints of the failure of members of the public to comply with these regulations.

Honourable Skelton said, **“Many of our people are dying from cancer and we know that second hand smoke is a contributing factor. As a country we must commit ourselves to the prevention and reduction of cancer and other non-communicable chronic diseases by maintaining a healthy environment and making healthier lifestyle choices.”**

Owners or managers are required to post approved “No Smoking” signs in visible areas at the entrance to and within all establishments, including private dwellings with spaces open to the public.



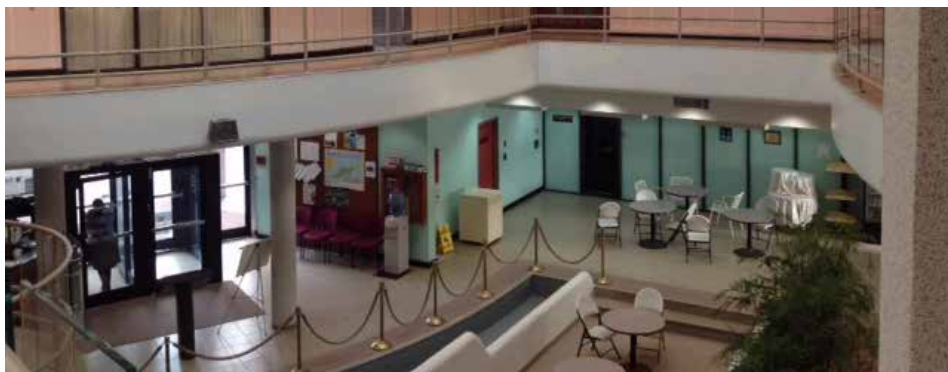
111. AIR QUALITY IMPROVED AT ADMINISTRATION COMPLEX

The Ministry of Communications and Works took various measures to control the mold and enhance the quality of air in the Central Administration Complex.

Deputy Permanent Secretary, Mr. Andrew St. Hilaire said the Complex has gone through several remedial works such as repairing the roof, refurbishing air handlers, antifungal fogging and the installation of filters which are replaced every three months. The measures also included draining the water from the indoor pool and removing plants from the indoor garden.

Mr. St. Hilaire added, **“As the Ministry’s air quality initiative advances, the building will undergo another air quality evaluation to aid in providing a better long term strategy, like replacing the chiller units. The Ministry is taking the matter seriously and understands that the health of all government employees and visitors to the building is of the utmost importance.”**

The three-story building is in close proximity to the sea which causes the chiller units to corrode at a faster rate. The high humidity levels in the atmosphere also contribute to the fostering of mold in the building. The Central Administration Complex is 80,000 square feet, houses over 300 employees and was built in 1991.



112. VIRGIN ISLANDS INCREASES HEALTH SURVEILLANCE AGAINST WHOOPING COUGH

The Ministry of Health and Social Development in July 2016, increased surveillance and sample collection for Severe Acute Respiratory Illnesses, following the results of an investigation on two suspected cases of Pertussis, also known as whooping cough detected in St. Lucia.

The Ministry of Health in St. Lucia officially notified the Caribbean Public Health Agency, CARPHA of the receipt of positive laboratory results for two suspected cases that were part of a wider investigation of six cases of prolonged, severe cough in small children requiring hospital admission.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development said it will remain vigilant in its surveillance and sample collection for Severe Acute Respiratory Illness, and enhance reporting and sample collection from clusters of respiratory illness, especially of prolonged duration, in children under five. The DPT vaccine and all other childhood vaccinations are provided free of charge by the BVI Health Services Authority to all Virgin Islands residents. Parents were encouraged to ensure that children receive their entire courses of immunisation in order to be protected against vaccine-preventable diseases.



Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

HEALTH

113. TEMPORARY BAN PLACED ON IMPORT OF ALL LIVE BIRDS

A temporary ban was placed on the importation of live birds in July 2015 due to the spread of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N2 Subtype).

The temporary importation restriction was in accordance with the Animal (Disease and Importation) Act (CAP 88 Section 3(i)). Seventeen states in the USA confirmed cases of the influenza including Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota, California, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia.

The live birds were poultry including chicken, duck, geese and or turkey,

from specific jurisdictions in the United States and Toronto, Canada.

Chief Agricultural Officer Bevin Brathwaite said the public's awareness and cooperation was key to preventing an outbreak or spread of the virus into the Territory. **"Any person with the intent to import live birds into the Territory must request an import permit from the Department of Agriculture, specifying the origin of the birds and the intended arrival before such a permit is granted",** Mr. Brathwaite stated.

The Chief said the department



was vigilant since the start of the outbreaks in November 2014 in Europe, and that poultry farmers were made aware of the outbreak and what should be done to avoid importing infected birds into the Territory.

The department introduced educational programmes on Bird Flu awareness and prevention via local radio, and continues to follow the status of the outbreak.

114. STUDENTS EDUCATED ON PESTICIDE MANAGEMENT

Students of Grades 5 and 6 of the Leonora Delville and Isabella Morris Primary Schools were engaged in activities on how to properly use and dispose of pesticides as part of Pesticides Awareness Week.

The activities were conducted by the Department of Agriculture which included visits to schools. Students were educated on pesticides including the types of protective gears that should be worn when handling these substances.

Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer, Mrs. Arona Fahie-Forbes said it is important for students to learn how to properly use pesticides as many are

exposed to these substances that are not properly stored nor managed within households and on farms. She said as a result, children are poisoned and in some cases death occurs.

Mrs. Forbes said, **"The students were actively engaged in the activities and learned a lot. The students played Pesticide B-I-N-G-O which challenged their pest related vocabulary. Also, students, teachers and principals were given a brief PowerPoint presentation on the safe use, management and disposal of many commonly used pesticides in the home."**

Pesticides Awareness Week was observed in the Territory from September 27 to October 3, 2015, under the theme, "Children are Precious: Protect them from Pesticides".



115. BVI NOW OFFERING SEAFARERS MEDICAL FITNESS CERTIFICATE



The British Virgin Islands is a Category One jurisdiction for ship registration, and is now offering the United Kingdom Seafarers Medical Fitness Certificate for persons working aboard vessels.

The Territory joins the state of Florida, in the United States of America and Trinidad and Tobago in having medical facilities offering this certification.

Acting Director of the Virgin Islands Shipping Registry, Captain Raman Bala stated that Dr. Paula Trotman-Hastings of Peebles Hospital has been approved by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to examine candidates and issue the United Kingdom Seafarers Medical Fitness Certificate beginning in March 2016.

Captain Bala said, **“This is an internationally accepted seafarers’ medical certificate and there are only a handful of doctors approved world-wide to conduct this examination. It is indeed a proud moment for the Territory as a Category One ship registration jurisdiction.”**

Captain Bala explained that it is essential to have a seafarers’ medical certificate to work at sea, whether in charge of a ship or serving on a merchant ship or yacht. International maritime regulations require seafarers to be certified and to be deemed medically fit by a doctor trained and approved for this purpose. The certificate is valid for two years.

116. CHRONIC CARE COURSE TO MANAGE NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A series of self-management workshops was conducted to assist persons in the management of non-communicable diseases.

The sessions were organised by the Ministry of Health and Social Development in collaboration with the Pan-American Health Organisation to combat the escalating incidence of chronic diseases in the Virgin Islands.

Chief Nursing Officer, Ms. Jacinth Hannibal stated that a diagnosis of a chronic disease such as diabetes or high blood pressure can be stressful for individuals and their families, and often requires a change in lifestyle and supportive efforts to correct the disease or to prevent further impact to the body.

Ms. Hannibal stated, **“Through this program individuals learn skills to help them cope. These skills are taught by persons like themselves with chronic disease and will be taught incrementally so it is easy for persons to understand.”**

The programme was based on the well-researched Stanford University’s chronic disease self-management programme.

LIVING WELL *With* CHRONIC DISEASES

Sick and tired of being sick and tired? Well Take Charge!! Sign up for the Chronic Disease Self-Management Course which is sure to help anyone with conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, heart, breathing and back problems.

You Will Learn

- How to work with your doctor
- How to manage your symptoms
- New ways of solving problems
- How to set and achieve realistic goals
- Communications skills
- Relaxation techniques

LIVE LIFE ON YOUR TERMS WHILE MANAGING CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

HEALTH

117. ROADSIDE FOOD VENDORS REQUIRED TO BE LICENCED

Roadside vendors and owners of food establishments were reminded that they are to be registered and be licenced in order to operate within the Territory.

Acting Chief Environmental Health Officer, Mrs. Yolanda Penn said in addition to the proper licencing, all vendors and food establishment owners need to comply with the Public Health Food Hygiene Regulations.

Vendors were also advised to set up mobile businesses in locations that would minimise risk to food operations. These establishments are

also required to display their licences where it can be easily seen by the public and patrons.

Patrons were advised to look for food licences that should be displayed in plain view at all venues. The licence confirms that the food establishment has passed inspection and has met requirements to operate.

Food establishments must meet the minimum requirements before a licence can be obtained. The operation must have hot and cold running water, at least one hand-wash sink and be free of pest infestation.



118. CHANGES MADE TO FOOD HANDLER CLINICS



Amendments were made to the processing of food handler clinics in January 2016 in an effort to increase efficiency. Among the changes were that persons attending food handler sessions must have all of the required documents when attending the sessions.

Acting Chief Environmental Health Officer, Mrs. Yolanda Penn said these practices by some persons have resulted in a back log of cards that have not been collected and incomplete paper work at the division.

Persons renewing their food handler's certificates are required to present their expired certificates, social security card, work permit and/or picture identification.

Persons seeking to obtain a food handler's certificate for the first time are also required to bring the result of their Mantoux (skin) and stool tests, work permit and/or picture identification, social security card and one recent passport size photograph.

119. REDOUBLING EFFORTS TO REDUCE MOSQUITO BREEDING

Residents were urged to redouble their efforts to reduce mosquito breeding and prevent outbreaks of Dengue Fever, Chikungunya Virus and the new Zika Virus. These viruses are spread by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito.

Medical Officer, Dr. Ronald Georges said the Zika Virus has spread from Africa to the Americas and was identified in Brazil in April of 2015. He added that there was one case

in the Dominican Republic and there was a concern for the Territory.

Common symptoms of infection with the Zika virus include mild headaches, skin rash, tiredness, red eyes, and joint muscle and back pains. There is no preventative treatment or vaccines for any of the mosquito borne illnesses, other than rest, hydration, and anti-inflammatory medications.

The Public was reminded that general clean-up should include the removal of all water holding receptacles, such as old tires, discarded buckets, pots or pet feeding dishes, abandoned and derelict boats and vehicles or anything that can hold water.



Uncovered water tanks, wells, buckets and boats, are to be properly covered as these are potential breeding sites.

Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

HEALTH

120. 'PROJECT BUG OUT' TO FIGHT ZIKA

A partnership to fight Zika has been established. The 'Project Bug Out' public/private partnership was established to chart the path towards mosquito eradication on Virgin Gorda.

The partnership is part of efforts to reduce the potential impact of the Zika Virus on the sister island.

The project's steering committee is comprised of community members from private, public and non-government sectors and will seek to ensure that all residents of Virgin Gorda and surrounding islands are aware of the immediate measures that can be taken to support

mosquito eradication.

Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Ronald Georges said that the group understands that Zika, Chikungunya and Dengue Fever could be devastating to the Virgin Gorda economy. In addition to raising awareness, the group has committed to mobilise community clean-ups, ensuring that residents have information on how to prevent mosquito breeding and have access to things they might need, like mosquito traps and nets to cover barrels and cisterns.

Dr. Georges reported that the current situation on Virgin Gorda shows that

there are several open wells that can be a source of mosquito breeding. He said, **"Almost all of the houses have water catchments and some of them are open and uncovered. Boulders have a lot of natural breeding spots where water can be collected. The dump is a concern and there is a lot of bulky waste around the Valley."**



121. CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN ON JOST VAN DYKE

A clean-up campaign was spearheaded on Jost Van Dyke in October 2015 in an effort to mitigate vector borne diseases like Zika, Chikungunya and Dengue Fever.

Jost Van Dyke was identified as a vector hotspot and with heightened awareness about vector borne diseases and the emergence of the latest vector disease ZIKA, efforts were made to ensure that the area was cleaned before the rainy season began.

Manager at the Department of Waste Management, Mr. Greg Massicote said two 20 cubic yard bins designated for bulky waste disposal were placed behind the Jost Van Dyke Primary School for collection of waste. Residents on the eastern side of the island were also encouraged to clean their premises of bulky waste and have them transported to the designated areas.

A team of sanitation officers was also designated to conduct general clean-up of the island's main road while the department removed derelict vehicles and boats during the three day clean-up campaign.



122. CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN BEGINS IN MOSQUITO HOTSPOTS

A clean-up campaign was launched in February 2016 in mosquito hotspot areas as efforts continued to reduce the potential impact of the Zika virus in the Territory.

The joint operation between the Department of Waste Management and the Environmental Health Unit began on Jost Van Dyke.

The vector control team traveled to Jost Van Dyke and conducted house to house inspections. Residents were asked to conduct a general clean-up of their premises and to cooperate with the team.

Acting Chief Environmental Health Officer, Mrs. Yolanda Penn said that similar campaigns will be conducted

throughout the Territory over the next few months as efforts continue to reduce mosquito breeding within the community. The department will also prioritise based on areas with the highest indices reported by the vector control team.

Residents are reminded to conduct weekly surveillance activities for breeding sites, properly dispose unwanted containers that can hold water and garbage on a regular basis. Drains where water could settle must also be opened and cleared at all times. Persons are encouraged to thoroughly scrub the sides of containers to destroy mosquito eggs, keep their yard clean and clear of weeds, and store containers not being used faced down.



Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

HEALTH

123. HAND FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE ON THE RISE PARENTS CAUTIONED

Parents were urged to remain vigilant as health professionals reported that Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease was on the rise in the Territory.

Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Ronald Georges said that there were 12 suspected cases identified in five different daycare and preschool facilities locally, as well as one suspected adult case.

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD), is a generally mild disease caused by a group of viruses called Coxsackie Viruses. It mainly affects infants and young children (less than five years old) but can also occur in older children and adults.

According to Dr. Georges, the disease is spread from person to person through coughing, sneezing, and contact with infected feces through changing a diaper, or touching surfaces or objects which have been contaminated with the virus.

"Symptoms usually begin with a fever, sore throat, reduced appetite and a general feeling of being unwell," Dr. Georges said. He added, **"Within a day or two after the first symptoms, a rash and bumps may appear on the soles of the feet, palms of the hands and inside the**

Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease



mouth. A rash may also develop on the elbows, knees and buttocks. The bumps may blister but do not cause itching."

The Medical Officer of Health encouraged parents and care workers to wash hands often with soap and water, especially after changing diapers. He said adults should help young children do the same in order to reduce the risk of getting infected with the disease and prevent the spread of the virus.

124. CHRONIC DISEASE SELF-MANAGEMENT LEADERS TRAINED

The Ministry of Health and Social Development held a series of training workshops for individuals to lead workshops on chronic disease self-management.

The sessions were held as the Ministry moved forward with its approach of reducing chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes in the Territory.

Persons were trained in the Stanford University Chronic Disease Self-Management Programme geared towards persons with chronic diseases or caregivers of persons with chronic diseases. The programme was also designed to assist individuals to take better care of themselves by learning different ways and methods to manage chronic conditions.

Chief Nursing Officer, Ms. Jacinth Hannibal said, **"Our goal for this programme is to empower persons to take charge of their own health. If you are in charge of your health you know what you need, when you are not feeling well you will know the resources**

within the Territory to assist you in managing your condition."

The leaders are expected to carry out similar training sessions in their respective communities and civic organisations.



125. ASTHMA EDUCATION WORKBOOK SERIES NOW AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC

Parents and caregivers of children with asthma were empowered with knowledge and tools to effectively manage the health condition with the launch of the educational series **"Asthma Education 101."**

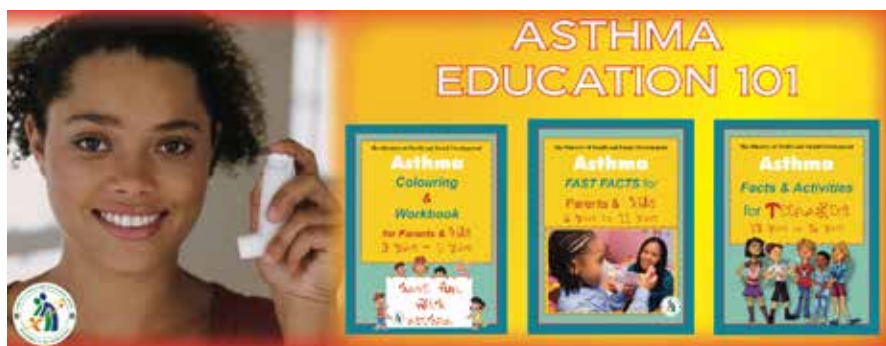
The series includes asthma fast facts for parents and children ages six to 11, asthma facts and activity book for teenagers, and an asthma colouring and workbook for children ages three to five.

Chief of Drugs and Pharmaceutical Services, Mrs. Gracia Wheatley-Smith said the series was offered by the Ministry of Health and Social

Development and will offer a wealth of information that could be beneficial to adults and children to effectively treat and control the condition.

Asthmatics and caregivers of children with asthma were encouraged to

use the publications and other tools to better manage the lung disease in a manner which will result in the reduction of attacks and hospital visits.



Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

HEALTH

126. DERELICT VEHICLES REMOVED FROM VIRGIN GORDA



A campaign organised by the Department of Waste Management to minimise the buildup of neglected and unmaintained vehicles on the island saw the removal of 73 derelict vehicles from Virgin Gorda.

The derelicts were transported to the main site on Tortola, where they were be processed and eventually shipped out of the Territory.

Manager at the Department of Waste Management, Mr. Greg Massicote stated that these efforts are part of the “fight the bite” campaign to reduce mosquito breeding in the Territory. He explained that in order to prevent possible breeding sites for rodents and mosquitos, the department started the initiative to minimise the amount of derelict vehicles.

“This is the first phase of the department’s efforts to reduce the amount of derelicts on Virgin Gorda. The department will be organising another shipment in the near future as more scrap metal is shipped out of the Territory. We have already shipped over 250 derelict vehicles out of the Territory since the beginning of 2016,” Mr. Massicote said.

The department has put measures in place to maintain a steady flow of abandoned vehicles out of the Territory. The aim is to reduce the amount of derelicts on the streets and eventually reduce the pile of scrap metals on Virgin Gorda and Tortola.

127. GRADES 4 AND 5 INTRODUCED IN HEALTHY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Teachers of Grades 4 and 5 and Physical Education teachers met to develop age-appropriate lessons for the Healthy Lifestyle School Intervention Programme.

The programme will be moving into its second year and seeks to emphasise healthy eating, physical education and physical literacy in school-age children by promoting healthy eating and active living.

Coordinator for Health Promotions Services and National Focal Point for Non-Communicable Diseases, Ms. Ivy George stated that there is an increase in the number of children suffering from childhood obesity in the Territory. She added that the aim is to prevent childhood obesity in school age children, through the implementation of the intervention

programme designed to help delay or prevent the onset of obesity and chronic non-communicable diseases.

The programme is integrated within core subjects of math, science, language and physical education in Grades 2 and 3 students and will continue to concentrate on nutrition and physical activity. At its core are the behaviors eating breakfast daily, eating fruits and vegetables, eating a variety of food daily, reducing sugary snacks and drinks and increase physical activity.

The Healthy School Intervention Programme is a joint effort of the Ministries of Education and Culture and Health and Social Development, along with Caribbean Public Health Association (CARPHA).



Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

DISEASE MANAGEMENT

128. HIV/AIDS MONITORING MECHANISM INITIATED IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

The “Test and Treat” mechanism which ensures better outcomes for the immune system in the prevention of HIV transmission as well as its progression to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), has been initiated in the Virgin Islands.

“Test and Treat” is offered to all persons who are diagnosed with HIV, regardless of the CD4 levels. CD4 cells or T-cells are a type of white blood cells that play a major role in protecting the body from infection. Once a person is infected with HIV, the virus begins to attack and destroy the CD4 cells of the immune system. HIV uses the machinery of the CD4 cells to multiply and spread throughout the body.

National HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health Programme Coordinator, Mrs. Noelene Levons Clarke said that the Virgin Islands has been consistent in monitoring HIV clients’ CD4 and Viral Load levels at least twice per year and more often for persons who are not yet stabilised.

Due to this monitoring mechanism, the Virgin Islands and Cuba are among the first set of Caribbean countries to request validation for

the Elimination-of-Mother-to-Child-Transmission of HIV/AIDS and Congenital Syphilis from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Mrs. Levons Clarke said, **“The Virgin Islands qualifies for validation, given that we have only had one child being born with HIV over the past five years and so WHO officials will visit the Territory in October to evaluate the health services and provide validation for EMTCT Elimination-of-Mother-to-Child.”**



129. GETTING TO ZERO FOR WORLD AIDS DAY

The Ministry of Health and Social Development reported that there were 120 reported cases of HIV/AIDS in the Territory between 1985 and 2015 as it continued to spread the message of getting to zero in observance of World AIDS Day.

There were 68 reported cases between June 1985 and December 2007. Since then, there were nine new cases in 2008 and 2009 respectively; seven were reported in 2010, six in 2011, five in 2012, ten in 2013, and three in 2014 and 2015.

Family Health Coordinator, Ms. Noelene Levons said that getting

to zero means that as a part of the global community, the Territory is striving for zero new HIV infections, zero deaths from AIDS and zero stigma and discrimination for people living with HIV.

Ms. Levons said by following key messages, residents can significantly reduce their chances of new HIV infections.

She said, **“Know your status and all your sexual partners’ HIV status by getting tested, use a condom with every sexual encounter, and be faithful to one faithful partner. If you are HIV Positive, taking your**

medications daily as prescribed by your doctor will lessen the chances of passing the infection on to others while preventing AIDS and death.”

The Family Health Coordinator reiterated that everyone is at risk for HIV from birth until old age and regardless of one’s age, sexual preference or lifestyle, married or unmarried, one should get tested for HIV. She also encouraged persons to include HIV testing as well as tests for other STIs such as Herpes, Hepatitis B, Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), Syphilis, Gonorrhea and Cancroids as part of their annual health screenings.

LIFESTYLES

130. PROGRAMME LAUNCHED TO ADDRESS AT-RISK YOUTH

A Juvenile Intervention Programme to address the increase of violence among youth was launched by Government.

The programme titled A.V.O.I.D (Anti-Violence Ongoing Intervention Defense) was an intensive ten-week life skills workshop to provide young persons between ages 11 and 18 who were in need of psycho-educational support, with the necessary skills to solve problems,

make decisions and interact positively in social situations.

Deputy Secretary for the Ministry of Health and Social Development, Natalie Fahie-Smith said the objective was to reduce the risk levels of the youth and to increase the protective factors on the risk assessment such as drug and alcohol, school attendance, criminal referrals, anti-social behavior and suspensions and expulsions.

Mrs. Fahie-Smith said, **“Children will be referred into the programme once they meet the following criteria which are, if they are between the ages of 11 and 18, they are at risk, they have a pre-delinquent case and they agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the programme.”**

The programme was based on interactive classes, course materials and participants received a personalised certificate on completion. A Train the Trainer Course was also held and key individuals directly involved with the youth received certification to facilitate future A.V.O.I.D classes.



Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

LIFESTYLES



131. FATHERHOOD CAMPAIGN PROMOTES HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Fathers were encouraged to develop and maintain a healthy relationship with their children in a Fatherhood Campaign launched by the Office of Gender Affairs.

Gender Affairs Coordinator, Ms. Lorolie Connor said the campaign was necessary to highlight great fathers, encourage men to play a leading role in the lives of their children, promote healthy paternal relationships and empower men with the necessary knowledge and information to enable them to fulfill their roles as great fathers.

Ms. Connor said, **"This is our third year the office has featured great fathers as part of its campaign. We want to encourage fathers to be in their children's lives. There are some fathers that are very instrumental in raising their children and we want to see more of that. We want to see more men taking their role more seriously because their role is just as important as the mother's role."**

The campaign was derived from a Pan American Health Organisation initiative that seeks to promote the participation of fathers and caregivers in the lives of children.

132. MEN ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE IN ADDRESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Territory's men were at the forefront advocating for healthier relationships, in the 'Men Against Violence' campaign during Domestic Violence Awareness observance.

The goal was to highlight positive images of men in the community that will combat the negative stereotypes and notion that males are the only perpetrators in violent disputes, especially domestic violence.

Gender Affairs Coordinator, Ms. Lorolie Connor said, **"I know that we advocate for women survivors of violence but this**

year, we want to have a positive impact on change as we highlight men across the Virgin Islands to stand up against violence."

The process of choosing the male participants for the campaign was a collaborative effort between the Office of Gender Affairs and the Family Support Network.



133. CO-PARENTING SESSIONS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Parents who are no longer in an intimate relationship received assistance on parenting in a cohesive manner through a series of sessions.

The sessions assisted separated parents in parenting in a united manner that will benefit the child or children in the long run. Parents received information on dealing with the impact of separation, strategies to help families adjust to change, effective ways for communicating with each parent, visitation and how to keep children out of the middle of parental' conflict.

Community Development Officer, Ms. Barbara Smith said parents were also given, options for resolving family disputes, including mediation and counseling. Parents mandated by the courts to attend the sessions also learnt about how the child support guidelines are applied during the court process.



Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

LIFESTYLE CHANGES/ PROGRAMMES

133. MEN EMPOWERED AT “MAN CAVE” CONFERENCE

The Territory's men were centre stage in June following the hosting of the first of two “Man Cave” conferences. The sessions were organised by the Office of Gender Affairs and the Family Health Unit of the Ministry of Health and Social Development as part of activities to observe Men's Month.

Coordinator for Family Health Unit, Mrs. Noelene Clarke said the Cave is a place where men can come together and discuss issues that mainly affect them, where they can unwind, learn and share with the

hope of empowering each other to become better people.

Mrs. Clarke added, **“In this society there are a lot of great men who have values and behaviors that other men can model. We are depending on those men to step up, encourage and provide support to the ones that are falling behind.”**



134. SANDY LANE CENTRE REBRANDED TO BETTER SERVE THE HOMELESS

The Sandy Lane Centre was officially renamed Safe Haven Transitional Centre in April 2016 to provide better social support and stable housing to persons experiencing chronic homelessness.

The Mental Health Act passed in 2014 in the House of Assembly provided for the establishment of a Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Unit in the BVI Health Services Authority (BVIHSA). As a result, the drug treatment services offered by the Sandy Lane Centre were transferred to the BVIHSA. This decision was taken by Cabinet after reports by

the Community Mental Health Services indicated that a total of 22 persons had been identified as being homeless or potentially homeless and were in need of residential support.

Safe Haven Transitional Centre's Director, Mrs. Jacqueline Donovan said the goal is to assist chronically homeless individuals to develop the skills and resources for independent living.

Mrs. Donovan said, **"The focus of this restructured programme would be to assist clients to attain their optimal level of functioning through various**

therapeutic services and activities such as individual counseling and group sessions."

Group sessions offered at the centre include building healthy relationships, addiction and recovery, coping skills, anger management, employment readiness, healthy living, and home and gardening.



135. HEALTH MINISTRY ENDORSES SPORT FOR LIFE PROGRAMME



The Ministry of Health and Social Development is in full support of long term athletic development and physical literacy as part the Sport for Life programme.

The concept of Sports for Life is a movement to improve the quality of sport and physical activity which links sport, education, recreation and health, as well as aligns community and national programming.

A symposium was held to introduce the concept to a wide audience which included members from the Ministries of Education and Culture and Health and Social Development, and leaders of sporting federations. The objectives of the programme are to develop physical literacy, create clear pathways to excellence for elite athlete development and to assist everyone to be active for life.

Coordinator of Health Promotions Services and National Focal Point for Non-communicable Diseases Prevention, Ms. Ivy George said the Ministry of Health fully endorses the programme especially the physical literacy component which is an excellent population-based programme that targets all ages.

Sport for Life addresses the overarching system and structure of sport and physical activity, including the relationship between school sport, physical education, and organized sport at all levels, from policy to programme delivery.

Improving Overall Social Services Programmes & Healthcare

LIFESTYLE CHANGES/ PROGRAMMES

136. HEALTHY LIFESTYLE PROGRAMME BEGINS IN SCHOOLS

The Healthy Lifestyles School Intervention programme was launched following three weeks of baseline data collection in the Territory's primary schools.

The programme seeks to improve the health and academic performance of students by improving the diet and physical activity.

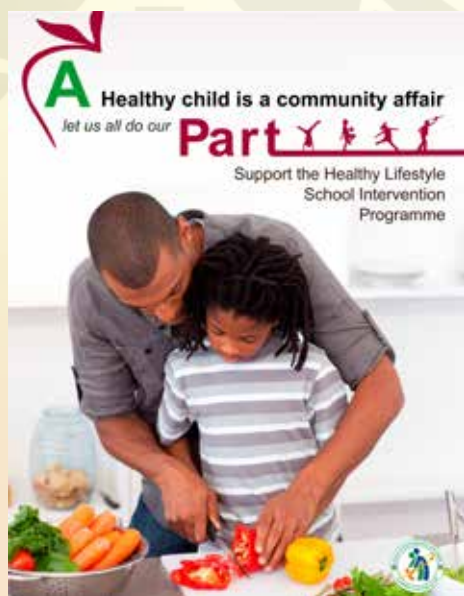
Coordinator for Health Promotion Services and National Focal Point for Non-Communicable Diseases, Ms. Ivy George said the data collection process provided vital information in the area of knowledge, physical assessments as well as fitness level of students.

Ms. George added that the team was comprised of retired nurses, nurses from the BVI Health Services Authority, Physical Education teachers and the staff of the Public Health Unit of the Ministry of Health and Social Development.

The Healthy Lifestyle School Intervention programme will be integrated within core subjects of math, science, language and physical education and will concentrate primarily on nutrition and physical activity.

Parents were also encouraged to learn more about the programme and support the intervention by assisting their children with the five behavioral changes of eating a variety of foods, eating breakfast daily, eating fruits and vegetables, reducing daily intake of fats, salts, and sugary snacks and drinks and engaging in a variety of physical activity.

The Healthy Lifestyle School Intervention Programme is designed to promote healthy eating and active living through nutrition and physical activity. The programme also supports school-wide promotional activities and supportive school, community and home environments.



137. AROUND THE WORLD IN 52 WEEKS CHALLENGE ISSUED

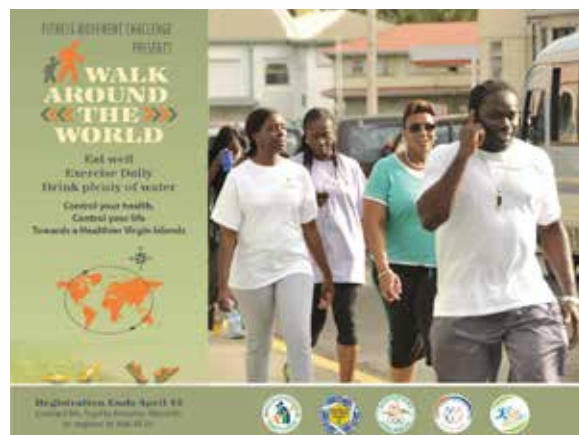
A new fitness challenge, “Around the World in 52 Weeks” was issued to encourage more sustained walking among groups and individuals.

The challenge is geared for ten-member groups to walk around the world for an estimated 24 million steps. Individuals will also take a Volcanic Relief Mission to Montserrat for a total of 2.6 million steps during the course of the challenge.

Programme Coordinator, Ms. Sophia Brewley-Massiah explained that this challenge combines physical activity

and healthy eating. She said participants will be required to increase their water intake every day.

Ms. Brewley-Massiah said, **“The challenge will also focus on improving eating habits by using the portion control plate when eating and adding more fruits and vegetables, and cutting back on sugary drinks.”**



The fitness challenge is a part of the VI Run/Walk programme which seeks to increase physical activity through widespread participant walking for adults between the ages of 25 to 64.

138. BVI COMMITTEE ENHANCES HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

In an effort to strengthen the development of occupational health and safety in the Territory, an Occupation Health and Safety Subcommittee was established under the Virgin Islands National Health and Wellness Advisory Council.

The committee was established to provide leadership, coordination, planning, training, policies and strategies that will improve the workplace environment and workforce population in the Territory.

Coordinator for Health Promotion Services and National Focal Point for Non Communicable Diseases, Ms. Ivy George said, **“The Occupation Health and Safety Subcommittee will deal with health, safety and well-being of workers who are the most vulnerable to occupational**

diseases and accidents. Through the committee, the development of occupational health, safety and wellbeing will be better coordinated and integrated across the various sectors.”

The subcommittee of the Virgin Islands National Health and Wellness Advisory Council, is comprised of representatives from both Government and private sector. The Chairman is Deputy Labour Commissioner Ms. Michelle Mclean; and the Deputy Chairman, is Ogier Practice Manager, Decoy Mactavious.

Other members are drawn from agencies such as BVI Teachers Union, Virgin Islands Human Resources Association, BVI Chamber of Commerce and Hotel Association, BVI Tourist Board, H. Lavity Stoutt

Community College, BVI Health Services Authority, BVI Social Security Board, Road Town Wholesale, and various Government departments.

The BVI Health and Wellness Advisory Council’s primary role is to give oversight of the implementation of the Government of the Virgin Islands’ ten-year Non-Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control strategy: “Towards a Healthy BVI”.



Strengthening the Educational Sector



MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE HONOURABLE MYRON V. WALWYN “A QUALITY EDUCATION REMAINS OUR PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY”

Over the past five years our public education system has gone through significant improvements. From the introduction of economically and culturally significant subjects such as Financial Services, Tourism, Civics and the like, to the requirement of all students to sit the Caribbean Examination Council CSEC assessments, the introduction of CAPE at Grade 12, the discontinuance of the Primary School Leaving Exams, to the change in nomenclature from class and forms to grades.

These improvements have not been easy for the Ministry to make, but we recognised after surveying what was happening in the rest of the world, looking at the availability of opportunities for our young people right here at home, their experiences on the job and at universities abroad, as well as the desperate need to better prepare our people to be

stakeholders in the development of the Virgin Islands, we maintain that those improvements are necessary. With the shift in the world's economy in seeking more competence based professionals, it is necessary to ensure that our students are competitive beyond the shores of the Virgin Islands. It is through their knowledge and skills that we as a Territory will find new industries, chart new courses for our development and remain competitive in our global economy. So as we continue our overall journey to create within our education system and in the lives of our students, a culture of excellence, this academic year, we will be guided by the theme, Care for Me, Teach Me, I will Learn as we endeavour to provide our young people an improved level of education, that is comparable with any modernised economy.

As with anything new, we understand that there will be teething pains, but we remain committed to open

dialogue with our community, our educators, our parents and our students so that together we can realise the best educational environment and opportunities for our young people on all of our islands.

We are seeking to further enhance our educators and education administrators across the Virgin Islands. We see them as the architects of our society. It is in their classrooms that our students develop ideas and discover their marks of identity. So we will continue to invest in the development of our leaders and ensure that our students meet a positive and productive environment in every classroom and in every school in the Virgin Islands.

Professional development sessions are held every term for all teachers and principals where they are exposed to the current trends in education. We have just completed another Summer professional

development programme where our teachers were exposed to sessions which included Planning for students who are different, Writing Individual Education Plans; Writing Valid Assessment Instruments; Using Assessment Data to provide effective feedback; Developing critical thinking in students; Teaching for Mastery learning; Leadership skills for initiating and sustaining change in education, school safety and Healthy schools among others.

Teachers for the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations, commonly known as CAPE subjects also went through training organized by the Caribbean Examinations Council. It was a rich experience from all accounts and as we make this investment in our educators I know we will see positive changes in our system.

We will continue to enhance the knowledge and skills of our educators to integrate the use of technology in the education process. Our teachers for years have yearned for the opportunity to be online while teaching students. An MOU signed with two of the Territory's telecommunications providers will provide unfettered and dedicated Internet access to our schools at a significantly increased speed of 100 megabytes. This opportunity is a significant step in upgrading the teaching and learning process. Not only will it make the teaching and learning process in schools more exciting, with our classrooms connected, we can fully utilize Promethean boards, provide a modern learning experience for students, have better access for teachers to utilize applications such as Power School and significantly, give students the opportunity to complete lessons and assignments,

as well as conduct research much faster while at school.

We continue to work at the Early Childhood level to establish a policy and strategic plan, as we believe that we must invest more in the foundation years in order to ensure that our students are on the right path.

We are currently in the infancy stage of our plans to develop a Teacher Education Institute at H. Lavity Stouff Community College, which will be responsible for training and providing professional development to all educators, including a certificate programme for our Early Childhood Instructors. We believe that once better trained, we will see students entering into the primary education system much better prepared and will have a stronger foundation on which to build, for their secondary and tertiary education.

In addition, we are working on improving our early intervention programme in all schools. With the restructuring of the ministry, the student support unit will have additional teachers assigned in this upcoming school year to serve as remedial teachers. An Intervention specialist has also been added to the Student Support Unit who will coordinate individual education plans for students. Our policy of inclusive education is one of priority as we believe that every child can succeed.

Key stage assessments were held in June for Grades Four and Six students. As a part of this Assessment, we intend to introduce the CXC Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA) and the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary

Level Competence Assessment as the Key Stage Assessments for Grades 6 and 9 respectively. These two assessments will give us a regional bar by which to gauge our students' readiness locally and regionally. I caution however, this is not a reintroduction of a common entrance examination, it is an assessment to determine where our students are in their development to help both teachers and parents understand how they need to continue working with the children to enable their success.

We have implemented the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) for those students in Grade 12 who were able to complete their CSEC Examinations in Grade 11 and they will complete Level 2 of CAPE at H. Lavity Stouff Community College. As stated earlier, training for our teachers took place during our summer training last week.

Those students who complete the requisite number of CAPE modules to qualify for higher education will have the opportunity to obtain a scholarship and move ahead to university without completing an Associate Degree at HLSCC.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is important that we encourage our children and work with them to become successful at the CXC Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) as this is our benchmark to ensure that our young people are ready and able to compete with their peers not only in the region but worldwide. CXC is an internationally accepted examining body. Five CSEC subjects inclusive of Mathematics and English can get your child in the door of a university.

Add the requisite CAPE subjects and

Strengthening the Educational Sector

they can get advanced placement. A foundation at the CSEC level goes a long way in ensuring better passes at HLSCC or any other college for an Associate Degree and thus a better chance of getting into university to complete a Bachelors Degree. We must hold our students to the highest standards so that they can be in a position to do well as they hone their careers through higher education.

As we get ready to implement Grade 12, I want to assure all that the Ministry has been working diligently to ensure the smooth transition of the Grade 12 students who will be

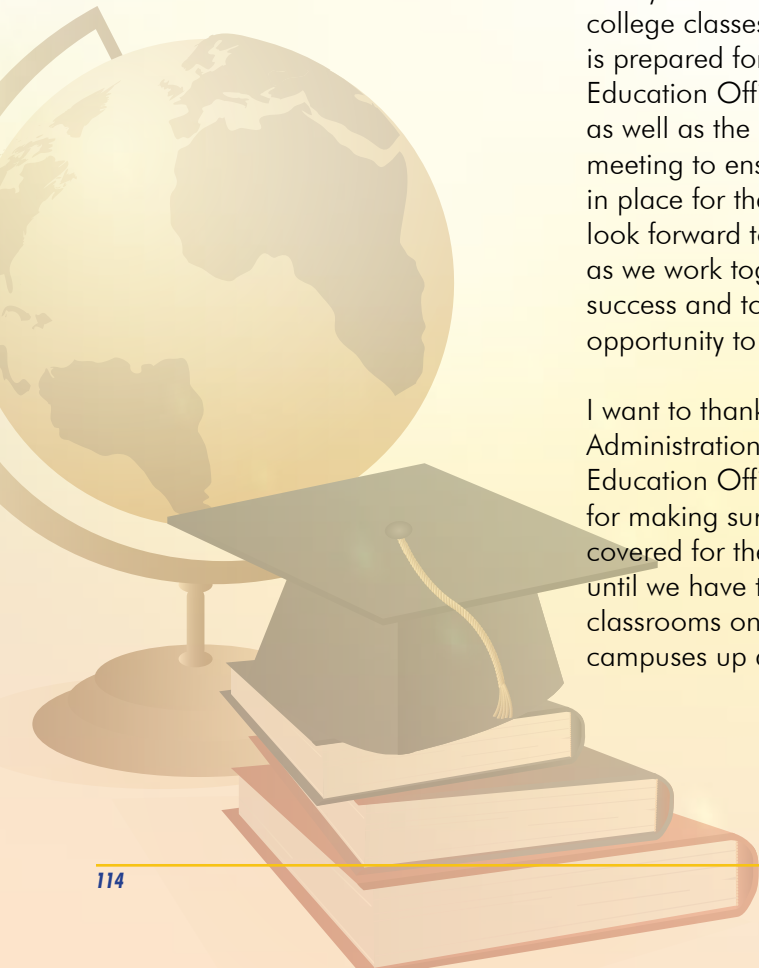
finishing their high school tenure at the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College campuses both for Elmore Stoutt High and the Bregado Flax Educational Centre. Students will be transported to and from the campuses on a daily basis as well as at the times when there are blocks for technical subjects which must be done at their regular school campus. Teachers along with Administrative staff are in place on the HLSCC campuses to ensure the smooth running of the timetable and that students are where they should be. Students with the opportunity to be dually enrolled will be involved in college classes and the College is prepared for them. The Chief Education Officer and HLSCC faculty as well as the Principals have been meeting to ensure that everything is in place for the start of classes. We look forward to the cooperation of all as we work together to make this a success and to give our students the opportunity to excel.

I want to thank the College's Administration and the Chief Education Officer and her team for making sure that all areas are covered for the smooth transition until we have the necessary classrooms on the high school campuses up and ready.

We were happy that we were able to carry out remedial works during the summer break at 95 percent of our schools in the Territory and we expect more works to be carried out during this first term. I take this opportunity to thank the Maintenance Manager, Mr Glenn Smith and his team and Ms Lorna Stevens who have been spearheading the work of school projects for their hard work.

The Virgin Islands School of Technical Studies (VISTS) has had another remarkable year and we are seeking to build on the interest in the school to provide opportunities for students. We will continue to work towards providing our students with opportunities to gain knowledge and skills in the fields of technical and vocational education as these skills are important in our community.

We have been in discussions with some of the owners of auto mechanic shops, beauty salons, construction companies, restaurants and hotels to afford students of VISTS the opportunity for practical training and to complete internships. The leveraging of these types of relationships with the business community, not only helps us as a Government to save money, but it also allows our students to work closely with the persons who drive various industries in our community, their potential employers. Out of such partnerships, our students will not only have practical working



experience, but also a foot in the door for job opportunities. I am calling on our community to be a part of this venture and help our students become the best they can be in their areas of specialization and thus build a cadre of persons who are critical to the development of the Virgin Islands.

We are also preparing the school to offer the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs) to ensure that our technical students have various pathways to qualify themselves for further education and or join the world of work.

As a result, our teachers at the Virgin Islands School of Technical Studies also received further training through the HEART Trust National Training Agency of Jamaica as well as having the school assessed for the offering of CVQs.

We at the Ministry have taken a major decision after consultation with the Principal and parents of the Jost Van Dyke community to end the continuation of Grades 7-8 and revert to having these students return to the Elmore Stoutt High School. To continue with Grades 7-8 in the primary school is to short-change those students as they did not have the opportunity to be taught by teachers with specialist training in each of the subject areas to be covered. These students will be attending the Elmore Stoutt High School starting this September.

I say thank you for your continued commitment to the task of preparing our young people. Your profession is a noble one. Principals and Teachers become our children's parents away from home, their counselors, nurses, friends, encouragers and so you have

an awesome task. It is not one to be taken lightly and I encourage you that even amidst the stresses, you are the beacon and much is expected of you. I thank you and ask you to stand strong amidst the storm as our young people and country depend on you.

Parents, I wish to thank you for being an active part of our education system, for taking the time to be with your children and ensuring their success. While this is true of the majority of our parents there are always a few who are not as diligent. I am appealing to all our parents to get even more involved in their children's school life. I ask you to instill in your child the virtues of manners and respect. Discipline starts at your home and it is very difficult, or impossible for teachers during school hours while delivering academic instructions to do what some of you fail to do at home.

As school is made up of students who come from the community, that school will be a reflection of the community and not necessarily the performance of the teachers. So as parents it is our responsibility to ensure that our children are on time for school, that they are properly dressed in their uniforms, that they bring their books and other necessary learning material, and that they complete their assignments. There is a role for all stakeholders to play in this journey towards excellence in our education system, part of our job as parents, is to hold our children to account.

I also want to take this opportunity to remind all parents as well, that you have a legal responsibility to ensure their children are in school. It is an offence if a parent neglects or refuses to place their child in a school.

According to the Education Act, legal proceedings can be taken against a parent or parents that do not ensure that their children are in school.

Now parents I understand the hard work that you must put in to provide for your household but we cannot neglect this important responsibility to educate our children. Without a proper education our children are being set up for a life of poverty and they will not be adequately equipped to make a meaningful contribution to the development of this country and live independent lives. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your children are in school. When I say parents, I mean both mother and father.

Our Truancy Officers have been doing a sterling job of getting our children into school or assisting where they have been involved in deviant behaviour. The Officers have been involved in patrolling, and observation, assessments, investigation, student counseling and parent counseling. However, they cannot do it alone and we need the parents to become more involved. It has become obvious that those students who have been involved in truancy from their primary years are carrying it over to their secondary years. I will be giving instructions to our Chief Education Officer, beginning this school year, to formally notify the Department of Public Prosecution of those parents that continually allow their child or children to be absent from school without valuable cause.

Let us all work together to build a culture of excellence in our education system and in the lives of our students that will see the Virgin Islands thrive in the 21st century

Strengthening the Educational Sector

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

139. PREMIER SMITH: 'INNOVATIVE EDUCATION HOLDS THE KEY TO OUR FUTURE'



Officials working in the education and culture sectors were urged to be good educational stewards, and create innovative learning environments that motivate students to think critically and collaborate effectively.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE told the educators that the Government of the Virgin Islands was working to ensure that all citizens, at every level, have an opportunity and the skills to reach their full potential and can contribute to the social and economic development of the Territory.

He said every person working within the education and culture sectors plays an integral role to ensure that the Government's vision for the educational development of the people of the Virgin Islands, and particularly our youth, is realised.

Premier Smith stated, **"We are implementing a 'standards-based' curriculum that focuses on a learner centered approach where lessons are designed to respond to individual learning needs. This means that as good educational stewards, we must create innovative learning environments that motivate our students to think critically, collaborate effectively, lead efficiently and be competitive."**

The Premier explained that this was important so that those students in the educational system will then be inclined to pursue areas today that can fill tomorrow's economic gaps in the community, and by extension, the world.

140. SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION IS #1 PRIORITY MINISTER WALWYN AFFIRMS

Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn has said that special needs education is number one on his ministry's agenda and that he expects to see some significant progress made in this area.

Honourable Walwyn said he was very pleased to see that the differently-abled students are being challenged and reiterated that Government is doing what is necessary to **"ensure that they have the opportunity to live a life of fullness, just like all of us"**.

Minister Walwyn applauded the initiative with the Vanguard School in Florida, where Government has committed to sending two or three persons on scholarship each year, and stated that he has seen a transformation with the students from BVI who are pursuing studies at the institution.



141. EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IS GOVERNMENT'S TOP PRIORITY

The Government continued with efforts at taking a futuristic approach to the development of the Territory's education sector.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE said that in order to maximise the potential of the Virgins Islands people, education must be afforded to them, from the cradle right on through adulthood, and even at that stage the Government cannot afford to rest on its laurels.

The Premier stated, **"The business of excellence, in which we are engaged, is the work of a lifetime and the work of generations. We will, therefore, stop at nothing to ensure that our educational system is par excellence, and provides for the needs of the BVI economy today and into the future"**.

Premier Smith outlined initiatives implemented by Government which he said included the Virgin Islands Youth Parliament that exposes future leaders to good governance and democracy; and the Emerging Fellows Award programme administered as a grant by the Ministry of Education and Culture on an annual basis to young people ages ten to 20 years old, that show exceptional promise in sports, the arts and/or academics.

Additionally, the BVI business community has partnered with the Government to offer students of the Virgin Islands School of Technical Studies (VIST) internships in order to develop strong training experiences. Premier Smith said there are approximately 288 students on scholarships in various universities and institutions of higher learning around the world, and that



Government will continue to forge important links through the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College to ensure high quality education and training opportunities for the people of the Virgin Islands.

Strengthening the Educational Sector

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

142. CXC CSEC RESULTS FOR 2015 RELEASED



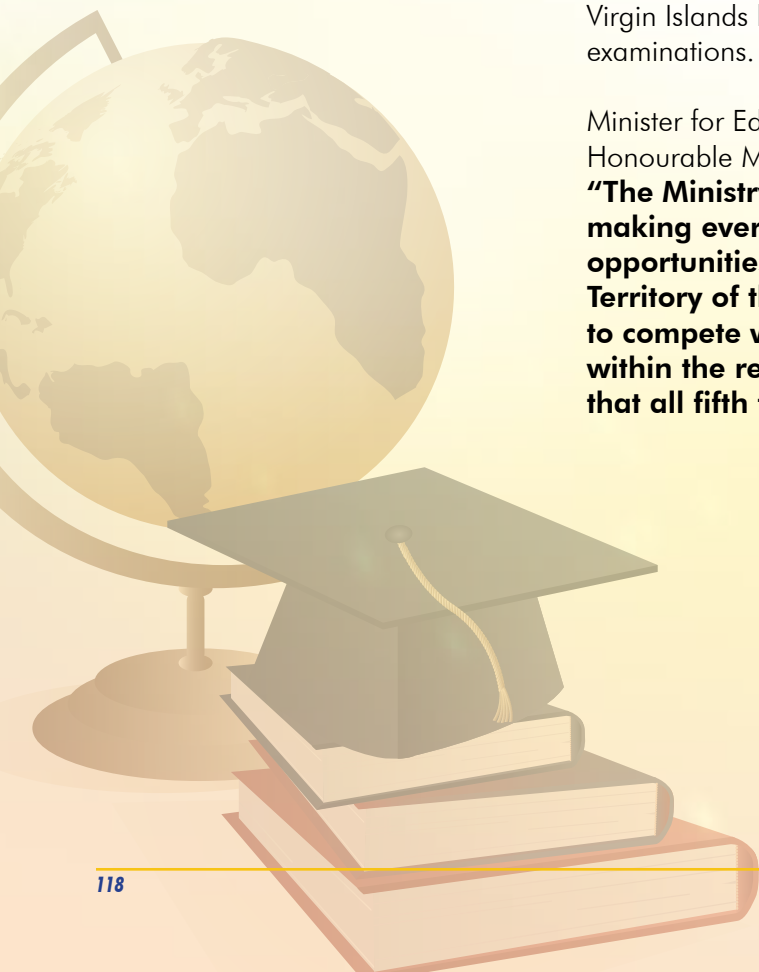
The Territory's secondary students were congratulated for their success in the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations.

The 2015 CXC CSEC results were released with 281 students from the three public and two private secondary schools in the Virgin Islands having wrote the examinations.

Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn said, **"The Ministry of Education is making every effort to provide opportunities for students of the Territory of the Virgin Islands to compete with other students within the region. Mandating that all fifth form students be**

exposed to writing CXC CSEC subject examinations was a great move on the part of the Ministry. I am positive that there is more potential in our students which we still need to tap into. Congratulations to all the successful candidates who once again have made this Territory proud."

Of the 281 candidates who were registered to write the examinations, across the Territory, two candidates received 11 passes each; three candidates received 10 passes each; five candidates received nine passes each; 20 candidates received eight passes each; 33 candidates received seven passes each; 49 candidates received six passes each; and 40 candidates with five passes each.



143. BVI'S ASHLEY PENN PLACES 10TH IN REGION FOR CXC CSEC

Elmore Stouff High School (ESHS) graduate Ashley Scarlette Penn, was placed on the CSEC Merit List for 2015, having tied for 10th place in the region in the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Physical Education and Sport General Examination.

Ms. Penn, 17 years old, graduated in June 2015 after being enrolled in the ESHS Liberal Arts programme. She joined the second cohort of graduates who have taken CSEC examinations since mandated in the 2013 to 2014 school year.

Minister for Education and Culture,
Honourable Myron V. Walwyn

congratulated Ms. Penn on her achievements.

He said, **"The Virgin Islands is again making its mark via our students and by extension, our educational institutions. Ms. Penn has made the entire Territory proud and I extend congratulations to her and her family on this major achievement."**

Acting Chief Education Officer, Mrs. Jillian Douglas Phillip said that Ms. Penn is an example of what hard work can achieve. She said this should also show students that doing



well in CXC CSEC examinations are not just recognised locally, but regionally and internationally.

144. MAYOWA WILLIAMS RECEIVES BVI READING COUNCIL LITERACY AWARD

Fourteen year old student Mayowa Williams was the recipient of the BVI Reading Council's (BVIRC) 2015 Literacy Award.

Mayowa, a student at Valley Day School in Virgin Gorda, was chosen after overcoming learning difficulties and challenges with reading.

The 2015 Literacy Award recipient shared her difficulties with reading stating, **"Reading and writing was hard for me, for years, I just couldn't do it. I started to believe that I could never be able to read."**

Mayowa said her teachers assisted with her reading for two hours every day and she now writes stories every weekend and shares them in class the following week. **"Everyone started to believe in me,"** she said, adding, **"And you know what – I believe in me too!"**

The BVI Reading Council was established as a non-profit, voluntary, professional organisation with a mandate to foster the love of reading throughout the Territory. The council works alongside the Ministry of Education and Culture to fulfill its mandate. The first BVIRC Literacy Award was given in 2002.



Strengthening the Educational Sector

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

145. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AT THE FOREFRONT OF WEEK OF ACTIVITIES

Educators and students joined the Ministry of Education and Culture in bringing education to the forefront in observance of Education Week 2016.

The theme was, *'Instructing Every Child through Inclusive Education'* with the subtheme, *'Education Includes Me'*.

Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn declared the week officially opened and said all children and people have the right to education.

The Minister said, **"As the stewards of our educational system, we must ensure that we provide an opportunity for all of our students**

to gain an education that will serve them in their overall development."

Honourable Walwyn called for stakeholders to work together to ensure that all schools can easily cater to the identities, languages, abilities, and talents of students. He also stressed the need for all to recognise and affirm an inclusive environment where the learning needs of students are addressed.

Education Week is an annual event in which the work and abilities of students, teachers, and the school in general, are highlighted.



146. OVER 253 FIFTH FORMERS MET ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

Two hundred and fifty three students from secondary schools across the Territory who wrote the 2015 School Leaving Examinations, successfully completed the academic requirements for graduation in 2015.

The Territory-wide graduating class included 83 honour students who achieved a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 to 3.9; and six high honour students who maintained a GPA of 4.0 to 4.3.

The requirements for graduation was amended in 2015 to include passes

in at least five subjects including Mathematics and English, and the completion of the National Citizen Service Programme, an initiative requiring students to complete 120 hours of community service.

In addition to the community service requirement, the ministry introduced the Top 10 Mathematics Students and Top 10 English Students lists as a part of its results report.

The top achiever in Mathematics was Rhevaun Leander Sprauve of the Elmore Stoutt High School, who

along with eight schoolmates was included in the Top 10 Mathematics Students, while the tenth student was from the BVI Seventh-day Adventist School.

Three of the Top 10 English students were from the Bregado Flax Educational Centre, three from the Elmore Stoutt High School, two from the St. George's Secondary School and one from the BVI Seventh-day Adventist School. The top achiever in English was Elmore Stoutt High School student, Creightanya Rose Brewley.



Honourable Walwyn congratulated the students on their academic achievements. **"I must offer special congratulations to the valedictorians and salutatorians who have excelled above and beyond"** he said, adding, **"The top student of the Territory hails from the BVI SDA School, with an overall percentage pass rate of 91.72%, followed closely by two students from the Elmore Stoutt High School with GPAs of 91.03% and 90.25%. Congratulations Zora Williams, Creightanya Brewley and Rhevaun Sprauve."**



Minister Walwyn encouraged unsuccessful students to keep striving for excellence and not see their failure as the end, but as a speed bump on the road of success. He urged the students to pause to reflect, regroup and renew their attitude.

Strengthening the Educational Sector

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

147. HLSCC RECEIVES ACCREDITATION

Following a rigorous, nine-year accreditation process, the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College (HLSCC) is now accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

The College was notified of the accreditation in July by the Commission, based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. Among the benefits of accreditation is the improvement of opportunities for students seeking to transfer to other institutions after completion of studies at HLSCC.

According to the Commission's standards, operating should

positively impact functional areas at the college, including teaching and learning; finance and operations; and student services, among other areas. The status also opens further doors for student and faculty exchanges, inter-institutional collaboration and generally enhances the College's reputation.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE said, **"I am very pleased that my Government's vision of education for the people of**

the Territory continues to be realised with the accreditation of the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College. This means new doors of academic opportunities are now open for everyone living and working in the Territory. It also positions the British Virgin Islands to be even more globally competitive in the educational arena as a recognised institute for learning and research."



148. TWO LOCAL SCHOOLS CERTIFIED AS SMART INSTITUTIONS



The British Virgin Islands (BVI) Seventh-day Adventist School and the Little Litehous Child Development Centre were the first two schools in the Territory to receive SMART School certification from the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The schools were presented with SMART School plaques by representatives of the DDM and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Culture, Dr. Marcia Potter. The DDM also certified the Ebenezer Thomas Primary School as a SAFE School.

Dr. Potter applauded the schools for undertaking the necessary requirements to become SAFE and SMART Schools and the DDM for taking a keen interest in ensuring that all schools in the Territory are certified by 2018.

Dr. Potter stated, **"I congratulate the schools for achieving this level of certification and encourage them to maintain their status and I encourage the Ebenezer Thomas Primary School to advance to the next level to obtain the SMART Schools certification."**

Deputy Director of the DDM, Evangeline Inniss-Springer praised the newly certified SAFE and SMART institutions for understanding the significance of ensuring that they provide a healthy, safe and green learning environment for children to thrive.

Nineteen schools throughout the Territory have achieved the SAFE School certification and are now eligible to advance to the SMART Schools certification level. These 19 schools are expected to be recertified by November of 2016.

149. ISABELLA MORRIS PRIMARY SCHOOL RECEIVES 200 BOOKS



The Isabella Morris Primary School was the recipient of over 200 books courtesy of the Rotary Club Sunrise of Road Town.

The books were added to the school's Library and Resource Centre to promote early literacy.

Principal, Mrs. Keturah Smith said that in November during the Advent Term of the 2015-2016 school year, a book drive was launched to refurbish the school's Library and Resource Centre in order to create a more pleasant,

informative and fun-filled learning experience for the students and to make the centre more useful and accessible to both students and staff.

The books were handed over to the school in a ceremony witnessed by Schools' Governance and Liaison Officer, Mr. Arthur Selwood, the Principal, staff, parents and students. Students recited poems, performed dramatisations, and sang songs that expressed their joy for reading and love of books.

Strengthening the Educational Sector

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

150. ESLYN HENLEY RICHIEZ LEARNING CENTRE'S HISTORY IN FOCUS

The 4th Annual Eslyn Henley Richiez Learning Centre Day was recognised in October 2015 with a focus on the school's history.

Formerly the Fort Charlotte Children's Centre, the school officially opened its doors on October 12, 1972 in an old Public Works Department store room at McNamara and caters to the educational needs of differently-abled students.

Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn said it was important to recognise the day as Government continues to make significant strides in special needs education.

Minister Walwyn said, **"We are continuing our work on developing our education system to concentrate on providing even more services for our differently-abled students to be truly included in our society, both academically and socially."**

Principal, Mrs. Vansittart Huggins said the school, like many great institutions, started from very humble beginnings.

She said that it was important back then, and it is even more important now, to provide the highest quality special education, while emphasising individual growth, self-esteem and respect for all. Mrs. Huggins added, **"When we recognise Eslyn Henley Richiez Learning Centre Day, we are also celebrating our special students. We are celebrating their talents and how much they have grown."**





151. ANTI-BULLYING AWARENESS VIDEO COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The Alexandrina Maduro Primary School and the Bregado Flax Educational Centre-Secondary Division were declared winners of an Anti-Bullying Awareness Video Competition in March 2016.

The competition was organised by the Ministry of Education and Culture through the Guidance and Counselling Unit for students to promote awareness to the problem of bullying, which is an aggressive and repeated behaviour that can be physical, verbal or relational. The aim was also to demonstrate how to resolve

challenging situations and to restore relationships.

Private and public school students were invited to create a visual depiction of the theme, 'Take a Stand, Lend a Hand' in a video format which were uploaded on the Government of the Virgin Islands' Youtube and Facebook pages.

The preliminary competition was judged based on the amount of 'likes' each primary and secondary school received via Facebook and the final judging was decided by the counsellors from the Guidance and Counselling Unit.

152. BVI SCHOOLS RALLY AGAINST BULLYING

Schools in the Virgin Islands are launching anti-bullying campaigns to end bullying in their own schools and the wider community.

The Alexandrina Maduro Primary School (AMPS) hosted a 'Run/Walk Against Bullying' in October 2016 from the school in Baugher's Bay to the Festival Grounds where presentations highlighted the importance of standing up against bullying.

Students and staff of the Ebenezer Thomas Primary School (ETPS) and Enid Scatliffe Pre-Primary School (ESPPS) marched against bullying in October.

Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn said, **"Bullying is a serious issue for students and youth in general. While it is the goal of the Ministry of Education and Culture to provide an environment that**

is most conducive to learning and enhancing critical thinking skills, bullying can frustrate the achievement of those objectives. It is important that we work together as a community to end bullying and do whatever is possible for our youth to ensure they receive a well-deserved education."

Honourable Walwyn continued, "I am

pleased that anti-bullying campaigns have been launched and the Ministry fully supports these initiatives."

Schools have planned various activities involving lessons, handouts, videos, songs and games throughout the year to focus on appropriate playground behaviour and sharing while fostering a caring and loving environment.



Strengthening the Educational Sector

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

153. GRADE 12 IMPLEMENTED IN BVI SECONDARY

September 5, 2016 marked history for Grade 12 students in the Virgin Islands, who are the first cohort since the implementation of the additional school year by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Grade 12 students of Elmore Stoutt High School (ESHS) and Bregado Flax Educational Centre (BFEC) Secondary Division are being accommodated at the H.L. Stoutt Community College (HLSCC) campuses on both Tortola and Virgin Gorda. For the 2016-2017 school year ESHS has 167 students enrolled, and BFEC Secondary has 42 students.

At the ESHS general assembly, Principal Mrs. Sandy Underhill told Grade 12 students, **"You will either be dually enrolled, taking both ESHS and HLSCC courses, or taking ESHS course only...We are very excited about this relationship between ESHS and HLSCC and believe that this bond will serve as a catalyst for strengthening relations between the college and all secondary schools in the Territory."**

She also explained various ongoing initiatives including improved safety in collaboration with the Department of Disaster Management and the

continued improvement regarding intervention strategies for discipline.

Principal Underhill also told the student body that ESHS will continue to build its public relations, improve community outreach, and enhance fundraising efforts including the Cheerleading Competition, ESHS Senior School Pageant, and Alumni Outreach.

Students are also expected to learn the Virgin Islands Territorial Pledge.





154. BRIGHTLY COLOURED SOCKS MARK WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

Teachers and students at the Eslyn Henley Richiez Learning Centre dressed in brightly coloured socks in March 2016, to raise awareness for Down syndrome.

World Down Syndrome Day was observed under the theme, "My Friends, My Community."

Principal, Mrs. Vansittart Huggins said that Down Syndrome International invited everyone across the world to wear socks to raise awareness of the congenital disorder.

Mrs. Huggins said, **"The school held a short ceremony and introduced the six students at the school with Down syndrome. These students were presented with brightly coloured socks and a personal post card."**

World Down Syndrome Day is a global awareness day which has been officially observed annually by the United Nations since 2012. The aim is to raise awareness of what the condition is, what it means to have it, and how people with Down syndrome play a vital role in our lives and communities.

TEACHER TRAINING

155. BVI PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS SHARPEN SKILLS

Public and private primary school teachers sharpened their skills at the 2015 Advent Term Teachers' Professional Development Training Days by participating in workshops focusing on inclusive education.

Acting Chief Education Officer, Mrs. Jillian Douglas Phillip said that it was mandated since 2013 that there should be two professional development days per term for educators to boost teachers' development and to ensure they are kept abreast of the latest educational practices.

Mrs. Douglas Phillip said, **"Within the ministry and teaching fraternities, we have identified a number of resource persons who have attained the qualifications and experience necessary to facilitate the sessions. The ministry continues to collaborate with other government departments and private agencies to assist with facilitating some of the sessions."**

The Teachers' Professional Development Training Days are an extension of the annual Summer Institute, which also focuses on sharpening teaching

skills. The institute began in the 1950's, and is usually held before the start of the school year.



Strengthening the Educational Sector

TEACHER TRAINING

156. TEACHERS RECEIVE TRAINING ON TECHNOLOGY IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

More than twenty teachers and education officers participated in a springboard Promethean Master Educator Training, as the Ministry of Education and Culture worked to implement information and communication technology throughout the education system.

The Promethean Master Educator training in the field of education allows for educators to effectively deliver a varied course catalog and guides them through an effective and valuable professional development experience. Promethean's professional development engages educators in professional learning that is guided by their needs and requirements to help them seamlessly

integrate technology into curriculum and instruction.

Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn said that technology allows learning to take place anytime and anywhere and infuses the classroom with rich, dynamic, interactive digital content.

Minister Walwyn said, **"The way that our children are learning has changed significantly and it is time that we change along with it. It is time that we instil 21st century skills and prepare every child to be ready for careers and the real world where technology is interminably present."**

A pilot Information Communication Technology programme was introduced in Grade 5 of eight primary schools to integrate technology in the everyday learning of students.

Since then, the Minister for Education and Culture has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with telecommunication providers, LIME, Digicel and CCT to provide internet access to all public schools in the Territory. An extension of the ICT programme was also done at all primary schools across the Territory.



157. TEACHERS MET TO STRATEGISE EXECUTION OF HEALTHY SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Teachers of Physical Education and Grades 2 and 3 strategised to find effective ways to implement the 'healthy lifestyle school intervention programme' in schools across the Territory.

The programme is a joint initiative by the Ministries of Education and Culture and Health and Social Development, and the Caribbean Public Health Association. It seeks to improve the health and academic performance among school aged children by improving their diet and physical activity patterns. This will be done by instilling the knowledge, skills and motivation needed for adopting healthy lifestyle behaviors.

activity accounts for two of the four modifiable behavioral risk factors that are common to the development of diabetes, high blood pressure and heart problems and some cancers. We feel that these two interventions will make the greatest impact. The other two risk factors are smoking and excessive alcohol use."



Coordinator for Health Promotion Services and national focal point for the Non-Communicable Diseases programme, Ms. Ivy George stated that there was an increase in the number of children suffering from childhood obesity in the Territory. The aim she said was to prevent childhood obesity in school age children through the implementation of the intervention programme designed to help to delay or prevent the onset of obesity and chronic non communicable diseases in the future.

Ms. George added, **"The reason we are concentrating on these two behaviors is because nutrition and physical**

The programme will be integrated within the core subjects of math, science, language and physical education and will concentrate on nutrition and physical activity. The course material, was developed by teachers, and will be taught in all public schools.

The Healthy Lifestyle School Intervention Programme is a five year initiative that will see the preparation of behavioral lessons for children in pre-primary and primary schools as Government forges towards a healthier Virgin Islands.



Strengthening the Educational Sector

TEACHER TRAINING

158. NEW WAY FORWARD FOR MATHEMATICS AT BREGADO FLAX PRIMARY

Teachers at the Bregado Flax Educational Centre-Primary Division implemented a more student-centered approach as it relates to mathematics instruction in classrooms.

Principal, Mr. Hilroy George said students are now seeing the subject as fun to learn and are gradually losing their fear for the subject and understanding how the concepts relate to real life situations.

Mr. George said a new accountability framework was recently developed and teachers are responsible for improving students' performance and utilising multiple modes of assessments.

He added, **"They are also accountable for careful planning, which should result in effective lesson deliveries. Gone are those days where the lessons were all about the teachers' involvement. Today it is about investigative learning, real life applications, differentiated instruction and so forth."**

The student-centred approaches at the primary school can be seen via various activities like shopping and restaurant games for students to see the significance of decimals. Other activities include using paper cut-outs and folding to learn fractions, dramatising to solve problems, using fruits and other goodies to teach the concept of greater than and less than and the number line to practice rounding numbers.



159. BVI CONTINUES TRAINING IN CARIBBEAN VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

In an effort to offer the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQ) in the British Virgin Islands, the Ministry of Education and Culture has continued to facilitate CVQ training.

CVQ, a competency based certification, is geared towards students in the technical and vocational areas. Teachers and professionals received training to be certified CVQ Facility Auditors, Assessors and Verifiers.

Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn said, **“We want to provide the best educational environment for the Territory’s students. This can only be possible with our renewed focus on the training of our educators, the architects of our education system, and our society.”**

In his 2016-2017 school year address, Honourable Walwyn stated: **“We are also preparing the [Virgin Islands School of Technical Studies] to offer the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications to ensure that our**

technical students have various pathways to qualify themselves for further education and or join the world of work.”

He further stated, **“With the shift in the world’s economy in seeking more competence based professionals, it is necessary to ensure that our students are competitive beyond the shores of the Virgin Islands. It is through their knowledge and skills that we as a Territory will find new industries, chart new courses for our development**

and remain competitive in our global economy.”

Acting Chief Education Officer Mrs. Connie George said, “The Caribbean Vocational Qualifications courses are the region’s standards and recognised internationally. With the recent training, the Virgin Islands is one step closer to offering CVQ courses.”

Seven persons received Facility Auditor training, 23 received Assessor training and nine received Verifier training.



Strengthening the Educational Sector

TEACHER TRAINING

160. BVI MAKING PROGRESS FOR PHYSICAL LITERACY IN SCHOOLS



Officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture are moving towards introducing Physical Literacy in Virgin Islands' schools in October 2015.

Representatives of the National Long Term Athletic Development (LTAD) and Physical Literacy Committee discussed the way forward in integrating Physical Literacy in the Territory's curriculum. Physical Literacy is the development of a 'movement vocabulary' of fundamental movement and sport skills.

Acting Chief Education Officer, Mrs. Connie George said, **"The Ministry of Education is in full support of integrating Physical Literacy from early childhood through secondary schools and work has already started with the Healthy School Committee which will be further strengthened with the Physical Literacy component."**

Regional Coordinator for LTAD and Physical Literacy in the Caribbean, Mr. Keith Joseph, said the BVI is taking the lead in the Caribbean. The Virgin Islands is one of six Caribbean territories that have been

selected by Caribbean Association of National Olympic Committees (CANOC) to benefit from the Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) Programme.

BVI National Coordinator for LTAD and Physical Literacy, Mrs. Angeleta Bernard told meeting attendees that she was very pleased with the outcome of the Physical Literacy Workshop that took place. Mrs. Bernard reported that there were 83 participants, and seven new physical literacy projects emerged as a result of the workshop.

The Physical Literacy Workshop provided training for both Physical Education and Liaison teachers, as part of the Healthy School Intervention Programme.

The workshop was organised through the collaborative efforts of the British Virgin Islands Olympic Committee, CS4L, Canadian Olympic Committee, CANOC, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Health and Social Development.

161. BVI AND CXC LAUNCH FINANCIAL SERVICES SYLLABUS



The Ministry of Education and Culture, in collaboration with the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) launched the Financial Services Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) Syllabus on November 3, 2016.

Acting Premier at the time, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick D. Pickering; Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn; Interim Executive Director of BVI Finance, Mrs. Lorna Smith, OBE; CXC Registrar, Mr. Glenroy Cumberbatch; and CXC Assistant Registrar, Dr. Annette Piper delivered remarks at the ceremony held at the Eileene L. Parsons Auditorium at the H. Laverty Stouff Community College.

Financial Services was introduced as a compulsory subject into the curriculum of Virgin Islands secondary schools in the latter part of 2012. Later, the Ministry of Education and Culture initiated discussions with CXC for the development of a Financial Services Syllabus at the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) level. With the help of technical experts from the Virgin Islands and around the region on the subject, the CAPE Financial Services Syllabus will be ready for examination in 2017.

162. BVI TEACHERS TRAINED TO DELIVER WORLD CLASS QUALITY EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education and Culture is enhancing teachers' skills through ongoing training for the Healthy School Intervention Programme, Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE).

Acting Chief Education Officer Mrs. Connie George said that the teachers are being equipped with the necessary tools to deliver world-class quality education.

In August 2016, 41 teachers received training for the Healthy School Programme, which was initially implemented for Grades 2 and 3 in 2015. The programme, geared towards promoting healthy lifestyle behaviours, has been introduced to Grades 4 and 5 for the 2016-2017 school year.

Trainers from the National Council on Technical and Vocational Education

and Training based in Jamaica were in the Territory and conducted CVQ 'Facility Auditor Training'.

Seven educators and industry experts completed the one-week course where they learned how to inspect and assess facilities to ensure they are up to standard and on par with students' learning needs. The technical facilities range from woodwork to auto body shops to kitchens.

In relation to CAPE, twelve educators from secondary and tertiary institutions were trained to facilitate the following coursework: Caribbean Studies, Integrated Mathematics, Entrepreneurship, Physics and Chemistry. Eight educators will soon receive training in Communication Studies, Biology and Performance Arts.

Strengthening the Educational Sector

FINANCE IN SCHOOL

163. BVI FORWARD COLLECTS DATA ON STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TO FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Financial Services Implementation Unit (FSIU) in partnership with the Ministry of Education, pressed ahead with plans to strengthen financial services education in the Territory to improve the future industry related skills of the BVI workforce.

The FSIU collected data at the secondary level through a survey administered at the Elmore Stoutt High School (ESHS) to better inform its work on the Building BVI Islander

Capability Initiative as part of the BVI Forward campaign.

The survey was designed to capture sample baseline data on the attitude and perspectives of Grade 11 students who have been exposed to at least one term of financial services education.

The activity sought to gather information on the overall value of the course to students, their understanding of key concepts, course delivery and the general

learning experience as well as their motivation to learn about financial services, among other areas.

The Business Department at the ESHS facilitated the actual administration of the survey. Principal, Mrs. Sandy Underhill said, **"As teachers and administrators, we are always grateful when things are moving forward. I am especially pleased with this partnership to reform the financial services curriculum and I commend the FSIU for doing the necessary work because as we all agree, the financial service industry is a pillar of the BVI economy."**

Following the completion of the survey and analysis of results, the FSIU hosted a Focus Group Discussion for business teachers, advisors and career counselors. The aim of this discussion was to gather data on the delivery of financial services course content as well as knowledge and comfort level on providing career advice related to the financial services industry.



164. FINANCIAL SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION UNIT REACHES OUT TO TEACHERS

The newly established Financial Services Implementation Unit (FSIU) engaged teachers in the British Virgin Islands as part of the BVI Forward campaign.

Director of the FSIU, Mr. Kedrick Malone identified potential areas of partnership when he met with principals of primary schools.

He told the educators that the idea was to help primary school students become aware of the financial

services industry and its importance to their daily lives. He said by opening up young minds to the industry, a seed will be planted that will grow over time.

He added that various methods to achieve this objective include field trips to law firms and trust companies, designing illustration and colouring books for this particular age groups and providing in-class presentations.

Mr. Malone also mentioned the possibility of identifying champions within the primary schools who can serve as ambassadors among their peers.

He said, **"As part of the BVI Forward campaign, we have identified a number of well-known and respected persons within the community whom we call champions and who will**

use their influence to promote awareness of the industry and the benefits to be derived by the average person. Through an essay competition, we were able to identify a teenage champion and it is our intention to similarly identify a younger spokesperson who will help to engage students at the primary level."

BVI Forward is a campaign designed to further strengthen the internationally recognised financial services sector in the BVI and increase the awareness and engagement of its population in the process. The campaign is part of efforts to build upon the successes of the financial services industry and encourage greater involvement by key stakeholders in ensuring its sustainable future.



Strengthening the Educational Sector

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



165. SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS GAIN EXPERIENCE THROUGH SHADOWING

Twelve secondary school students shadowed senior public officers to gain a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities as part of activities to observe Education Week 2016.

Acting Chief Education Officer, Mrs. Jillian Douglas-Phillip said the shadowing experience involved students observing senior public officers in the performance of their duties within their assigned department or ministry.

Mrs. Douglas-Phillip said, **“Students assisted public officers in completing daily tasks, participating in meetings, visiting job sites, being exposed to structural plans, meeting with departmental staff, drafting memoranda, and sending e-mails, among other tasks.”**

The main objective was to provide the students with an increased knowledge of an area of work or job role that they may be considering in the future. They were also expected to gain an understanding of the public service and build a network of contacts that will be invaluable when it is time for them to apply for future positions.



166. APPRENTICES TRAINED FOR THE WORKFORCE

The first cohort of participants in the Ministry of Education and Culture's Apprenticeship Programme moved into its sixth month in September 2015, and additional training was held for new and old cohorts.

The apprentices were trained in areas including interviewing and soft skills. Training was also provided in communication, customer service, and team building skills.

The programme is an ongoing initiative geared to help the youth of the Virgin Islands find employment through a coordinated effort involving business and industry. At the end of the six month apprenticeship period, a new cohort of young persons is selected.

The programme is open to any business or industry partner throughout the Territory who is willing to partner with the Ministry of Education and Culture to provide employment to young persons who meet the criteria for selection for a period of six months. During this time, the business pays half, and the government the other half of the monthly salary.

Through participation in the Apprenticeship Programme, employers are provided an opportunity to help prepare future workers, reduce their costs for recruitment and training and improve employee retention, while building a skilled, home grown work force.

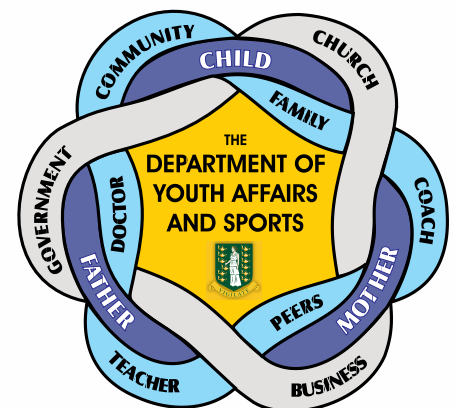


167. DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS DEBUTS NEW SPORTS AND YOUTH RADIO SHOW

The Department of Youth Affairs and Sports (DYAS) launched 'DYAS Voice', a bi-monthly radio programme geared towards informing the public on DYAS activities, along with featuring youth, sports and activities of various sporting and community youth organisations.

The radio show, hosted by Dean "The Sportsman" Greenaway, made its debut on ZBVI 780 AM, in October 2016. It airs on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. DYAS Voice features guests representing youth or sports, a sports calendar, history corner and call-in opportunities.

DYAS Assistant Director and the show's creator, Ms. Avelinda Freeman said, **"The department feels that it is important to be in contact with the community to provide them with timely and accurate information pertaining to sports and youth affairs, hear their views and to share their ideas on how we can improve in these areas. The department also plans to partner with the community to reach our goals."**



Strengthening the Educational Sector

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

168. JOST VAN DYKE SCHOOL INTRODUCES SERVICE AMBASSADORS

A Service Ambassador Programme was introduced to the students of the Jost Van Dyke School as the institution continued to build a positive school culture and soar to excellence.

Principal, Ms. Lavern Blyden said the Service Ambassador Programme emerged as a result of a module by the National College for Educational Leadership and is an opportunity for students to act as liaisons between the school and the community.

Ms. Blyden stated, **“The service ambassadors at the Jost Van Dyke School are a delightful collection of student greeters, who pleasantly welcome school visitors at the dock, at the school, and in the classrooms.”**

The ambassadors vary among all grade levels and include both male and female students. Once students have been selected as the school’s service ambassadors, they are trained to greet visitors warmly and to

accompany their guests on tours of the school as required.

Students are attired with a royal blue vest with the school logo displayed at the front left corner as part of their uniform. The ambassadors are also selected based on a specific criterion approved by the staff which includes - good behavior, regular attendance and good standing with their class work.



169. THIRTY-ONE STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO THE TVET APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

Thirty-one students who were inducted into the Technical/Vocational Education and Training Apprenticeship (TVET) Programme in September 2015 graduated having completed the nine month programme.

The programme is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Education and Culture and H. Lavity Stoutt Community College. Students had the opportunity to obtain a City and Guilds certification. Three extra sessions were also added in addition to the programme's one-day retreat.

Participants were expected to attend all classes and complete the mandatory core subjects of Mathematics and English Language course in an addition to their selected technical course.

Eight cohorts of students have completed the TVET Apprenticeship Programme since 2006. It continues to offer entry level professional training in air conditioning and refrigerating, motor vehicle management, culinary and restaurant skills, general office skills, computer application and woodwork to persons between the ages of 18 and 30 years old, who are currently unemployed.



170. FORUM EMPOWERS FEMALE STUDENTS TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL

Female students at the Bregado Flax Educational Centre in Virgin Gorda received the road map on how to become successful young women at an all-girls empowerment forum.

Over 50 students from the tenth and eleventh grades participated in the session and presentations were made on topics including Gender Equality and Parity; Having a Spiritual Relationship with God; Having High Self Esteem; Dynamics of Being in a Relationship at a Young Age; Sexuality; and Professional Development.

The session was a joint collaboration with the Rotaract Club of Virgin Gorda and The Office of Gender Affairs and was held in observance of International Women's Day in March 2016.

Gender Affairs Coordinator, Ms. Lorolie Connor said the aim was to reach the young people and encourage them to start thinking differently about what gender equality and gender parity are about.

Ms. Connor added, **"The young ladies appreciated the information and I know that the knowledge that was imparted will make a difference in their lives in the long run."**

International Women's Day is observed internationally on March 8 every year. This year's theme was, 'Pledge for Parity'. In different regions, the focus ranged from a general celebration of respect, appreciation and love towards women, to a celebration for women's economic, political and social achievements.

Strengthening the Educational Sector

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

171. VIRGIN ISLANDS YOUTH PARLIAMENT OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

The Virgin Islands Youth Parliament, established to create leadership skills and competencies in the Territory's youth, was officially launched in October 2015. The launch was a fulfillment of Government's promise to the young people of the Territory to ensure their involvement in the running of the Territory that they would ultimately inherit.

Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Walwyn said the National Youth Policy was officially handed over to the young people of the Virgin Islands in April which guides programmes and plans through a range of sectors; and will foster their development, participation, education, well-being, employment, and protection.

The Minister added, **"This policy seeks to ensure the active participation of our youth in the Territory's social, political, religious, and economic development. An integral part in ensuring that this policy reaches its objective is that we make provisions and opportunities for our young people to be engaged through a National Council, National Commission and our very own National**

Youth Parliament, to learn about the issues of our time and to add their voices and experiences to the decision-making processes of this country."

The official launch concluded with the First Session of the First House of the Virgin Islands Youth Parliament. Premier and Minister of Finance, Honourable Sonniel Pickering at that session, sought to resolve the motion to implement a Consumer Protection Agency to regulate prices and ensure best value for money for consumers in the Virgin Islands.

The Youth Parliament was established through the Virgin Islands National Youth Policy, passed in the House of Assembly in February 2015. It is expected to give the Territory's young people between the ages of 15 and 29 a unique opportunity to understand in theory and practice the important principles of governance, democracy and the rule of law, human rights, and to advocate different platforms and themes that impact young people.



172. BVI HOSTS 11TH REGIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Twenty-five young people from across the region participated in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's (CPA) annual Regional Youth Parliament at the H. Laverty Stoutt Community College.

The 11th Regional Youth Parliament was one of the events of the 40th Conference of the Caribbean, the Americas and the Atlantic Region of the CPA held in July 2016. The young people representing 14 countries debated the Motion:

- **WHEREAS** the participation of young people in any representative democracy is essential for the continued growth and strengthening of that democracy;

- **AND WHEREAS** the youth are an integral part of the future leadership of a Country and must therefore be engaged from an early age to ensure succession planning and continued development of that Country;
- **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Regional Youth Parliament agrees to engage future generations in representative democracy.

Speaker of the House of Assembly, Honourable Ingrid Moses-Scatliffe said that the CPA Youth Parliament was in recognition of the

importance of young people to the Commonwealth and its future and that it was hoped that this work will be further strengthened by the creation of the BVI National Youth Council.

She said with the establishment of the National Youth Policy, a mandate was also established for the creation of a National Youth Council, thereby forming the National Youth Parliament.



173. VIRGIN ISLANDS' YOUTH RECOGNISED FOR CARIBBEAN YOUTH DAY

The achievements of the Territory's youth were showcased in observation of Caribbean Youth Day.

Young persons who represented the Territory locally, regionally, or internationally in the field of music, education, entrepreneurship, marine, aviation, veterinary, sports, and law received recognition. Youth honoree profiles were featured highlighting their achievements and contributions through special almanac features presented on radio and other online media.

Assistant Director of the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Ms.

Avelinda Freeman said, **"Caribbean Youth Day is also an opportunity for the department to highlight the contributions of young persons to the Virgin Islands' community. It is also an opportunity to acknowledge the Virgin Islands' youth for their hard work and contribution to the development of the Territory."**

Caribbean Youth Day has celebrated the work and achievement of young people since 1985, and reinforced the contributions and roles of youth for the continued and sustainable development of our Territory.

The traditional celebration highlights the creative force of young people and draws attention to the current youth issues of the region. Additionally, this day reinforces young people's commitment to regional integration.



Strengthening the Educational Sector

CULTURE

TERRITORIAL PLEDGE

Virgin Islands Pledge

I pledge to my country, the Territory of the Virgin Islands, to encourage national pride and dignity, render patriotic service, promote justice for all, be true to God and remain dedicated to these Virgin Islands



174. TERRITORIAL PLEDGE COMPETITION

The Government of the Virgin Islands continued to work on building national pride among the youth and the population and launched a competition for the creation of a Territorial Pledge in February 2016.

This initiative was guided by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Minister, the Honourable Myron V. Walwyn announced during the sitting of the House of Assembly in December 2015, that the Government will be moving to institute a Territorial Pledge to build a nation of citizens and residents who understand and have a deep reverence of Virgin Islands heritage.

Minister Walwyn said, **"We will be launching a competition for a Territorial Pledge as we did with the Territorial Song and Territorial Wear."**

The Minister added, **"A woman who has committed her life to bringing out the best of Virgin Islands culture in business and the arts, Honourable Delores Christopher has willingly agreed to chair that committee and I am very grateful to her."**

The Ad-Hoc Committee also include committee members Mrs. Eileene L. Parsons, Mr. Theodore James, and Mrs. Brenda Lettsome-Tye.

175. DESTINEE CLINE HOISTED COMMONWEALTH FLAG



Ms. Destinee Cline, a Grade 4 student at the Ivan Dawson Primary School hoisted the Commonwealth Flag on March 14, 2016.

The Fly-a-Flag committee of the Deputy Governor's Office partnered with the Ivan Dawson Primary School to observe Commonwealth Day and the raising of the flag was a symbol of unity and public expression of the Territory's commitment to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Flag was also flown at the Central Administration Building.

Destinee was among Heads of State, Prime Ministers, Lord Mayors; sea, army and air cadets; charities and community groups; and many others around the world who raised more than 850 Commonwealth Flags on Commonwealth Day in a shared celebration of a family of nations that encompasses the globe.

His Excellency the Governor, Mr. John S. Duncan, OBE; Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn; Representative for the Second District, Honourable Melvin Turnbull; Principal of the Ivan Dawson Primary School, Mr. Theodore John; school officials, students and senior public officers were in attendance at the ceremony.

The Fly-a-Flag for the Commonwealth initiative, now in its third year, is catching the imagination of thousands of participants from all walks of life, inspiring them to join with others throughout the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Day 2016 was observed under the theme, "An Inclusive Commonwealth".

Strengthening the Educational Sector

CULTURE

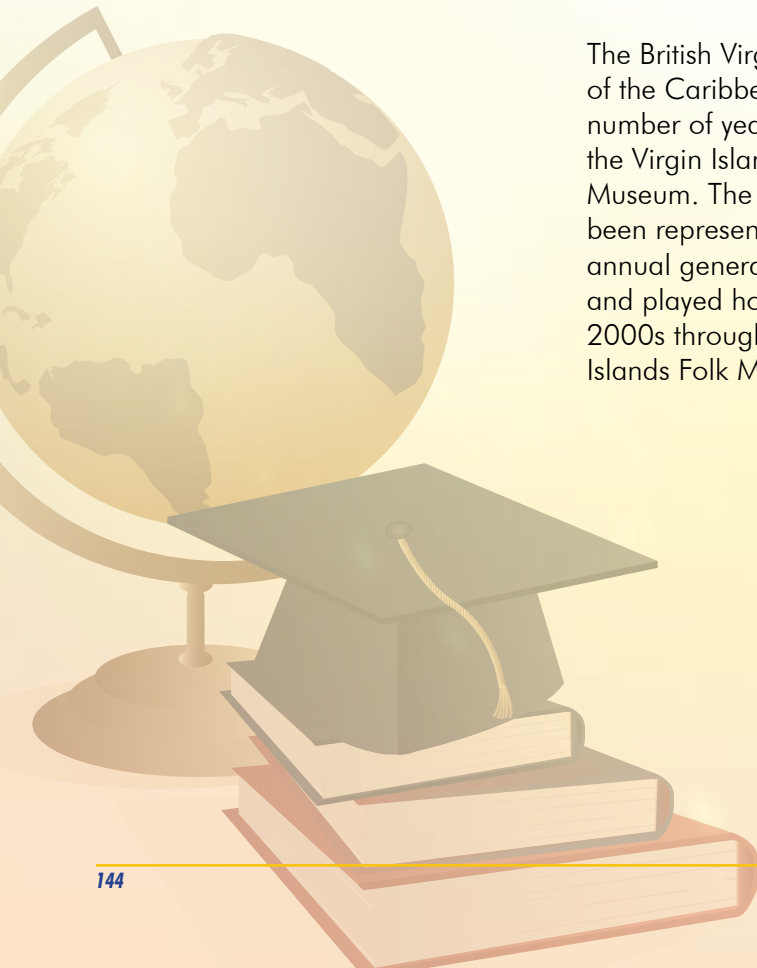
176. LUCE HODGE-SMITH APPOINTED VICE PRESIDENT OF MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

Director of Culture, Mrs. Luce Hodge-Smith is Vice President of the Museum Association of the Caribbean. The Museum Association of the Caribbean (MAC) was formed in 1987 to allow museums and related organisations and societies in the Caribbean to share experiences and skills.

The Association recognises the importance of museums as centres of conservation and preservation of natural and cultural patrimony and of common heritage, as well as the vital role they play in the conservation, education systems, scientific research and tourism of Caribbean States.

Mrs. Luce Hodge-Smith said, **"I am very moved to feel the confidence that members have shown towards me in electing me as the Vice President of the Museum Association of the Caribbean. For their generous endorsement by acclamation, I strive to maintain that confidence by doing my best to meet resolutely the continued objectives of the Association."**

The British Virgin Islands has been a member of the Museum Association of the Caribbean for a number of years through the Virgin Islands Folk Museum. The Territory has been represented at the annual general meeting and played host in the early 2000s through the Virgin Islands Folk Museum.



177. PURCELL COMMUNITY CENTRE RENAMED AFTER WARNER MATRIARCHS

The Purcell Community Centre was renamed and dedicated after community stalwarts, the late Christiana and Gertrude Warner, in recognition of their contribution to the Purcell Estate community.

Cabinet approved the decision to rename the centre after the women following the suggestion made in 2012 by the Sixth District Representative, Honourable Alvera Maduro Caines.

Honourable Caines in a proposal said Gertrude and her mother Christiana provided housing to the

less fortunate and had leased and sold land to the majority of the homeowners in Purcell Estate at affordable costs.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development undertook the initiative and invited comments from the public via the local media and churches on the proposal. A survey was also conducted in the Purcell Estate area that obtained direct feedback on the recommendation for the renaming.

The results revealed 100 percent of persons were in full agreement with the renaming of the community centre in honour of Gertrude and Christiana Warner. The re-naming and dedication ceremony was held in July 2015.



Strengthening the Educational Sector

CULTURE/BOOK LAUNCHES

178. BOOK DETAILING 150 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT 1834-1984 LAUNCHED

A book titled '150 Years of Achievement 1834-1984' and highlights the history and a cultural experience of the Virgin Islands and its people was launched in January 2016.

The book was first published in 1984 and was revised and compiled by local authors Mrs. Eileene L. Parsons and Mrs. Jennie Wheatley in 2015.

The book is a compilation of a complete record of the accomplishments of Virgin Islands people, the customs and things truly uniquely Virgin Islands.

Author, Mrs. Jennie Wheatley in its introduction, paid homage to Virgin Islands' foundation builders, educators, sea captains, house and boat builders, great sportsman, physicians, nurses, grannies, massagers, cooks and workers.

She said, **"These are the persons who passed on the torch which every generation must pass to the other. They passed it lit, burning brightly. May all who follow pass on a bright torch."**

Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn said, **"The book, like many of the others published by Mrs. Wheatley and Mrs. Parsons tell a unique Virgin Islands story through the compilation of works. It is most definitely a work of art that should be housed in the homes of Virgin Islanders, Belongers and visitors alike."**



179. THE BOOK 'WHO CHEATS MORE THAN A POLITICIAN' LAUNCHED

A book titled 'Who Cheats More Than A Politician? You Be the Judge' and focused on the lives of seven married couples, was launched in December 2015. The book was penned by local author, Mrs. Venoria Todman, based on a personal account of her marriage.

Mrs. Todman said the novel is filled with passion, laughter, and sorrow along with a focus on seven married couples and one fantasy couple. She added that her expectations are that there will be fewer instances of infidelity and divorce, marriages will thrive, and couples' faith will be renewed in their wedding vows 'to have and to hold, from this day forward.'

The Ministry of Education and Culture through the Department of Culture assisted with the book launch ceremony as it continues to promote Literary Arts in the Virgin Islands.



180. "A STORY TO TELL" LAUNCHED

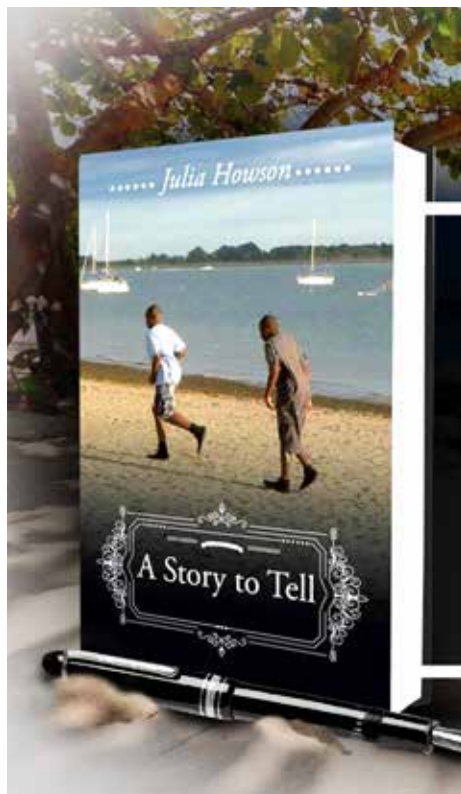
A juvenile nonfiction book destined to take readers to a place of becoming a survivor of truth was launched in March 2016.

The novel, titled 'A Story to Tell' was penned by local author, Ms. Julia Howson, based on lifetime confessions from the heart.

Ms. Howson said readers would be transported to places from loving, to hating, to forgiving and finally to becoming a survivor of the truth. The book's author is the mother of three sons. She was born in neighbouring St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands and grew up in the British Virgin Islands.

Ms. Howson said she started writing short stories and poems at the age of 12 and these stayed as a collection on a shelf for many years. She added that two years ago, with the help and encouragement from friends and family, she decided to take the art seriously by putting her words into a book and has now completed her first novel.

The book was launched through the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Education and Culture through the Department of Culture as it continued to promote Literary Arts in the Virgin Islands.



Protecting Our Borders and Enhancing Law, Order and Public Safety



PREMIER SMITH: 'HELP US TO KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE'

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE, appealed to residents to help keep the Virgin Islands safe by turning in illegal weapons during an amnesty instituted by the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force (RVIPF) in July 2015.

Residents were encouraged to use the opportunity, in light of increased prison terms, to hand over any prohibited weapons in their possession to the RVIPF, during the month-long Firearm and Offensive Weapons Amnesty.

The Premier said gun violence affects the BVI society at its core and destroys families, along with lifelong friendships, and hinders the Territory's journey on the road of progress. He also added that Government has delivered on its promise made in December 2014 to amend the Firearms and Air Guns Ordinance in the first quarter of 2015 to introduce mandatory penalties and gun control.

"We are resolved to keeping the BVI as safe and as crime-free as possible, with zero tolerance for gun crimes. We understand that managing criminal activity is important to building and shaping our Territory into a modern society. Criminal activity threatens our existence; it affects our reputation as a safe tourism destination; it affects our reputation as a stable financial services jurisdiction; and it affects our ability to safeguard our families and continue building our society", Premier Smith stated.



HONOURABLE PICKERING: I SUPPORT THE GUN AMNESTY CAMPAIGN

Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick D. Pickering echoed the call for the BVI community to participate in the Firearm and Offensive Weapons Amnesty.

Dr. Pickering said it was important that everyone do their part to ensure that the Virgin Islands remain safe and he appealed to persons to turn over any prohibited weapons in their possession to the Police.

"I support the gun amnesty campaign. It provides an avenue for mitigating gun related crimes. It is also a way and an opportunity for us to ensure that the Territory continues to be seen as the ideal place to live, work, visit and to do business. We are building a 'Great Little Nation' for generations to come", he added.



HONOURABLE VANTERPOOL: GUN AMNESTY IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY

Minister for Communications and Works, Honourable Mark Vanterpool expressed satisfaction with the direction the Government of the Virgin Islands took to strategically get the community involved in the fight against crime.

Minister Vanterpool said, **"One of things that we have to do is to be proactive in mitigating crimes. I am satisfied with the steps taken to involve the community in tackling the issue of illegal firearms. Gun amnesty is important and necessary and is a brilliant idea that I am certain will bear fruit, especially if we continue to reach out to the community in this amicable way."**

The amnesty was instituted by the Royal Virgin Islands Police for firearms and offensive weapons in July 2015. It was anticipated that persons would have used this opportunity to turn over any prohibited weapons in their possession to the police by July 30 with no questions asked.

Protecting Our Borders and Enhancing Law, Order and Public Safety

PUBLIC SAFETY

181. PAROLE BOARD TO CONSIDER PUBLIC'S SAFETY FIRST

The Parole Board of the Virgin Islands pledged to ensure the public's safety when deciding cases, by making informed decisions.

The Board's Chairman Mr. Denniston Fraser said that the Parole Board strongly believes in the parole process and is committed to the ethical, unbiased and professional performance of its duties and will continually weigh the risks while striving for excellence, justice and consistent fairness.

He said that above anything else, the impact of public safety is considered before reaching a decision relating to the parole of a prisoner. He said the Board will consider any and all reports connected to the case including reports from the prison, police, the Director of Public Prosecutions' Office, parole officer's report, and/or any medical information from the BVI Health Services Authority.

Mr. Fraser added, **"While weighing all of this information and before rendering a decision, the Board will also consider the need to maintain public confidence**

in the administration of justice, the nature of the circumstances related to the crime committed, the prisoner's criminal record, the prisoner's ability to adjust to society and possible effects on the victim or family of the victim if parole is granted."

Persons are encouraged to pay attention to the information campaign launched by the Ministry of Health and Social Development to learn more about the Parole Board, its functions and processes. Topics such as the mission of the Parole Board, how to apply for parole, considerations of the Board when reviewing parole applications and responsibilities of the parolee will be addressed.

The Parole Board is committed to the improvement of the quality of the criminal justice system on behalf of the citizens of the Virgin Islands and seeks to achieve this through a deep concern for public safety, consideration of the victims of the crime and the rehabilitation of offenders.

DID YOU KNOW

That the **Parole Board of the Virgin Islands** is now **fully functional** and **accepting applications** for parole?

Step 1
Eligible prisoners may personally or through their legal representative apply to the Parole Board at least 60 days before the parole hearing. The application can be collected from and submitted to the Superintendent of Prisons.

Step 2
The application is forwarded to the Parole Board of the Virgin Islands.

Step 3
A hearing is scheduled and the Parole Board considers the application and other relevant information.

Step 4
The Board's recommendations are submitted to the Governor.

Step 5
Once a final decision is made the Parole Board will notify the applicant of the decision. If parole is granted, the parolee will be released on license and will have to comply with the terms of the license.

Please Note:
A prisoner is eligible to be considered for parole if he/she has been serving a sentence of imprisonment for a period of at least four years has served at least one of half of his/her sentence and has completed an approved counseling or rehabilitation programme.

Contact Information
Virgin Islands Parole Board
Ministry of Health and Social Development
Central Administration Building
#111 Aden Drive
Road Town, Tortola VI01112
Tel: 284 - 488-2282
Fax: 488-4412

182. MOTOR VEHICLE OWNERS OFFERED 'SKIP THE TRIP' SERVICE

Individuals and businesses with multiple vehicles can now benefit from the Department of Motor Vehicles' "Skip the Trip" service. The new service allows persons who have five or more vehicles, to be inspected and licenced at their premises. This initiative, is a part of the department's modernisation process and is expected to relieve customers, such as vehicle rental agencies, from the stress and hassle of driving numerous vehicles to the Pockwood Pond office.

Commissioner, Mr. Kye Rymer said persons who are desirous of receiving this service are asked to schedule an appointment with the department,

and should have internet available for officers to set up their devices. Persons are also being informed that only cheques are accepted for this service.

The department has also changed the licence sticker and learner driver tests to better suit the needs of the modern consumer. Licence stickers are now synchronised with the expiration date of the insurance policy to ensure that customers receive the full benefit of their coverage. In addition, learner drivers are now allowed to use rear view mirrors and indicators for road and cone testing.



183. MOTORISTS ASKED TO PAY ATTENTION TO NEW LICENSING STICKER

Motorists were urged to pay attention to the expiration date on the new licensing sticker and remain compliant with the Road Traffic Act.

Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, Mr. Kye Rymer said each motor vehicle insurance expiry date is now the same as displayed on the licensing sticker, therefore, the expiration date is no longer at the end of the month.

Mr. Rymer stated that in order to be fully compliant, customers must visit the Department of Motor Vehicle with valid insurance of no less than three months and no more than one year, complete vehicle inspection and payment of the appropriate fees.

Persons are also reminded that operating a motor vehicle in the Territory that is not licensed or insured is committing an offense.



Protecting Our Borders and Enhancing Law, Order and Public Safety

PUBLIC SAFETY

184. TERRITORY SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM SUPPORTS SEARCH OPERATIONS



Members of the Territory's Search and Rescue Team (TSART) supported a successful land based search operation launched by the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force (RVIPF).

The team was commended by Deputy Commissioner of Police for its efforts and the progress being made to build search capacity among the team members.

"The team was called out last week to undertake search operations that uncovered skeletal remains behind a Main Street establishment. I am pleased that we now have access to a highly skilled team of men who can be immediately deployed to support these types of operations," The Deputy Commissioner said.

Director of the DDM, Sharleen Da Breo praised the work of the team adding, **"The outstanding**

work performed by TSART speaks volumes to the level of training they received in 2014 and 2015 which exposed members to international standards for search consideration and techniques, incident command system, rope rescue, communications, maps compasses and land navigation".

Ms. Da Breo said future training will be done to build on TSARTs skills and techniques and to eventually have the team ready for international certification.

TSART was formed in 2014 and is comprised of members from the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force (RVIPF) and the Virgin Islands Fire and Rescue Service who are expected to work in conjunction with voluntary organisations and individuals in executing their duties.

185. TERRITORIAL SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM ON THE PATH TO ACCREDITATION



Members of the Territorial Search and Rescue Team (TSART) participated in an Incident Command Systems Training programme organised through the Department of Disaster Management (DDM).

The Territorial Search and Rescue Team initiative was approved by Cabinet in 2014 to establish local capacity to respond to all types of search and rescue emergencies whether on land or at sea and to work in conjunction with voluntary organisations.

Training Officer at the DDM, Ms. Carishma Hicks said Cabinet approved the development of a specialised national Search and Rescue team, comprising of fifteen to twenty officers from the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force and the Virgin Islands Fire and Rescue Services. The team is to be trained, equipped and resourced according to international standards identified in the Capability Assessment Review report.

Ms. Hicks said, **"We began training the team in December**

of 2014 to apply basic navigation techniques and this year, members participated in a search and rescue exercise held on Anegada along with officers from the RFA Lyme Bay and community volunteers."

The DDM's training officer stated that the Territorial Search and Rescue Team is being developed in a manner so that it can be eligible for accreditation through the Urban Search and Rescue Standards developed by the Emergency Management Accreditation Programme (EMAP) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

She said the intention is also to have the team certified for regional and international deployment through the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, which is a global network of more than 80 countries and organisations endorsed by a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly.

Protecting Our Borders and Enhancing Law, Order and Public Safety

PUBLIC SAFETY

186. DDM FORMALISES PARTNERSHIP WITH ROTARY AND ROTARACT

The Government of the British Virgin Islands signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the five presidents from the Rotary and Rotaract Clubs solidifying the working relationship that currently exists between the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) and the Rotary family in the BVI.

The agreement will provide a formal space for these entities to work in disaster response and disaster risk reduction.

Acting Governor, Mrs. Inez V. Archibald, CBE signed on behalf of the Government of the British Virgin Islands and welcomed the opportunity of the Rotary family partnering with DDM to bring more support to the Territory's national disaster management programme, especially as September is considered to be the peak of the Hurricane Season.

Acting Governor Archibald said, **"At the core of the rotarian culture is a distinct point of view and approach which guides how each Rotarian operates. Partnering with the DDM and other non-governmental organization to establish disaster**

resilient SMART Communities throughout the Territory typifies this culture and demonstrates that Rotarians indeed see and think differently".

Through this MOU, the Rotary family and the DDM will work together to enhance community disaster resilience by improving the quality of life for

residents throughout the Territory; develop disaster risk reduction literacy and capacity building programmes as well as in disaster relief coordination and distribution efforts.

The signing signaled the beginning of an arrangement for Non-Governmental Organisations working in disaster risk management.



187. FIRE SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK ENDS WITH A NEW IRON MAN CROWNED

Fire Officer Cleve Davis was declared the 2015 Iron Man, after having completed the Endurance Drill/Challenge in nine minutes. Fire Officer #58 Keone Maduro was second in 9:24, while Fire Officer Romney Thomas placed third with a timing of 9:26.

Chief Fire Officer, Mr. Zebalon McLean, said the event was part of Fire Safety Awareness Week, and added, **"The event is formulated to test each firefighter's ability to endure certain obstacles that they may face during a real fire, and also to test their level of physical strength and conditioning."**

Challenges in the year's Endurance Drill, included hoisting a 60 pound container to the top of a three story building, pulling a 300+ pound sled for approximately 50 feet and dragging a 168 pound dummy to safety. Each team comprised of three officers.

Blue Watch team won the drill and copped the three top spots for the challenge while White Watch team won the overall inter-watch competition. Fire Safety Awareness Week 2015 was held under the theme "Fire and Smoke Kill; Stop Them Before They Start!"



188. EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM FORMED IN CANE GARDEN AND BREWERS BAY

Several residents from Cane Garden and Brewers Bay are now trained in a number of basic life support and rescue techniques.

The training programme was conducted by the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

Participants were trained in basic fire suppression, basic search and rescue, first aid and CPR, and disaster medical operations which can make a difference between life and death during emergencies.

The programme was funded under the UK Department for International Development through the British Virgin Islands Red Cross.

It also received support from the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) and the Virgin Islands Fire and Rescue Service.

Disaster Risk Reduction Officer at the BVI Red Cross Jason Lyons stated that the training was part of efforts to build the capacity of communities by ensuring that residents are better prepared to respond to emergency situations that may arise.

Mr. Lyons said, **"The reality is that during emergency situations or hazard impacts, the members of the community are usually the first on the scene and so it is absolutely critical that these individuals are knowledgeable**



of basic lifesaving techniques which they can apply to those in need until professionals arrive."

CERT training began in the BVI in 2012 and is an ongoing project.

Protecting Our Borders and Enhancing Law, Order and Public Safety

PUBLIC SAFETY

189. HURRICANE HUNTER VISITS BVI ON AWARENESS TOUR

The 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron known as the Hurricane Hunters of the Air Force Reserve and a team from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's Hurricane Centre made an inaugural visit to the Territory.

The team's visit was a part of the 2016 Caribbean Hurricane Awareness Tour 'CHAT'. The US Air Force WC-130J aircraft and crew arrived at the Terrence B. Lettsome

International Airport, Beef Island to a water salute welcome organised by the BVI Airports Authority.

Managing Director of the BVI Airports Authority, Mr. Denniston Fraser noted the significance of the visit to the Territory.

Mr. Fraser stated, **"The Hurricane Hunters arrived a day earlier than expected but this is a historic visit to the British Virgin**



Islands, not only because it is the first of its kind here but also because it signals the importance of hurricane preparedness. Added to this, is the fact that this visit allows our residents, especially those who toured the aircraft, an opportunity to truly appreciate how science and technology have evolved to improve the tracking and data collection capabilities of scientists and forecasters".

The CHAT is conducted annually prior to the start of the Atlantic Hurricane Season which lasts from June 1 to November 30. The aim is to increase public awareness and preparedness considering the serious threat of hurricanes to the Caribbean region during the hurricane season.



190. RECORD NUMBERS PARTICIPATE IN TSUNAMI EXERCISE

More than 4,600 persons in the British Virgin Islands (BVI) evacuated buildings and made their way to high points as part of the annual tsunami simulation exercise titled 'CARIBE WAVE 16' held in March 2016.

This year's figure surpassed that of 2015 when 4,200 persons participated in the exercise and is the highest number recorded since the simulation test began in 2009.

Messages to the public were communicated in various ways including text messaging from the local cellular providers, who came onboard last year through a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Disaster Management (DDM). This

arrangement allows the public to have access to several sources through which they can obtain alert and warning information. These included local radio and television stations, social media, websites, VHF radio systems and through SMART radios that can be bought through local suppliers. The sirens were used to alert persons who were outdoors to tune to one of these sources as quickly as possible.

CARIBE WAVE 16 provided an opportunity for the Territory to improve its tsunami warning system's effectiveness and awareness, maintain and promote tsunami preparedness for critical entities and test contingency plans.



191. EAST END/LONG LOOK FIRE STATION REOPENS

The East End/Long Look Fire Station was reopened and is back in operation after a 3 year closure.

Acting Chief Fire Officer, Mr. William Penn said the department was pleased to communicate this information and is now responding to calls for assistance within and from that station area.

He said, **"Human resources were always deployed to any reported emergency within the eastern area and was supported by additional resources from the central fire station of Road Town. Those civilians who found it moving to volunteer their time to the effort of community safety, we commend them for their support."**

The department continues to urge the community to be safe and in the event of an emergency they are to contact 999 or 911.



Protecting Our Borders and Enhancing Law, Order and Public Safety

PUBLIC SAFETY

192. VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE FORCE TO GET MORE OFFICERS AND TRAINING

The Government of the Virgin Islands reiterated its commitment to fully equip the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force (RVIPF) to efficiently achieve its mandate.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE, in August 2016, said this support will come in the form of the recruitment of additional officers to bring the force up to the full complement of officers to improve the efficiency of the service; strengthening of the current training programme; and the addition of vehicles to the current fleet.

The Premier commended the police officers for keeping the Territory safe and spoke of the importance of the officers' roles in helping to ensure that the British Virgin Islands can be promoted as an ideal place to live, work, visit and do business.

Premier Smith said, **"As the Premier and Minister of Finance, I am definitely in support of the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force and the other enforcement agencies like the Immigration and Customs Department in**

doing what they have to, and continuing to make the BVI even safer."

He noted that it is important that all agencies continue to work together in order to maintain the quality level of law and order experienced in the Virgin Islands.

His Excellency the Governor, Mr. John S. Duncan OBE, also commended the police force on their steadfast performance during a difficult period. He said he was confident that under the new leadership of Commissioner Matthews, the force had now turned the corner and with the support of the National Security Council, he looked forward to steadily improving results.

Commissioner, Mr. Michael Matthews, expressed his appreciation to the Government for its commitment to the Force.

The Commissioner said that Government's support will go toward recruiting an additional 30 officers; 20 of whom will be persons born or raised in the Territory and ten will be recruited from overseas to bring immediate needed skills to the force.

Government is also providing the funding for the training of the 20 new officers, and is also providing the means for purchasing four new vehicles to be added to the current fleet in the first instance, and three per year thereafter.



193. SWIM AREA MARKED FOR INCREASED SAFETY AT WHITE BAY

A swimming area has been demarcated at the White Bay beach on Jost Van Dyke to provide a safer swimming experience for visitors, residents and the wider British Virgin Islands community.

The markers for the swimming area of the beach were implemented after several public meetings with Jost Van Dyke residents and vendors who expressed concern for the safety of beach-goers and sea-bathers, who shared the same space as numerous boaters.

The public meetings were hosted by Representative for the Second District, Honourable Melvin “Mitch” Turnbull, along with representatives

from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour and the Department of Conservation and Fisheries.

Honourable Turnbull noted the concerns raised saying that White Bay is one of the most prestigious beaches in the world and the safety of visitors to the beach must be priority in order to preserve the ‘experience and feel’ of White Bay.

He said, **“Many residents have complained that visitors on the beach experience disruption from vessels and, most times, are too close to boaters in the area. It was an active decision to implement the swimming area which is being enforced to protect and prevent any serious incident from occurring as White Bay rises in popularity.”**

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour, Mr. Ronald Smith-Berkely said that safety at sea was very important and it is a part of the Ministry’s directives for the comprehensive overseeing of beaches.

He stated, **“We want to encourage safe boating and safe swimming at all our beaches, including White Bay. The markers will show boaters where they can go, how far they can go into the bay and will ensure that locals and tourists get an improved beach experience away from the loud noise of vessels, or the dangers of propellers and being struck, while in the water.”**



Protecting Our Borders and Enhancing Law, Order and Public Safety

PUBLIC SAFETY

194. GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS PARTNERSHIP IN PETROLEUM SAFETY

The Ministry of Communication and Works endorsed a three month campaign to promote petroleum and Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) safety in the Virgin Islands.

Minister for Communications and Works, Honourable Mark Vanterpool welcomed the initiative, which was a collaborative effort between the Department of Disaster Management and Sol Petroleum. He said it was a very important step in ensuring that safety procedures are being followed when persons are handling gasoline, diesel, LPG and other petroleum products.

Minister Vanterpool stated that these products are flammable and life threatening, yet many persons handle or are exposed on a daily basis and are not fully aware of the risks. He recalled several incidents including one on Anegada and two on Tortola and stated that the Virgin Islands are not untouched when it comes to persons sustaining injuries from the mishandling of petroleum products.

Honourable Vanterpool said, **"These accidents may not occur on a regular basis in our islands, but one injury is one too many and efforts are needed to ensure that we heighten the level of awareness and education among the population, about the proper use and transportation of these substances."**

The minister said his ministry supports the campaign as it reinforces the need for the swift approval of legislation, such as the Oil Discharge Prevention, Liability and Compensation Act.

The Act seeks to protect the BVI, its



people and natural resources, by enacting safety standards to address issues surrounding the transportation and spillage of petroleum products and hazardous materials. The legislation has gone through several rounds of consultation and is currently being prepared for Cabinet's approval.



195. BVI'S DISASTER MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION ADVANCED



Commanding Officer of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) Ship LYME BAY Captain Paul Minter declared that the Virgin Islands on-island response

facilities were fairly well advanced when his ship arrived in the Territory in August as part of a Caribbean familiarisation trip for the 2015 Atlantic Hurricane Season.

The ship is one of the Royal Navy's support vessels and was in the Territory on a familiarisation trip to assess the Territory's readiness in the event of a hurricane. Its main task during the hurricane season is to be available to any of the Overseas Territories islands in the event of an incident which requires support.

The officers participated in a search and rescue exercise on Anegada as part of the visit. The captain said that the RFA LYME BAY has the capacity to offer transport, generators, earth moving equipment, two field ambulances and hospitality facilities on board and can transport a maximum of 1,500 persons in the event of an emergency. It also has the ability to produce clean, fresh drinking water and make eight tons more water per day than what can be consumed, onboard.

196. BVI AND UK DISCUSS STRATEGIES TO TACKLE CROSS-BORDER CRIMES



Senior representatives from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, particularly the National Crime Agency (NCA) and Serious Fraud Office (SFO) visited the Territory to engage in further technical

discussions on strengthening the legal framework for cooperation to tackle cross-border financial crime in both jurisdictions.

The meetings were a follow up to sessions held in London in December 2015 at the Joint Ministerial Council, and in response to an invitation from Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE.

Discussions were also focused on how the respective 'law enforcement agencies' of both countries can further build upon their current good working relationship to provide an effective beneficial ownership regime.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the UK delegation to learn about the ongoing reform processes

that the Territory has embarked upon to strengthen the Territory's international cooperation practices.

Premier Smith stated, **"It was a constructive meeting and we now look forward to strengthening the partnership and cooperation between both governments."**

The Premier re-emphasised his Government's continued commitment to transparency as it seeks to solidify the Territory's financial services industry and said Government will continue to work closely with the local financial institutions and the UK to ensure that as a jurisdiction, the Territory remains a competitive, highly reputable and internationally respected international finance centre.

Protecting Our Borders and Enhancing Law, Order and Public Safety

PUBLIC SAFETY

197. DOG OWNERS ADVISED TO IMPLEMENT GOOD SAFETY HABITS

Owners of dogs in the Territory were reminded to implement good safety habits through registration of their pets, leashing, tying and fencing-in practices.

Chief Agricultural Officer, Mr. Bevin Braithwaite said the Department of

Agriculture is responsible for dogs and livestock and that it is important that owners know where their dogs are at all times.

Mr. Braithwaite stated, **"It is important to keep your pets safe at all times to prevent**

them from getting hurt or hurting someone or someone's property. Too often we have to hold dog owners responsible for killing and or maiming livestock and sometimes creating disruption in a community or neighbourhood."



Head of the Veterinary Division of the Department of Agriculture, Dr. Michael Montrose also appealed to persons to keep their dogs under control by using simple, consistent, practices such as leashing and fencing-in pet dogs. These methods he said can help to reserve Government resources and save the lives of humans and of many animals.

"Not only do we register and license dogs, we administer aid to animals who have endured dog attacks, and often we see how the two coincide," Dr.

Montrose added.

ENHANCING ORDER

198. CUSTOMS PROTECTING BORDERS AND SAFEGUARDING TOURISM

In an effort to enhance 'guest experience' and safeguard the yachting and tourism industries, Her Majesty's Customs Department is doing its part to protect the borders of the Virgin Islands.

According to the Commissioner of Customs, Mr. Wade Smith, the Customs Department has heightened vigilance and is requiring guests and visitors to the Virgin Islands who are traversing the Territorial waters to present themselves along with their Government issued travel documents and their belongings when entering the different ports of entry.

Commissioner Smith explained that this has been the law and it is important for the public, especially industry stakeholders to be reminded of this longstanding requirement. The Customs Department is working diligently to create a culture of compliance amongst all its industry stakeholders.

The Customs Department in collaboration with other Government

agencies in the Virgin Island have observed increased reprehensible activities in the Territorial waters and noncompliance with the Customs Management and Duty Act, Commercial Recreational Vessels Licensing Act 8 of 1992 and Cruising Permit Ordinance.

The Commissioner said this meant illegal entry in the Territory and a loss of revenue along with further violations of the rules and regulations of the Department of Trade Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs, Immigration and Labour departments.

"There are too many instances of noncompliance, and therefore, it was imperative to impose this procedure, which has been in place since the inception of Her Majesty's Customs Department", the Commissioner said.

He added, **"The primary objective of what we are doing here is to enhance travel experience, and**

at the same time provide a safe, reliable, efficient and seamless process of facilitating our tourists and guests throughout the Virgin Islands borders. This is our top priority."

Mr. Smith is recommending that agents and marine charter companies utilise the Sail Clear on-line service at www.sailclear.com by submitting pre-arrival notification to the Customs Department. Sail Clear is a service available for use by yachts and other pleasure craft operators who wish to submit their Customs declarations in the form of electronic notifications, prior to arrival.

This pre-arrival notification will allow for officers to use their discretion in carrying out necessary risk assessment procedures when agents and marine charter companies enter and update information about their vessel or vessels, crew and passengers.

199. ANCHORING IN CORAL REEFS IS ILLEGAL, OFFENDERS WILL BE FINED

Boaters and other seafarers were reminded that anchoring in or too close to coral reefs is illegal and persons caught doing so will be fined.

Acting Chief Conservation and Fisheries Officer, Kelvin Penn said that coral reefs are very important in the Virgin Islands and that the department had recently fined boaters for illegal anchoring.

Mr. Penn stated, **"People need to understand that coral reefs have always played an important role in the economic and cultural development of the islands. Reefs provide food and shelter to several marine species. Reefs are very important and boaters who are not diligent will be issued a fine up to \$1000 in accordance with the Virgin Islands Fisheries Act (1997)."**



Penn added that vessels groundings and anchors damage the reef, the Virgin Islands' fish stocks, the economy, and the Territory's tourism product.

Public Sector Reform

IMPROVING PROCESSES

200. CUSTOMS AUTOMATED PROCESSING SYSTEM GOES ONLINE

Commissioner of Her Majesty's Customs Mr. Wade Smith said that effective November 1, 2015 all trader declarations must be completed and submitted online through the Customs Automated Processing System (CAPS) as Her Majesty's Customs moves towards full automation.

Mr. Smith said that in addition to the Customs Automated Processing System going into effect, the department opened its first processing centre to conduct CAPS operations and trainings.

He said, **"Our aim is to collect accurate trade data, reduce the amount of time spent at a Customs port, expedite the clearance process of goods, efficiency in data mining for our stakeholders and risk profiling of non-compliant importers."**

"Additionally, knowing who importers of certain commodities are in the event of a product recall, having officers spend more time conducting inspections and less time doing clerical duties, utilising the International Commodity Coding System or Harmonized System, improving compliance and efficiency, and increasing

revenue collection are a few areas in which the system is addressing," Mr. Smith added.

All importers are required to register with the Customs Department to obtain a Trader Identification Number or to gain CAPS access as stations throughout the Territory will no longer be accepting manual or paper trader declarations. Once registered, brokers and agents will be issued a Trader Identification Number and access to the web account.



201. GOVERNMENT EMBARKS ON WORK PERMIT PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

The Department of Labour in collaboration with the Immigration Department implemented the new work permit processes within January 2017.

The departments in collaboration with the Financial Services Implementation Unit (FSIU) have explored ways to enhance their internal processes and are now actively taking steps to implement improvements in the delivery of work permits.

The first phase of improvements is heavily focused on the Department of Labour. Labour Commissioner, Mrs. Janice Rymer said in this first phase, the department is committed to delivering improved service through greater efficiency and better customer service.

“One of the immediate service improvements the public will benefit from is a reduction in the processing time for work permit applications. Our goal is to establish a four-week window for the processing of new permits and two weeks for renewals. This timeframe is inclusive of processing by both Labour and Immigration departments. Ultimately, we want to make the work permit application process as simple as possible, improve efficiency and enhance customer satisfaction,” she said.

The Labour Commissioner also noted that the process improvements will enable the department to focus more on other functions within its portfolio. There are plans afoot to establish



an electronic central job board and strengthen the placement unit which is responsible for building the capability of job-seekers in the BVI.

She said, **“The new processes will facilitate a better link between the departments and their respective ministries and will pave the way for more effective evidence-based policy making. It will also reduce administrative burden, thereby allowing more of the department’s resources to focus on employment services and helping locals to improve their skills and qualifications for available jobs.”**

The enhancement in service delivery by both departments is in keeping with the BVI Forward Initiative to Reform Immigration and Labour, which is spearheaded by Mr. Gerard Farara as the Initiative Sponsor, assigned by the Honourable Premier. FSIU’s Delivery Specialist, Ms.

Monique Hodge is the lead for this particular initiative. Ms. Hodge said, **“The FSIU facilitated the development of an Enhanced Service Model based on the recommendations of the Initiative Working Group and in consultation with both departments. We have since identified project leaders who are working with project teams to make the recommended changes a reality. Both departments are firmly committed to having the improved processes implemented by January 2017.”**

The Reform of Immigration and Labour is recognised as one of the most critical in the BVI Forward campaign. It is key to attracting and retaining the **necessary talent to support the financial services industry while at the same time developing the capability of BVI Islanders.**

Public Sector Reform

IMPROVING PROCESSES

202. BVI AIRPORTS AUTHORITY INTRODUCES ELECTRONIC TICKETING SYSTEM

A new parking lot electronic ticketing system is now fully operational at the Terrance B. Lettsome International Airport parking lot.

The system came into operation is expected to help in maintaining order and security, and improve safety for all international and local customers at the pick-up and drop-off site.

Managing Director Mr. Denniston Fraser said the ticket system includes a barrier and ticket dispenser at the entrance, an automated pay machine at the terminal, and a barrier and ticket verifier at the exit of the parking lot at the airport.

He added, **"After passing the entrance barrier and collecting your ticket, you will be charged an administrative fee of \$1.00. After spending 31 minutes at the terminal, a parking fee of an additional \$1.00 will be added, resulting in a \$2.00 charge. The rate goes up to \$3.00 at 61 minutes, \$4.00 at 121 minutes and so on and so forth."**

Mr. Fraser stated that after the initial ticket is collected, a person can drop off their passengers at the terminal or park in the parking lot. He added, **"When you are ready to leave, pay at the automated pay machine situated immediately outside of the terminal building. Upon payment you will receive a receipt. Then you will have 5 minutes to exit the airport without incurring any additional costs."**

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour, Mr. Ronald Smith Berkeley is encouraging customers to be patient as the BVIAA continues to improve the security system at the Terrance B. Lettsome International Airport for the betterment of the Territory.

The BVI Airports Authority has also closed off the exit road to Trellis Bay from the Terminal Building.



203. DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES MODERNISING EXAMINATIONS

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) instituted several upgrades to better serve the public and has modernised its Learner Driver examinations.

Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, Mr. Kye Rymer said the DMV recognised that times have changed and the department was modernising the testing procedures for the cone and road tests. He said the DMV met with the various driving schools in the Territory earlier in 2015 to ensure that schools were aware of the new rules being implemented.

Mr. Rymer said, **“We have looked at the process of the road skills test and realised that hardly ever after obtaining a driver’s license, do persons actually use their hand signals while**

operating the vehicle on the road ways.”

Mr. Rymer stated that during the testing process, students are now be given the option of using mirrors in the cone test and for parking. Students will be also allowed to use the indicators for signaling rather than using the hand signals.

While the use of mirrors is now allowed on the cone test, students are required to learn the skill of looking over the shoulder while in reverse as it is a skill that proves hand-eye coordination, as well as it is a skill known if mirrors are temporarily unavailable.

The new changes are now in effect, but students are still expected to know the hand signals as they will

be tested on this skill in the initial testing stage before proceeding on the road. After this initial stage of the test is complete, the student will have the liberty to use or not use the hand signals on the road.

Recent upgrades at the department also include a new vehicle license database and new registration stickers.



204. VIRGIN ISLANDS SHIPPING REGISTRY EMBARKS ON EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

The Virgin Islands Shipping Registry (VISR) embarked on a maritime safety educational campaign to sensitise residents on its responsibilities and functions within the Territory.

Acting Director Captain Raman Bala said the department believed that it was prudent for the public, especially the sea-faring community, to have a better understanding of its roles and responsibilities and maritime safety.

Captain Bala said the Government of the Virgin Islands enacted the international maritime laws such as the International Convention for the

Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the Marine Pollution Act (MARPOL) into local laws. He added that the department then ensures that all BVI maritime activities, particularly in relation to vessel registration and inspections comply with these laws.

VISR performs safety inspections for commercial vessels, certification for Boat Masters licenses, ship registrations and ship inspections following any boating accidents. The registry also markets the BVI at international boat shows as a Category One Red Ensign ship registration jurisdiction.



Public Sector Reform

IMPROVING PROCESSES

205. IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS CHANGES TAKE EFFECT SEPTEMBER 1

Changes made to the Immigration and Passport Regulations (Cap 130) in September 2016 that will allow the Chief Immigration Officer to grant a permit for persons to remain in the Territory for the purpose of seeking employment.

Persons who have been working in the Territory for five years and are changing employers will no longer be required to leave the Territory during the transitioning process.

Acting Chief Immigration Officer at the time, Mr. Ian Penn said that only persons who have worked in the Territory for a period of five years would ordinarily qualify. The cost for the permit to remain in the Territory while seeking further employment will be \$250 and only one application during a five year period will be considered.

Persons who have held entry permits for one to four years will not be considered unless they can demonstrate exceptional circumstances where the amendment may apply. These 'exceptional circumstances' would include persons who are married to a believer; persons with work permit exemption status; persons who have

been laid off because the employer is renovating; persons who have invested or contributed in some meaningful way to the Territory within the stated period; persons affected by poor working conditions, with supporting evidence provided; and persons who may have been subject to verbal and sexual abuse in the work place, with supporting evidence provided.

Exceptional circumstance will be handled on a case by case basis, and a thorough investigation will be conducted before a decision is made as to whether a person qualifies or disqualifies. All decisions will be communicated to the individual within one week from the date the matter was logged with the Immigration Department.

Also amended under Section 31 is change of status granting permission to spouses and dependents who have resided in the Territory for at least three years without being employed, to change their immigration status to seek employment. The cost for the change of status permit is \$250.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith,

OBE, who also holds the portfolio for immigration, brought the Bill for the amendments to the Immigration and Passport Ordinance (CAP. 130) on April 20, 2016 to the House of Assembly during the Eighth Sitting of the First Session of the Third House of Assembly.



206. DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS REBRANDED



The Trade and Consumer Affairs Department was renamed the Department of Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs in December 2015 as part of the Government of the Virgin Islands' commitment to provide a secure future for residents through local investment.

Following the approval of the name change by Cabinet, Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE stated that Government recognises that the economic success of the Territory is partially dependent on a successful and productive trade and investment sector, which is perceived and understood by key stakeholders in the Virgin Islands.

Premier Smith said based on the refocus of activities within the department, it was prudent business sense to include the Territory's investment strategy within the name, hence the rebranding of the organisation.

He added, **"This allows us to better position our Territory for increased growth and greater focus on international, regional and local investments."**

Government remains committed to creating an atmosphere where local businesses can develop and prosper, and the expanded role of the rebranded department is expected to help to strategically align the Virgin Islands to benefit from a globalised trading system through various local, regional and International Relationships.

207. INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT REBRANDED

A comprehensive rebranding campaign was launched by the Inland Revenue Department in September 2015 as part of ongoing efforts to educate the Territory's residents about the services offered by the department.

The rebranding campaign provided information on the various taxes, licences and fees collected; the due dates, as well as the importance of being up to date with payments.

"What we hoped to achieve was greater voluntary compliance through the education campaign that we launched. If persons are aware of what their responsibilities are when it comes to the different legislations that we administer,

we can only anticipate that voluntary compliance will increase and delinquency will be minimised," Deputy Commissioner Mr. Orris Thomas said.

A significant part of the campaign was the reveal of the department's new logo and new uniform for staff

members.

The Inland Revenue Department is responsible for the collection of numerous taxes, licences and fees. This department is headed by the Commissioner, and is comprised of units such as administration, assessment, collection, taxpayer services, valuation and audit.



Public Sector Reform

TRAINING

208. EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING PROGRAMME LAUNCHED

The Public Service now has a comprehensive long term approach to orient new and transferred appointees. The Employee Onboarding Programme was launched to offer a comprehensive and strategic approach to familiarise new public officers with the Public Service and their roles.

The Employee Onboarding Programme will support a new appointee's transition to the Public Service to ensure they have the necessary resources and support to perform effectively in their role.

Over 100 buddies from a wide cross-section of Government ministries and departments were commissioned and pinned with the 'Buddy Pin'.

Director of Human Resources Mrs. Michelle Donovan-Stevens said that there is a 20 percent movement of employees throughout the public service, on average, and stated that the Employee Onboarding Programme is very effective for employees who are transitioning between ministries, departments or on secondments.

Mrs. Donovan-Stevens said the programme will allow the 'buddy' to walk alongside the new public officer and provide clear instructions, directions and support for their individual benefit and the greater benefit of the public service. Retention and employee morale are also key components of the programme.



209. PUBLIC OFFICERS RECEIVE VITAL INSTRUCTION IN ERGONOMICS

Public Officers received vital instruction in ergonomics when the Health and Safety Unit of the Human Resources Department facilitated in-house training sessions in collaboration with Therapy Works.

Over 60 public officers participated in one of several hour-long training sessions held in September 2016. The sessions demonstrated how public officers can improve their office workstation ergonomically and improve their general health by reducing ailments related to poor ergonomic design of workstations.

Health and Safety Unit Coordinator, Mrs. Dawn Leonard said the training was a huge success and lauded the



partnership with Therapy Works.

She said, **“The training taught Public Officers how to better interact with their workstations with the goal of reducing stress and eliminating injuries and disorders associated with the overuse of muscles, bad**

posture, and repeated tasks.”

The Health and Safety Coordinator added that the training was offered based on the results of an audit conducted by the Health and Safety Unit of the Department of Human Resources.

210. BVI GOVERNMENT TRAINING TO SUPPORT SUCCESSION PLANNING

The Government of the Virgin Islands has purposefully developed training opportunities that support succession planning across the entire public service.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE, stated at the second annual Public Service Excellence Awards (PSEA) ceremony in September 2016 that it was the Government’s vision and mission to create a cadre of professionals that will lead the work force in the Virgin Islands.

The Premier said, **“It is for this reason, senior officers of every**

ministry and department, have a mandate to ensure that opportunities for further training and professional growth of every civil servant are afforded to them.”

The Premier said the PSEA ceremony was special as it followed the launch of the “One Government, One Public Service,” that embraces a culture of unity and “oneness”.

He encouraged the honourees to assist in shaping the younger generation of public officers to ensure a continued high quality of service, and professionalism as “One



Government”, and also enable effective succession planning.

Public Sector Reform

TRAINING

211. WATER AND SEWERAGE TECHNICIANS RECEIVE TRAINING

The Water and Sewerage Department invested in its workers by providing the necessary training to develop each technician's expertise and prepare them to become certified in their respective areas.

The technicians participated in a training session facilitated by the Caribbean Water and Sewerage Association Incorporated (CAWASA), mandated to provide training and resources to all Caribbean member states.

Director of Water and Sewerage Department, Mrs. Perline Scatliffe-Leonard said officers were provided with new and innovative techniques to help them handle the different issues faced as water and wastewater operators. She added that that overall, the department is aiming to have an improved, efficient and sustainable water distribution network.



212. PUBLIC OFFICERS TO LEARN TO MANAGE WORKPLACE STRESS

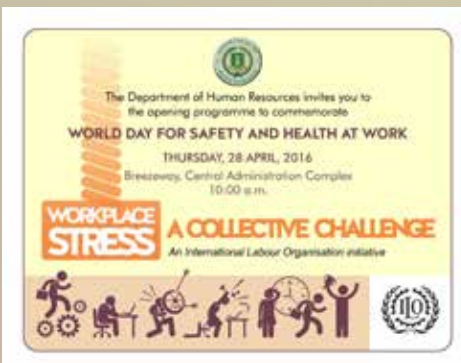
Public officers were given tips on how to manage workplace stress effectively as part of activities in observation of the World Day for Safety and Health at Work.

The officers attended four mini interactive seminars on Forgiveness,

Home and Work Balance, Nutrition and Stress and Exercise and Fitness.

Health and Safety Coordinator for the Public Service assigned to the Health and Safety Unit of the Department of Human Resources, Mrs. Dawn Leonard said, **"Workplace stress has gained global attention as an important topic to be addressed and I think this is a perfect opportunity to highlight its importance and potential impact on the workplace. I encourage all Public Officers to take the opportunity to participate in our interactive sessions as well as visit our exhibitors' booths."**

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) annually observes the World Day for Safety and Health at Work to promote the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases globally. The ILO states that it is an awareness-raising campaign intended to focus international attention on emerging trends in the field of occupational safety and health and to highlight the magnitude of work-related injuries, diseases and fatalities worldwide.



213. PAROLE OFFICERS RECEIVE TRAINING TO ENHANCE SOCIAL SKILLS

Parole and Probation Officers received training to enhance their social and cognitive skills in September 2016.

The aim was to improve service delivery to clients through the 'Thinking for a Change' (T4C) programme.

The T4C programme is a cognitive-behavioral curriculum developed by the National Institute of Corrections in Aurora, Colorado. The Social Development Department spearheaded the training that allowed for eight officers to complete course work inclusive of cognitive restructuring, social skills

development and development of problem-solving skills.

Officers who participated in the training included Parole and Probation, Intake, and Community Development units of the Social Development Department.

The overall goal of the training was geared to assist individuals to take control of their lives by taking control of their thinking.

Chief Social Development Officer, Mrs. Annie Malone Frett stated that an evidenced-based intervention programme will commence with a view towards making available,

and strengthening the necessary resources to rehabilitate offenders where possible.

The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Juliana Taymans, who is a co-author of the T4C programme.



214. BVI SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS OBSERVES USA ELECTIONS



Supervisor of Elections, Ms. Juliette Penn traveled to White Plains, New York to observe the United States of America General Elections 2016 which took place on November 8.

Ms. Penn said, **"I was able to learn new pointers from this experience and to apply them where necessary to our own election process in the Virgin Islands."**

As an observer of the elections, Ms. Penn had an opportunity to tour various polling stations. The invitation

to be an observer came from the Delian Project, a non-profit, non-governmental organisation dedicated to assist countries around the world to implement positive change in the democratic voting process through the application of technology.

Public Sector Reform

TRAINING

215. RISK OFFICERS TRAINED TO BETTER TREAT NEEDS OF OFFENDERS

Risk Officers from various agencies including Her Majesty's Prison, the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force and the Social Development Department engaged in efforts at improving service delivery, treatment and management of offenders in the Territory.

Chief Social Development Officer, Annie Malone-Frett said the goal was to bring a structured approach towards risk assessment among the relevant agencies and the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory tool was identified as the best way to improve the development of services and objectively measure changes in an offender's life situation. She said the tool can be utilised holistically in the treatment and management of offenders who are placed on probation, in prison or are released on parole.

Mrs. Malone Frett added, **"An offender's progress, or lack thereof, will be able to be evaluated as they progress through the system. Assessment and case management are key components to the concept of seamless delivery of**

services through the provision of a continuum of care, which is central to offender rehabilitation."

Participants were trained by the implementation of the inventory tool which provides structure for assessors to consider the likelihood of further offending; identifying an individual's needs; identifying responsivity issues; and identifying positive aspects or strengths.



LAW ENHANCEMENT



The Government of the Virgin Islands, through the Immigration Department, introduced a new customs and immigration form as part of efforts to reform the immigration and labour processes, particularly as it relates to work permits.

Cabinet approved that the Customs Declaration Form and the Immigration

216. NEW IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS FORM INTRODUCED

Entry/Departure Card be combined into one form to streamline the entry process and that the proposed form be adopted as the official form for entry into the Virgin Islands.

Acting Chief Immigration Officer, Mr. Ian Penn said, **"We are continuing to make great strides with the reform of our immigration laws and policies. The introduction of our new immigration form is a step in the right direction to ensure that we deliver a great first impression to our visitors on entry to the Territory."**

The new immigration form is said to be a progressive move by the

Immigration Department in the modernising of its data collection of visitors to the Territory. It includes a departure record with a duplicate carbon copy added to minimise the need to replicate information. Changes were also made to the layout to allow ease of flow when completing the form.

Previously, each visitor or resident was required to complete an Embarkation/Disembarkation Card or a landing card. Additionally, each family entering the Territory was also required to complete a Customs Declaration Form in accordance with section 87 of the Customs Management and Duties, Act 2010.

217. CHANGES INTRODUCED TO IMMIGRATION AND PASSPORT ORDINANCE (CAP.130)



The Government of the Virgin Islands, through the Immigration Department, has introduced changes to the Immigration and Passport Ordinance (Cap 130) to allow the Chief Immigration Officer to grant permission to persons to remain in the Territory for the purpose of seeking employment.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE, who also holds the portfolio for immigration, brought the Bill to the House of Assembly during the Eighth Sitting of the First Session of the Third House of Assembly in April. He explained that the amendments were necessary to reduce any detrimental social effects and unnecessary financial hardships on families, businesses and the economy.

Explaining the changes, Acting Chief Immigration Officer, Mr. Ian Penn stated, **"The amendments to the Immigration and Passport Ordinance (Cap. 130) allow persons who are changing employers to obtain permission from the Chief Immigration**

Officer to remain in the Territory and seek further employment."

Mr. Penn added that only persons who have worked in the Territory for a period of five years would ordinarily qualify. Persons who have held entry permits for one to four years will not be considered unless they can demonstrate exceptional circumstances where the amendment may apply. Also amended under Section 31 is change of status, granting permission to persons who have resided in the Territory without being employed for at least three years, to change their immigration status to seek employment. These changes are likely to be subject to an increase in fees.

Public Sector Reform

LAW ENHANCEMENT

218. BVI CONSIDERS USE OF ANKLE MONITORING BRACELETS TO MANAGE OFFENDERS

The Social Development Department has partnered with Comprehensive Security Solutions Incorporated to develop an Electronic Monitoring Pilot Programme in the British Virgin Islands.

The Electronic Monitoring Pilot Programme will include the use of an ankle monitoring bracelet that will allow enhanced supervision and monitoring of offenders. This pilot programme will play an integral part in a national crime reduction strategy, and offer significant cost saving

benefits to the Government of the Virgin Islands as compared to the cost of incarceration. In addition, it will offer adequate and accessible options to support offender management by the Probation and Parole Division within the Social Development Department.

Deputy Secretary within the Ministry of Health and Social Development, Ms. Tasha Bertie said the Ministry has realised that there is a problem in addressing the present state of offenders in the Territory.

She stated, **“The issue of the prison population and juveniles in conflict with the law is a pressing concern for the Territory. We must be able to address this issue without infringing on the human rights of these individuals. The development of this partnership is one of the avenues we are exploring, with hopes that it will address some of these concerns.”**

Director of Comprehensive Security Solution Incorporated, Mr. Ryan Clarke presented to the key stakeholders from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force, Her Majesty’s Prison, probation and parole officers within the Social Development Department, as well as officials from the Ministry of Health.



219. PUBLIC MEETING DISCUSSED CHANGES IN BVI MARITIME LAW

Mariners, ship and, yacht owners and those interested in maritime affairs met to discuss the Maritime Labour Convention 2006.

The seafaring community was informed on how the Convention 2006 will affect them individually, as the Government of the Virgin Islands moved toward conforming and adopting the Marine Labour Convention 2006 into local maritime laws.

This convention focuses on seafarer's living and working conditions onboard ships and is also known as the Seafarers' Bill of Rights. It came into force internationally in August 2014.

The Virgin Islands is required to ratify this Convention into Virgin Islands law as an imminent Category 1 Red Ensign Group of the United Kingdom. The Convention

also embodies all modern standards of international maritime labor conventions into one single coherent instrument and it will enforce international maritime labour standards on certain types of vessels in the Territory.



220. SECURITY ENHANCED WITH COMPLETION OF WEST END POLICE STATION



Residents on the western end of Tortola are receiving essential law-enforcement services and a more visible police presence following the completion of works on the West End Police station.

The works were completed on the station including the replacement of windows, installation of a new security and fire system, the renovation and installation of interior finishes, painting to the interior and exterior areas, the removal and installation of an air conditioning system, plumbing and electrical works. The project had a cost of \$318,000.000 and was completed over a nine month period.

The refurbishment of the West End Police Station is in keeping with Government's mandate to provide protection to residents while improving the infrastructure of its facilities.

The station was previously closed to undergo major repairs to the facility. As part of the extensive structural works, a new roof was installed and renovations were made to the office accommodations and police barracks.

The project was executed by the Project Support Services Unit of the Ministry of Finance under the guidance of Project Manager Duane Fraites and Project Coordinator Mrs. Barbara Pickering-St. Rose.

Public Sector Reform

RECOGNITION

221. PUBLIC OFFICERS RECOGNISED FOR PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Forty one public officers who portrayed exceptional performance are the recipients of the 2016 Public Service Excellence Award.

The officers were awarded at a gala prize-giving ceremony in September 2016 at the Eileene L. Parsons Auditorium, H. Lavity Stoutt Commuity College Campus.

His Excellency the Governor John S. Duncan, OBE congratulated the winners and the nominees for the second annual event. He stated that with the continued support of Government and the hard working men and women of the public

service, the award programme will continue to be meaningful and successful.

Awardees were recognised in the seven categories. They are Excellence in Leadership, Administrative Support, Organisational Development, Personal and Professional Development, Scientific/Engineering and Technological Achievements, Volunteering, Heroism and Service to Clients.

Premier of the Virgin Islands, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE; Acting Permanent Secretary in



the Deputy Governor's Office, Mrs. Carolyn Stoutt Igwe and Director of Human Resources, Mrs. Michelle Donovan Stevens also delivered congratulatory remarks.

Mr. Meade Malone, the Managing Director of MWM Global Holdings Ltd. delivered the keynote address and encouraged all present to focus on excellence.

222. OFFICERS RECOGNISED FOR PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE



Twenty-three public officers were recognised for their exceptional performance when the Government of the Virgin Islands hosted its inaugural Public Service Excellence Award Ceremony.

Awardees were recognised in the categories of Excellence in Leadership, Administrative Support, Organisational Development, Personal and Professional Development, Scientific/Engineering and Technical Achievements and Service to Clients.

The Public Service Excellence Award aimed to improve employee morale and award exceptional performance across all levels of Government.

The initiative featured an open

nomination process and included the recognition of senior management including permanent secretaries and heads of department, in addition to support staff and middle management for various awards. Each Ministerial Selection Committee selected their representative in the various awards categories. The programme was launched by His Excellency the Governor.

223. CIVIL REGISTRY AND PASSPORT OFFICE CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY



The Civil Registry and Passport Office observed their 10th Anniversary in 2015 under the theme, *"Celebrating 10 Years of Innovation, Technology and Enhanced Service Delivery."*

The celebrations were designed to highlight the series of achievements and success in transforming and reforming the office, since its establishment in 2005. The celebrations also educated the public on the roles, responsibilities and processes of the office as part of its public awareness campaign.

Registrar General, Mrs. Stephanie Benn said she was pleased with the direction and growth of the office over the years, having served in the post for the past eight years. She credited the implementation of the online database titled 'Civil Registry Information System' (CRIS), as the platform and catalyst of change to the department.

CRIS, is an automated system developed to address the needs of a modern Civil Registry. It uses technology to provide new services to the public, while simultaneously reducing Registry workload, increasing efficiency, and improving data accuracy and audit capabilities. The flexible system facilitates multiple Government agencies and provides on-line data entry and retrieval.

The Civil Registry and Passport Office provides several services to customers including passports, emergency travel documents, citizenship, belonger status, the legalization of documents, visas, the registration of churches and the registration of births, deaths and marriages.

Its mandate is to create and manage the civil records in the Territory and manage all travel documents and nationality matters.

224. COMPLAINTS COMMISSION CELEBRATES SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY



Complaints Commissioner Mrs. Sheila Brathwaite said in March 2016 that the office was expecting steady growth and improved standards in the service it provides as it celebrates its seventh anniversary.

The office marked seven years since it was established and the Commissioner said she was pleased that the Commission was able to make in-roads in the public service under the leadership of former Commissioner Mr. Elton Georges.

Mrs. Brathwaite added, **"I thank those departments who have been cooperative and adjusted their customer service. Those yet to accept the importance of the services we offer, I urge to get on board."**

Over the years, the Office has assisted the Deputy Governor's Office with the development and establishment of an Internal Complaint system and has worked with Her Majesty's Prison to implement an effective Internal Complaint System for inmates.

The office has also conducted systemic investigations into the processing of applications for residency and was instrumental in having those applications addressed by the Premier's Office to obtain a more efficient processing system.

The Complaints Commissioner, sometimes called the Ombudsman, offers to the public a channel for raising complaints about maladministration in the public service and statutory bodies.

Public Sector Reform

APPOINTMENTS

225. NEWLY APPOINTED DEPUTY GOVERNOR, MRS. ROSALIE ADAMS TAKES OFFICE

Deputy Governor of the Virgin Islands, Mrs. Rosalie Adams assumed her new role in the post in August 2016.

Mrs. Adams' official duties began with meetings with the Premier of the Virgin Islands, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE; a meeting with His Excellency the Governor, Mr. John S. Duncan, OBE; Deputy Premier, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering and members of Cabinet throughout this week. She has formally met the team at the Office of the Deputy Governor and will meet with Senior Leaders within the public service.

Mrs. Adams brings over 45 years of experience and knowledge to the post having served within the public service at the highest levels.

She is no stranger to the Deputy Governor's Office as she had been seconded for one year to serve on the Change Team to implement Public Sector reform in 2003.

Mrs. Adams was promoted to the post of Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2004 and confirmed as

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Social Development in 2005. She also served as Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Communications and Works from 2006 to 2007 and Permanent Secretary, Premier's Office from October 2007 to March 2011. She was Interim Acting Permanent Secretary in the Premier's Office from January 2012 to December 2013.

Mrs. Rosalie Adams joined the Public Service in 1968 and taught at various public schools throughout the Territory. She served as Guidance and Counseling Officer until 1993 and was transferred to the Department of Education and Culture where she served as an Education Officer from 1999 to 2004. She also served as a lecturer at the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.

The primary role of the Deputy Governor, in support of the Governor, is to oversee the management and development of the Virgin Islands Public Service; to lead the Public Service to ensure the effective delivery of the Government's programme, and to maintain the highest standards of service delivery and good governance.



226. DR. SANDRA BESSON APPOINTED DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF BVI LONDON OFFICE



Dr. Sandra M. Besson is the new Deputy Director for Political Affairs at the BVI London Office.

Dr. Besson is responsible for Commonwealth and European Union (EU) Affairs. She will also assist in maintaining the British Virgin Islands' (BVI) diplomatic and political relationships with key stakeholders in the United Kingdom (UK).

Prior to her appointment, Dr. Besson served in the senior post of Accountant General with the Government of the Virgin Islands. Throughout her career she served as Deputy Director of the Financial Services Institute at the H. Laverty Stoutt Community College, Political Officer and Accountant at the BVI London Office. Additionally, she has worked with Harney Westwood and Riegels, both in London and the Virgin Islands.

Director of BVI London Office, Mr. Benito Wheatley said, **"We are very pleased that Dr. Besson has joined the team. She brings with her a wealth of professional experience, strong background knowledge of the work of BVI London Office, prior work experience on EU and UK issues and expert knowledge in the area of financial services."**

Her addition to the office substantially strengthens our ability to advance the interests of the BVI in Europe, the UK and Commonwealth."

Dr. Besson said that she is looking forward to making a contribution to the important work of the BVI London Office, which is playing a critical role at this time in the Government's efforts to reposition the Territory globally and maintain its international reputation.

Dr. Besson, is a Virgin Islander, and holds a PhD in Accounting and Finance from the University of Manchester, UK; a Master's degree in Business Administration from Wright State University, Ohio, USA; and a Bachelor of Science in Economics from the University of the West Indies.

227. SHIRLEY VANTERPOOL-EVANS IS ANEGADA'S DISTRICT OFFICER



Mrs. Shirley Vanterpool-Evans has been appointed to the post of District Officer, Anegada with effect from September 1, 2016.

The District Officer in Anegada serves as the focal point for all official government inquiries on the island and coordinates designated Government activities and reports directly to the Sister Islands Programme Coordinator in the Office of the Deputy Governor.

In this capacity, Mrs. Vanterpool-Evans will manage the Government

Administration Building facilities and grounds. She will also be responsible for collecting land, house and other taxes on behalf of the Department of Inland Revenue and will manage the postal services, including the sale of postage stamps and money orders.

The District Officer also functions as the District Registrar and registers all births and deaths on the island. She will also coordinate the activities of the Civil Registry and Passport Office. Mrs. Vanterpool-Evans is tasked with various disaster preparedness duties, including coordinating activities and resources prior to, during and after a disaster; developing an organisational Disaster Contingency Plan; submitting bi-annual reports to the National Disaster Management Council

and the Department of Disaster Management; and supervising shelter management activities and emergency communications during an emergency or disaster.

Additionally, the District Officer will assist the Department of Trade and Consumer Affairs with its administration on the island and facilitates official visits and events on request from Government departments.

Mrs. Vanterpool-Evans obtained a Master's Degree in Human Resources Management from Webster University in 2003. She also obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree with a major in Communications and a minor in Psychology from the Palm Beach Atlantic University in 2001.

Public Sector Reform

APPOINTMENTS



228. VIRGIN ISLANDS GENERAL LEGAL COUNCIL APPOINTED

Queens Council Mrs. Dancia Penn, OBE, was appointed to chair the newly established Virgin Islands General Legal Council.

His Excellency the Governor, Mr. John S. Duncan, OBE, acting in accordance with the Legal Professions Act, 2015 appointed Mrs Penn who was nominated by the Chief Justice, Her Ladyship, the Honourable Madam Justice Dame Janice George Pereira as stipulated in the Legal Professions Act.

Mrs. Dancia Penn, Attorney at Law is a former Attorney General and past Deputy Governor of the Virgin Islands. The other members

appointed to the seven-member body are Mrs. Kimberly Crabbe-Adams and Mr. Richard May, both nominated by the BVI Bar Association; Mr. Meade Malone nominated by the Premier and Mr. Jamal Smith nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Attorney General and the President of the BVI Bar Association will serve as ex officio members of the council.

The Legal Professions Act was passed in the House of Assembly on March 25, 2015 and came into force on November 11, 2015. The Chairman and members of the Council have been appointed to serve for three years effective December 30, 2015.

The powers and functions of the Council are to regulate and supervise the legal profession and to evaluate, review and set the standards of conduct and proficiency of the legal profession.

The Council will also make rules for the examination as it sees fit for a person to pass before being admitted and enrolled as a legal practitioner among other responsibilities.



229. TWO NEW APPOINTMENTS FOR POLICE SERVICE COMMISSION

Local Attorney at law, Ms. Fiona Forbes, was appointed to the post of Chairman of the Police Service Commission, while, Barrister and former law enforcement officer, Mr. Kendall Mills, was appointed a member of the Commission.

The appointments were confirmed by His Excellency the Governor, Mr. John S. Duncan, OBE. The Chairman was appointed in accordance with Section 96 (1)(a) of the Virgin Islands Constitution Order, 2007, while Mr. Mills was appointed after consultation with the Police Welfare Association in accordance with Section 96(1)(d) of the Virgin Islands Constitution Order, 2007.



Section 97 of the Virgin Islands Constitution Order, 2007 states that the Police Service Commission has the power to advise His Excellency the Governor on appointments or removal from an officer within the Police Force.

Additionally, the Commission will advise the Governor on any disciplinary matters pertaining to an officer's conduct, or cause to be conducted proceedings for the hearing of disciplinary offences and complaints made by the public in relation to an officer; review and recommend legislation pertaining to appointments to, or removals from offices within the Police Force and or to the exercise of disciplinary control over officers, among other responsibilities.

The other members of the Police Service Commission are Reverend Selwyn Vanterpool, Former Director of Civil Aviation Mr. Milton Creque and Former Director of Human Resources for Little Dix Bay Resort, Mrs. Rosalia Gardener.

230. COMMISSIONER OF POLICE APPOINTED

Governor John S. Duncan, OBE, acting in accordance with Sections 97(1) and 97(2) of the Virgin Islands Constitution, following the recommendation of the Virgin Islands Police Service Commission and advice of the National Security Council, announced the appointment of Mr. Michael Matthews as Police Commissioner of the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force (RVIPF).

Mr. Mathews was Chief Constable of the Cyprus Sovereign Base Area (SBA) Police Force, and took up the

post of RVIPF Commissioner in April 2016.

The Police Commissioner began his police career in 1982 and brings a wide range of strategic and operational policing experience to his new role.

Mr. Matthews was Chief Constable of the Gloucestershire Constabulary prior to his appointment in Cyprus. He was awarded the Queens Police Medal for distinguished service in the New Years Honours list of 2013.



Public Sector Reform

APPOINTMENTS



231. VISITING JUDGE APPOINTED TO THE BVI COMMERCIAL COURT

The Honorable Mr. Malcolm Davis-White, Queen's Counsel (QC), has been appointed to act as Judge of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court assigned to the Commercial Division in the Territory of the Virgin Islands, from October 12 until December 2, 2015.

Recognising the value of an effective and efficient judiciary to the Territory's commercial sector, including the financial services industry, Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE said, "The appointment of the additional judges to the Court keeps pace with ensuring that our court

system handles matters expeditiously, economically and in a timely manner which will maintain the efficiency of the court."

Justice Davis-White, QC has wide ranging commercial experience, both contentious and non-contentious. Known as a first rate company silk, he specialises in directors' duties. He also acts and advises in all other fields of company and commercial law including shareholder disputes, corporate fraud and asset recovery, reductions of capital and schemes of arrangement.

He has expertise in LLPs, Industrial and Provident Societies, insolvency (both corporate and personal), financial services, insurance business transfer schemes and commercial disputes.

Justice Davis-White QC is one of a number of eminent London silks to sit as a visiting Judge of the commercial court in BVI. He will join His Lordship Justice Gerhard Wallbank on the bench in ensuring the court is able to meet the demand for commercial matters to be dealt with justly and efficiently.

232. MR. PAUL WEBSTER QC APPOINTED TO ACT AS JUSTICE OF APPEAL



His Lordship the Honourable Mr. Justice Paul Webster QC was appointed by the Judicial and Legal Services Commission to act as Justice of Appeal of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court for a period of three with effect September 1, 2015.

His Lordship is based in the Territory of the Virgin Islands and will travel throughout the Eastern Caribbean for court sittings. He presides over appeal cases in the Virgin Islands when required.

Mr. Webster was admitted as a Barrister of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court in 1980 and brings 35 years of experience to the post. He received his Bachelor of Laws from the University of the West Indies in 1978 and a Legal Education Certificate from the Norman Manley Law School in 1980. Justice Webster has served as legal counsel in the High Court, the Court of Appeal and the Privy Council, and has extensive work experience with practitioners in the Caribbean and the United Kingdom.

He acted as a Judge of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court in St.

Vincent and the Grenadines in 2001, where he presided over the Civil Division of the Court. He has also served as an arbitrator and was appointed as Her Majesty's Council in 2003.

Mr. Webster QC has produced expert reports of BVI law for use in the United States, England, Sweden and Hong Kong. He has also produced 24 written High Court judgments, written ten Court of Appeal judgments with other justices of appeal, and has delivered at least five oral judgments of the Court of Appeal.

The Court of Appeal is an itinerant court which hears appeals from the nine Member States and Territories of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court.

233. CABINET APPOINTS BVI SOCIAL SECURITY BOARD

The Government of the Virgin Islands' Cabinet approved the appointment of two new members and the re-appointment of five past members to the BVI Social Security Board. The appointments took effect on September 1, 2016.

The new members are Dr. Irad Potter, Chief Medical Officer and Ms. Vareen Vanterpool; both representing Government. The re-appointed members are Mr. Anghel George, Deputy Chairman, representing employees; Mr. Michael Vanterpool, representing employees; Mrs.

Annie Malone-Frett, representing Government; Mr. Simon Potter, representing employers; and ex-officio member, Mrs. Antoinette Skelton, Director of the Social Security Board.

Other members of the Board include Mr. Ian Smith, Chairman, representing employers; and Dr. Dawn Brewley, representing private health practitioners.

The appointments are in accordance with the Social Security (Amendment) Act, 2014 Section 1 (CAP 266) which



states that the Social Security Board should consist of seven persons to be appointed by the Minister responsible for Social Security, that being the Minister for Health and Social Development. The Act further specifies that the representative members may hold office for a period not exceeding three years and can be eligible for reappointment.

Infrastructural Development

ENERGY

234. GOVERNMENT MOVES FORWARD WITH RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Government of the Virgin Islands, through the Ministry of Communications and Works, integrated renewable energy sources as part of the electricity infrastructure in the Territory.

The Ministry of Communications and Works anticipates that by 2023, thirty percent of the Territory's power will be generated by renewable energy sources through the use of wind, solar, waste and waste heat.

Minister for Communications and Works, Honourable Mark Vanterpool says that it is imperative to get this initiative implemented quickly.

Government will also replace the old street light system with a modern LED (Light Emitting Diode) system that uses solar power for the street lights throughout the Territory. These combined efforts are designed to reduce the Territory's dependency on imported fossil fuels, reflecting the Government's global responsibility to reduce the Territory's carbon footprint. Currently the British Virgin

Islands Electricity Corporation Phase V Development Programme is underway and will have two 8.1 MW Wartsilla Engines installed in order to satisfy the demand in the Territory.

The Ministry of Communications and Works will continue to develop strategies to allow the Government to ultimately improve the quality of life for residents through a cleaner environment for the wider community. This will be done in collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour and the Ministry of Health and Social Development.



235. SOIL NAIL TECHNIQUE INTRODUCED IN PHASE V POWER PROGRAMME

The soil nail stabilisation technique was introduced into the construction works of the Phase V Power Development Programme at Pockwood Pond.

Phase V of the programme is to increase the capacity to meet the growing demand of electricity and reduce power outages in the Territory. The British Virgin Islands Electricity Corporation (BVIEC) stated that the soil nail stabilisation technique is new to the Territory and is faster to construct compared to other similar methods of stabilisation like retaining walls. The technique also brings soil



stability in areas where landslides are highly probable.

Soil nailing was first used in 1972 in Versailles and is now a well-established technique around the world. A similar application to soil nailing is rock anchors which are also being installed at Pockwood Pond in a similar way to the soil nails except these are located in the rocks.

Phase V of the Power Development Programme also involves the purchase

and installation of two diesel-fired generators, adding production capacity of over 16 megawatts of electrical power, plus two 34.5 KV cables, which will follow a separate route to that of the existing Pockwood Pond to Road Town line.

Additionally it will further provide reserve capacity to take care of planned and unplanned maintenance on the generating units, thereby reducing the need for load shedding.

236. GOVERNMENT MOVING FORWARD WITH POLICY FOR CLEAN ENERGY

The Ministry of Communications and Works is moving to ensure that the Territory achieves its stated objectives on energy through a comprehensive policy which will diversify the way energy is produced.

Minister for Communications and Works, Honourable Mark Vanterpool said the overall aim of Government's Energy Policy is to diversify the way energy is produced and reduce consumption of electricity by some 30 percent by the year 2023.

This diversification includes choosing sustainable lower emission fuels and integrating six megawatts of renewable energy into the national electrical grid by alternative sources of wind, solar, waste and sea waves.



The Energy Policy is being handled jointly by the Ministry of Communications and Works and British Virgin Islands Electricity Corporation. It was expected to be implemented during the second quarter of 2016, pending Cabinet's approval.

Infrastructural Development

ENERGY

237. SOLAR STREET LIGHTS INSTALLED ON DRAKES HIGHWAY

The Government of the Virgin Islands remains committed to green energy to reduce the Territory's energy cost and has added 15 solar lights to illuminate along public roads, namely Drakes Highway between Pockwood Pond and Fort Recovery.

The installation of the solar street lights is part of Government's Comprehensive Renewable Energy Pilot Programme to reduce public expenditure by 30 percent.

Honourable Mark Vanterpool said,

"The energy policy will reduce energy costs for consumers and ultimately lead the charge for the creation of jobs in the renewable energy sector."

A total of 50 solar streets lights were purchased to be placed in areas where there is no utility service or electricity lines and is in need of public street lighting. Areas such as North Sound, Virgin Gorda; Jost Van Dyke, Anegada, Salt Island and in West End, Tortola.



238. GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES INFRASTRUCTURAL MAP

An Infrastructural Works Map in was launched in 2015, to show precise locations of ongoing infrastructural works.

The map is processed through Google and was developed to give information and precise locations of scheduled work, road updates, completed works, water upgrades and detour options where necessary. Updates on the map are made periodically.

Deputy Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Communications and Works, Mr. Andrew St. Hilaire, said it is the aim of the Government to provide all available tools for the

public to stay knowledgeable about the vast amount of road works that are being executed in the Territory.

"This initiative will not only provide information on the different road works, but also provide information on special projects such as the National Sewerage Programme, the

Cruise Pier Project, the BVI Electricity Phase V and all projects under the Caribbean Development Bank loan," he added.

The Map can be viewed on the Government's website at www.bvi.gov.vg/infrastructuralworks.



239. MOBILE OPERATORS GRANTED SPECTRUM TO PROVIDE HIGHER SPEED INTERNET

The three mobile operators were granted 2016 spectrum awards, which will allow each to provide higher speed internet to the Territory. The operators, Flow (BVI), CCT, and Digicel (BVI), were granted the awards by the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) in August 2016 bringing the Territory in line with technological developments that have already taken part in other parts of the world.

The recent spectrum awards has been welcomed as a potential boost for the BVI Forward campaign to strengthen the financial services sector and the push to improve business infrastructure in the Territory.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE said an advanced telecommunications network is

essential for residents and the business community in order to ensure that the Territory retains its competitive edge in the sectors comprising the economic pillars. The Honourable Premier added, **“Improved internet service is a critical building block in creating the new infrastructure needed to facilitate my government’s thrust to build a substance based economy. The spectrum awards and planned improvements in telecommunications service are expected to provide a comparable level of operation in BVI to what exists in other jurisdictions. In an increasingly challenging global environment, we must do all we can to stay competitive.”**

Minister for Communications and Works, Honourable Mark Vanterpool

said that the Government is pleased that the TRC and the operators are at the point where they are settled on the spectrum award so that they can provide better services.

Minister Vanterpool said, **“We hope that as quickly as the award is made the operators can quickly thereafter implement their systems and be able to provide to the public good modern day high internet speeds, and better telecommunication systems on telephones and the like. We are pleased and anxious to see what is to come.”**

The TRC in a statement said that each operator was successful with their first or second spectrum preferences in the Award, and that higher speed internet will be provided through the technology of LTE which is a 4G mobile communication standard.

The Commission said, **“The aim of the Award has been to provide the three mobile operators with spectrum they can use to deliver high speed mobile broadband services using LTE technology. The implementation of this technology in the Virgin Islands will provide enterprises, consumers and citizens with better quality mobile broadband services and is in line with developments that have already occurred in North America and Europe and being implemented elsewhere across the Caribbean.”**



Infrastructural Development

COMMUNICATIONS

240. MEMORANDUM SIGNED TO PARTNER IN COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES



A Memorandum of Understanding was signed solidifying a partnership in bringing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the Caribbean.

Acting Secretary General of the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU), Mr. Nigel Cassimire and Director General of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Dr. Didacus Jules signed the Memorandum of Understanding at the Open Session of the 13th Caribbean Ministerial Strategic ICT Seminar being held in the Territory.

Mr. Cassimire said, **"This memorandum is a formalisation of our expectations for our work together and we have a lot of recent examples already of the CTU working with the OECS and its institutions on projects like spectrum management."**

The document also signifies the parties' homogeneous vision to achieve its goal effectively.

Dr. Jules said, **"We need to converge our efforts, we need to converge our expertise, so that by working together, to a common vision in close alignment, we can multiply the impact of the dollar spent and the effort expended."**

During ICT Week, delegates deliberated on topics such as Open Data, Accessibilities for People with Disabilities, and Smart Cities. The week concludes today with the hosting of the 2nd Caribbean Regulators' Forum under the theme 'Developing Regional Regulatory Approaches to Current ICT Issues'.

WATER

241. HOTLINE SET UP FOR THE REPORTING WATER FAULTS

A hotline was set up for residents to report all water faults to the Water and Sewerage Department. Persons are asked to call 468-6000 to report all water leaks, broken pipes and interruption to water supply.

Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Communications and Works, Mr. Anthony McMaster said the ministry has been receiving numerous complaints from the public about water leaks and with the implementation of the hotline, reports will be tracked to determine the effectiveness of the current resources.

Mr. McMaster said, **"It is important that callers are able to identify the particular area that will help ... when sending out technical**

teams. Also, callers should provide their names and contact number, so that in the event that we do not have sufficient information to find the leak we can make contact with someone to follow up on where the leak might be."

Additional teams are in place to ensure coverage is given to larger areas simultaneously as it is the ministry's intention to dispatch a technical team immediately after reports are recorded.

The fault reporting hotline is expected to be a 24/7 hotline and in the event a phone operator is not available, persons are asked to leave detailed messages on the faults.



SEWERAGE

242. WORKS MINISTRY COMMITTED TO BVI INFRASTRUCTURAL GROWTH

The Ministry of Communications and Works continued its mandate to enhance the infrastructure of the Virgin Islands and undertook several road improvement works including expansions on water and sewage mains.

Works continue on the National Sewerage Project in East End from next week. Works to improve the road and water mains in Spring Ghut have begun. The water expansion project will see the installation of 2,000 feet

of 6-inch pipes and 450 feet of 4-inch pipes to service the area.

Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Communications and Works, Mr. Anthony McMaster said, "The Ministry of Communications and Works is committed to the infrastructural growth of this Territory."

Road works to facilitate the construction of sidewalks on the Blackburn Highway near the Water and Sewerage Department to Fish Bay have

commenced. Work also includes the installation of manholes, a retaining wall, and 12-inch water pipes.

Other areas with on-going road works include Brewers Bay, Windy Hill and Lee Road in Virgin Gorda.

Infrastructural Development

ROAD WORKS

243. GOVERNMENT PLEASSED WITH PROGRESS OF CDB PROJECTS

The Government of the Virgin Islands said in June that it was pleased with the progress of the infrastructural rehabilitation and road stabilisation programme under the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) portfolio. Several projects were completed including the Parham Town project which is 100% complete with the addition of a new drainage component. Works at Pleasant Ballast Bay and Thomas Land are also complete.

In 2010, there was severe flooding, landslides, rock falls, tree falls and damage to the road infrastructure with the passage of tropical storm Otto. These projects are expected to minimise the effects of another tropical storm or hurricane.



244. AIRPORT RUNWAY EXTENSION ON THE HORIZON



The Government of the Virgin Islands announced in December 2016 that following a lengthy procurement process and very careful consideration between the 2 remaining bidders for the runway extension project of the T.B. Lettsome International Airport: China Communications Construction Company (CCCC) and IDL/McAlpine Consortium; that CCCC was selected as the preferred Bidder for the project.

The bid advanced by the CCCC was \$153,432,572.10 and the bid by IDL-McAlpine was \$198,910,525.00

Negotiations are underway with the preferred Bidder with a view to concluding a contractual agreement within 3 months which delivers the right outcome for the people of this Territory. It has always been, and remains, the Government's overriding objective to ensure a significant local involvement in the project.

The government sees this as critical and thus it will figure heavily in the negotiations.

The runway extension project became vital once American Eagle left Puerto Rico and took with it, the main access link from Mainland USA to the Territory. At the height of the Eagle's operations, up to as many as 12 flights per day operated between Puerto Rico and the Territory giving excellent and seamless access from the mainland USA and the rest of the world for most of the over 393,000 overnight visitors to our shores.

Extension of the runway at the T.B. Lettsome International Airport is fundamentally about the future of the Territory, given that our industries, Tourism and Financial Services, depend on having easy, reliable and affordable access to our global markets. This is of utmost importance if the BVI is to remain globally competitive.

Extension of the runway from 4645 feet to about 7100 feet will allow current airline fleets (737-800 and Airbus 320) to fly directly to and from continental US and Latin America. At present, established US airlines all cite the inability of their existing fleets to operate from the BVI due to runway length. In addition passenger surveys indicate that travellers do not like to make more than one connection to get to their destination. BVI hotels and other service providers are therefore losing their competitive edge due to visitor access to the Territory.

In welcoming this development Premier and Minister of Finance Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith OBE stated that it is Government's responsibility to ensure that an adequate infrastructure is in place to

support and grow our industries and ensure that our economy is able to produce the revenue streams required to ensure the quality of life the people of the BVI have become accustomed.

"Without the extension to the runway, new initiatives like our health tourism, the new BVI International Arbitration Centre and attracting new investors in tourism and financial services cannot succeed in providing additional revenue, jobs and business opportunities. Tourism can only be competitive if tourists can access the BVI easily. It is currently very inconvenient and expensive to visit the BVI," he said.

Premier Smith added, **"The Territory cannot afford to ignore the air access needs of our tourism sector since 62 percent of the aggregate economic activity in the Territory is generated by Tourism. Neither can we depend on other jurisdictions where we cannot guarantee the quality of the experience to our tourists which enable them to return again and again."**

The successful delivery of the project will also enable BVI's main international airport to accommodate regional and international traffic from a wider range of destinations, which will act as a catalyst for the further development of the economy, and will enable future borrowings where needed for important social infrastructural developments.

He further said, **"It will cement the BVI economic foundation and the future advancement of the territory for generations to come."**

Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

245. PREMIER SMITH ADDRESSES INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM IN CANADA

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE, discussed the role of the Caribbean in the economic development of the Americas when he addressed the International Economic Forum of the Americas Toronto Global Forum in Toronto Canada in July 2015.

Premier Smith was the distinguished speaker at the forum and was among three ministerial panelists who discussed the Caribbean's role in the economic development of the Americas, in light of the deepening relations between the United States of America and Cuba.

The session explored ways the Caribbean can promote an integrated agenda to encompass prospects that will shape its future and its political economy.

The Honourable Premier engaged in a number of bilateral meetings to discuss matters of mutual interest including central registries, economic development, air transport development, and tax transparency. The global forum was held under the theme "*Creating Opportunities in a Connected World*" and attracted over 2000 participants and 80 speakers.



THE
INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC FORUM
OF THE AMERICAS



246. PREMIER SMITH: WE ARE ALL INTERDEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER

Commonwealth parliamentarians were encouraged to continue to unite to achieve regional success on a range of common issues affecting representative countries.

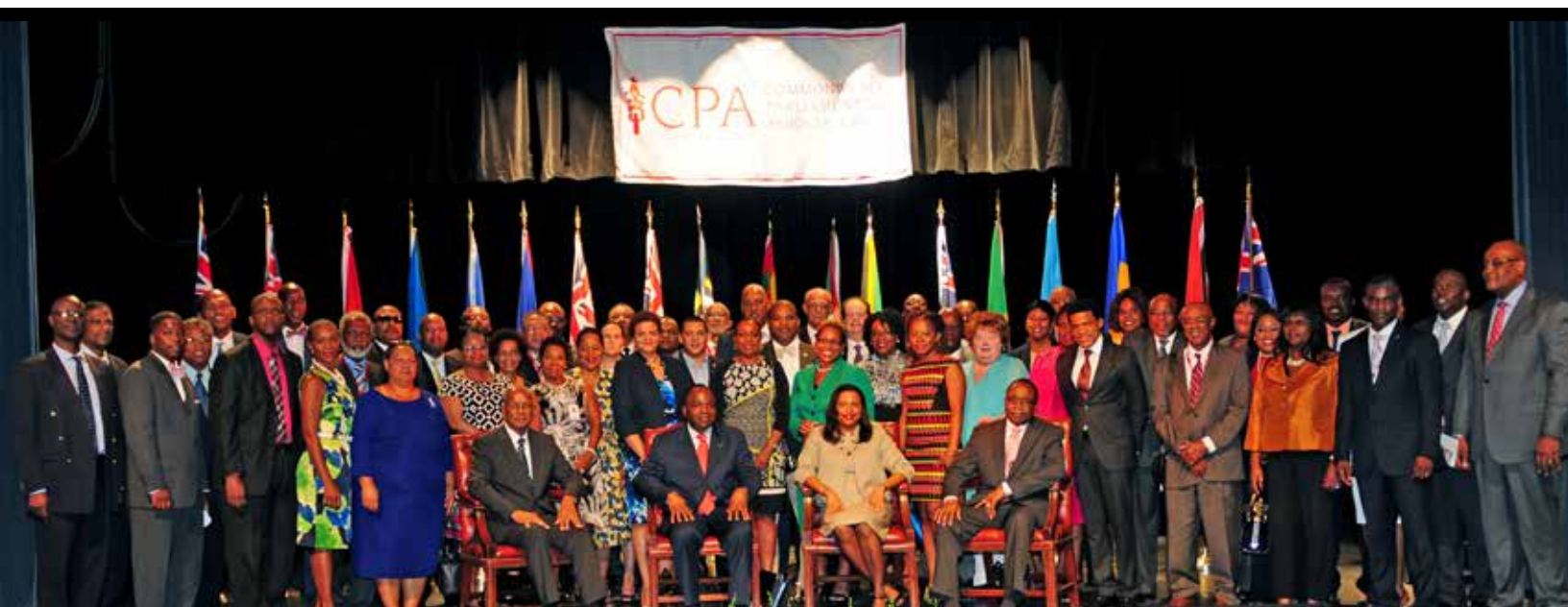
Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE addressed the 40th Annual Conference of the Caribbean, Americas, and the Atlantic Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in July 2015 and stated, **“As a collective body, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association affords us the opportunity to come together to engage in different discussions because it is important that we grapple with and brainstorm on unified approaches to building resilient democratic economies, whether politically, socially or economically.”**

Premier Smith reinforced the importance for the countries represented to raise common or unique issues, and instead of reinventing the wheel, build on each other’s models and tweak it so that it works for the various Commonwealth countries.

“We are all attuned to the essential elements of democracy in the Commonwealth, like the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, freedom of expression, the right to vote freely transparency and accountability. Make no mistake, democracy plays a vital role in institutional strengthening, economic diversification, and supporting public participation,” Premier Smith said.

The Honourable Premier said the regional conference of CPA highlighted unique unity among its participants, and that spirit of unity was evident with everyone gathering to promote knowledge about how the legislative, economic, social and cultural aspects of parliamentary democracy can improve the lives of citizens.

The 40th Annual Conference was hosted in the Virgin Islands under the theme ‘Promoting Democracy and Good Governance: A Unified Approach’. It included the Regional Executive Committee Meeting, Plenary Sessions, the Annual General Meeting and the Regional Youth Parliament.



Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

247. BVI REPRESENTED AT ENERGY MINISTERS SUMMIT IN BELGIUM

The Territory was represented at the Summit of Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) Energy Ministers in Brussels, Belgium by Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources & Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering.

The BVI's participation at this meeting in June 2015 followed the Government's call for greater inclusion of Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) that are Associate Members of United Nations (UN) regional commissions in programmes and processes of the UN, particularly where it concerns the environment. This call was made at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Honourable Pickering said the local energy demands require thoughtful planning and execution, and that this takes into account sound environmental management. The summit included OCT and European Union (EU) member-state Government officials (at the political & technical levels); members of the European Parliament; European (energy) research institutes; the European Commission; and the European Investment Bank.



The two-day activity was devoted to specific components of an OCT wide Sustainable Energy Roadmap. Energy Ministers discussed the challenges and opportunities for OCTs sustainable energy; increasing technical and institutional capacity through partnerships, and investments, instruments & priorities for sustainable energy.

Engagement with the Summit of OCT Energy Ministers represents the Government of the Virgin Islands goal and commitment of strengthening International Relationships with partners aimed at advancing the Territory's efforts to protect, conserve and manage our environment while pursuing public utilities that are reliable and affordable in support of an enhanced community life in the Virgin Islands.



248. PREMIER SMITH ATTENDS CARICOM MEETING IN BARBADOS

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE, attended the 36th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in Barbados in July 2015.

The meeting was held under the theme **“CARICOM: Vibrant Societies, Resilient Economies: A Partnership for Implementation.”** and consider several matters related to encouraging economic growth and development in member and associate member countries of CARICOM.

A major item on the agenda was participation by CARICOM member

countries in several ongoing international processes related to sustainable development, development financing and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Additionally, CARICOM Heads of Government engaged in dialogue with the Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki Moon, who was a special guest at the meeting in Barbados. The UN Secretary-General made a presentation during a High Level Dialogue titled, “CARICOM: Vibrant Societies, Resilient Economies – A Partnership for Implementation.”



249. PREMIER SMITH ATTENDS OECS AUTHORITY MEETING IN DOMINICA

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE attended the 62nd Meeting of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Authority in Dominica in November 2015.

The Premier and his counterparts discussed the regional health policies including the Financial Sustainability of the Pharmaceutical Procurement System; the Programme for Integration of Martinique into the OECS; and the update on Application by French Caribbean Overseas Regions to join the OECS.

OECS Heads of Government also visited some of the areas affected by the impact of Tropical Storm Erika, and discussed strategies for

Dominica's Recovery, as well as assess proposals for future disaster responsiveness in the sub-region.

Premier Smith said the trip to Dominica provided an opportunity to be updated on progress so far, and also demonstrate the leaders continued support for the rebuilding and reconstruction efforts.

The Premier said, **“As a regional partner, it is important for us to meet and dialogue. Through partnerships we can ensure the region's resilience as we seek solutions to our common challenges.”**



Organisation of
Eastern Caribbean
States



Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS



250. BVI AND ARUBA DISCUSS ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The Government of the Virgin Islands continued the discussion on approaches to cope with climate change following the recently concluded 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in December 2015.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering represented the Territory at the conference and held a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister of Aruba, Honourable Mike Eman.

The Deputy Premier highlighted the various climate change and wider environmental challenges facing the BVI, including a prolonged drought earlier in 2015 and the groundswell of sargassum that inundated the Caribbean basin. Honourable Pickering also outlined the main features of the Virgin Islands Climate Change Trust Fund as a mechanism by which to generate sustainable financing for climate change adaptation activities and other measures to protect the environment.

Minister Pickering said, **“The great challenge for small island developing states in addressing climate change is securing sustainable financing for climate change mitigation and adaptation activities. The Virgin Islands Climate Change Trust Fund will help to overcome this problem in the BVI context and we are prepared to share the legal and financial framework that has been developed with other islands such as Aruba in the Caribbean and those in other regions.”**

Prime Minister Eman discussed Aruba’s advances in renewable energy development and the island’s ultimate goal of eventually generating all power from renewable energy sources.

The leaders agreed that it was important for the two territories to give updates on each other’s progress in these areas and best practices on climate change mitigation and adaptation measures for mutual benefit.



251. BVI REPRESENTED AT ENVIRONMENTAL MEETINGS IN GIBRALTAR

Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick D. Pickering, represented the Territory at the UK Overseas Territories Ministers of the Environment Meeting in Gibraltar in July 2015.

Discussions were held on matters including: EU support; environmental management; environmental governance, as well as leadership and meeting outcomes.

Minister Pickering addressed the closing plenary of the conference, and attended a meeting of Environment Ministers from the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

Dr. Pickering said, **"Islands and coastal areas are an integral part of the global ecosystem. Our current environmental challenges are an opportunity to make our collective voices heard internationally on issues such as climate change that affects us greatly. It is more important than ever that we work together and coordinate our activities to preserve, protect and promote the environment in a meaningful way."**

Representatives from several Overseas Territories including: Gibraltar, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands, Isle of Man, British



Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Anguilla, Falkland Islands, Tristan da Cunha and Alderney attended the meetings.

252. DEPUTY PREMIER PLEDGES CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR SMALL ISLANDS IN 2016

Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering pledged his continued support for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Honourable Pickering stated at the UNFCCC COP21 meeting in Paris that he will continue to advocate for Small Island Developing States in the year ahead as they are among the most environmentally vulnerable places on earth.

"The BVI is no less affected by many of the same issues our sister islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans are facing, such as climate change and biodiversity loss. We must work closely together along with

our international partners to overcome any obstacles to our sustainable development," the Minister said.

Dr. Pickering said **"Islands hold the key to solving many of the environmental challenges facing our planet. Our size makes us a laboratory for a range of innovative solutions in key areas such as renewable energy and marine conservation."**

The British Virgin Islands (BVI) is an active member of both GLISPA and OCTA which champion the sustainable development of islands.



Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

253. BVI ENDORSES LANDMARK PARIS AGREEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The British Virgin Islands embraced the Paris Agreement endorsed by one hundred and ninety five countries at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The conference was held in Paris in December 2015 and the Territory was represented by Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering, who is responsible for the climate change portfolio.

Honourable Pickering said the outcome was a major and unexpected



victory for places like the Virgin Islands in particular. He said, **“Scientists consider 1.5°C as the maximum rise that can still support life and economies on small islands which often depend on very fragile and temperature sensitive ecosystems like coral reefs. Countries went into the conference with a 2°C rise target, but successful negotiations saw language of 1.5°C introduced into the final text, something lobbied for by small islands for many years.”**

The Paris Agreement aims to limit global rise in temperatures to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. In order to achieve this, the Agreement requires carbon emission reductions from all countries, developed and developing, including major emitters like China and India, another first in the life of the Convention. The deal came at a crucial time necessary to avert a future committed to the worst impacts of climate change.



254. REGIONAL SEAWEED CONFERENCE LOOKS TOWARDS OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS

The Government of the Virgin Islands and Virgin Unite co-hosted a two day regional conference to explore the strategies needed to address the future management of the Sargassum seaweed.

Ministers from the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, business representatives, senior technical officers and scientific leaders gathered in the Territory in March 2016 and discussed ways to create an effective partnership between all sectors to harness related opportunities and benefits of the seaweed.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE said the Virgin Islands' collective economic well-being had been impacted by the overabundance of seaweed on the tourism, fisheries and transportation sectors.

Premier Smith stated, **"Our coastal residents and their communities have been on the front line of the Sargassum events, witnessed over the last few years. We have displayed a great resilience and have sprung into action in partnership with government and the civil sector to clean our beaches and find innovative means of addressing the matter of the seaweed."**

Premier Smith added that moving forward, any action taken by government, community organisations and the private sector, should be founded on the best information available.

Founder of Virgin Unite and the Virgin Group, Sir Richard Branson said that as a business leader he was particularly aware of the link between conservation, economic empowerment and entrepreneurial solutions.

Sir Richard said, **"Virgin Unite helps shine a light on solutions trying to make our planet a safer and more sustainable place to live. I know first hand**

the importance these solutions have to play in restoring the Caribbean environment and growing the economy. We have all learnt a lot, it's been fascinating. There are a number of scientific challenges that need to be answered. The opportunity for entrepreneurs is massive."

Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour Dr. Kedrick Pickering said the impact of the Sargassum is not just regional and international, and that it affects daily living. He said the major issues of Climate Change show that the Sargassum problem is a direct result of the changes in the environment, the issues of Global Warming and the issues of the rising sea temperatures.

"So these discussions have been far and wide and we have we arrived at this place today and we have taken care to include individuals from various sectors of the community. We have included scientists, academics, and business persons and of course, we have included policy makers," Honourable Pickering said.



Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

255. PREMIER CONCLUDES SUCCESSFUL OVERSEAS TERRITORIES MEETING



Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE engaged in a successful meeting of the United Kingdom Overseas

Territories Association (UKOTA) Political Council of which he is currently President.

At the meeting held in November 2016, the Premier and other Overseas Territories leaders discussed a number of issues, including economic development, international trade, health, pensions and Brexit in preparation for meetings with the UK Government at the Joint Ministerial Council.

In his statement Premier Smith said, "I am pleased with the outcome of our deliberations which has positioned us to better engage the UK Government at our ministerial meetings this week."

Among other things, the leaders agreed that high level engagement between the UK Government and the Overseas Territories was needed on Brexit negotiations through a sustained dialogue.

"We are unified in our view of the importance of a UK Government and Overseas Territories special ministerial meeting on Brexit negotiations in early 2017 before Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty is triggered in March to formally begin negotiations on Britain's withdrawal from the European Union. We will make this case at the JMC," Premier Smith added.

Reflecting on his role as President of the UKOTA Political Council, Honourable Premier expressed, **"I am pleased that I have the commitment of my fellow OT leaders for the Overseas Territories to work more closely together going forward, which strengthens our voice internationally and will benefit us all."**



256. BVI MEETS IN ANTIGUA TO DISCUSS CORRESPONDENT BANKING



Acting Premier at the time, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering led a delegation that included Managing Director of the Financial Services Commission, Dr. Robert Mathavious and Financial Secretary, Mr. Neil Smith, to Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE from October 27 to 28, 2016 to discuss issues and seek solutions relative to correspondent banking relationships and its consequence on the Caribbean.

Honourable Pickering was able to contribute to discussions with various regional leaders and stakeholders in the area of the Caribbean's

participation in the global trading and financial system, including tourism, and compliance with anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing.

Honourable Pickering said, **"All attendees left with a verbal commitment to redouble their regulatory and commercial efforts to satisfy the concerns held by the correspondent banks; and on a political and diplomatic level as well, a strong commitment was made to continue to advocate for the Caribbean region and its continued viability in the financial and banking services sector."**

257. BVI/USVI VISA WAIVER PROGRAMME PROMOTES CULTURAL EXCHANGE OF BANDS



At the Inter Virgin Islands Council (IVIC) meeting in September 2016 in St. Thomas, the two Governments discussed the cultural exchange of musicians.

During the meeting, the Government of the United States Virgin Islands announced an interim measure allowing BVI bands to travel and perform in the United States Virgin Islands. The measure will be facilitated under the visa waiver programme, once the bands have been issued with an invitation by the Government of the United States Virgin Islands to perform.

By law, non-United States citizens coming into the United States or any of its territories to perform temporarily as members of an entertainment group are required to have a special visa classification, that is, a P Visa pursuant to 8CFR 214.2 (p). Minister for Education and Culture, Honourable Myron Walwyn said, **"In 2013 after members of our local bands expressed their concern to me about this on-going situation, we have made every effort to put this matter on the agenda of the previous and present administration in the USVI. I am pleased that Lieutenant Governor Potter has worked so consistently and urgently with me to resolve this situation. I thank him very much."**

Lieutenant Governor of the Virgin Islands, Honourable Osbert Potter

said, **"We have such a rich history with each other and we are so close that we must do everything that we can to ensure that the relationship continues, and continues in a mutually beneficial fashion."**

He explained that he wrote to the US Customs and Border Protection and recommended the use of the visa waiver programme for the BVI Bands if they were coming as part of a cultural exchange between the two Governments. The recommendation was received positively.

The Government of the USVI has given the assurance that they will make every effort to ensure the necessary legislative changes are made in Congress to have the situation fully resolved.

Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

258. PREMIER SMITH: POSTAL ADMINISTRATIONS ARE ESSENTIAL

More than 55 regional and international postal administrators visited the Territory and discussed the future of postal services at the 18th Caribbean Postal Union conference.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE told the administrators that these administrations are essential as they provide a link between nations across borders at the most effective rates possible, act as facilitators for intra and international trade, and provide business services to the farthest corners of the world.

The Premier said despite the fact that there are advanced



telecommunications systems in the more advanced territories and nations of the world, the post has remained relevant.

“However, in this environment we must retool ourselves so that not only will the vulnerable in our society be serviced, but that through the technological advances that are available to us, we can provide the type of logistical services that only a network as expansive and interconnected as the global postal network, headed by the Universal Postal Union, can provide,” Dr. Smith added.

The Premier said there is also the threat of heightened global terrorism in this era, and governments must recognise that postal administrations have relevant roles to play in national security, as they serve as an avenue through which goods are moved across borders.

The Premier said that the British Virgin Islands has taken a proactive stance to ensure that the integrity of the Post Office’s mandate is not compromised, and that the Territory is not being used to facilitate the movement of controlled and illegal substances or firearms, ammunition and explosives.

259. WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS UNITE TO CONTINUE BUILDING POLITICAL BRIDGES

More than twenty female parliamentarians from the Commonwealth assembled in the Virgin Islands to discuss women's issues, and strategies to promote greater female representation in the political sphere during the Eighth Conference of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians.

The Eighth Conference of Commonwealth Women

Parliamentarians was part of a week-long 40th Annual Conference of the Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) hosted in the Territory.

Acting Premier at the time, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering stated, **"This gender discourse on women's political participation in the Caribbean is a debate**

that has spanned decades as women's issues have been advanced, and with universal efforts made to eliminate all forms of violence against women."

The parliamentarians discussed gender ideology, structural and political factors as predictors of women's political representation in the parliamentary process.



Ways in which women can continue to contribute to community development - socially and economically; the need for a shift in institutional language to address gender stereotypes; the importance of focusing on competencies rather than gender preferences; and ensuring gender equality were also discussed.

260. SEVENTH INTER VIRGIN ISLANDS COUNCIL MEETING DISCUSS MUTUAL INTERESTS

The British Virgin Islands and United States Virgin Islands made progress to strengthen ties in areas of mutual interest following the Seventh Meeting of the Inter Virgin Islands Council (IVIC) in September 2016 in St. Thomas.

Premier and Minister of Finance of the British Virgin Islands, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE and Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, Kenneth E. Mapp led their respective delegations of Government officials to report to the council and further discuss areas of shared interests.

Premier Smith, in his opening remarks said, **"Our mutual commitment to the Inter Virgin Islands Council over the years, demonstrates that both our Governments, recognise the need to build an even more effective framework for continued meaningful and productive social, economic, and political exchanges."**

He added, **"Many of challenges we face are often brought about as a result of our differing political and governance structures. For, while we share the same waters and a common heritage we are part**

of two separate sovereign countries. It therefore requires us all to continue to work together to ensure the practical implementation of policies and laws, particularly those which emanate from our respective administering authorities."

Governor Mapp ordered that the flags of the BVI to be flown over Government House area in the capital of the USVI, from sunrise to sunset. He said that displaying the colors of the BVI is a testament to the friendship and welcoming of the Premier Smith, Government and people of the British Virgin Islands.

Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

261. BVI ASIAN TRADE MISSION

The Territory strengthened its economic and financial services relations with the Asia Pacific region when Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE engaged with business leaders, Government officials, financial services practitioners and clients during the BVI ASIAN Trade Mission in Hong Kong and Greater China. The theme for the 2016 BVI Asian Trade Mission was Strategies for Global Success - BVI: The International Partner of Choice.

Premier Smith said, **"The mission, from October 17 to October 28, will seek to expand and deepen the British Virgin Islands' footprint in the Asia Pacific Region (APAC), and broaden the understanding of how the BVI is used in the region. We are seeking to maintain the BVI's position as the leading offshore jurisdiction in the APAC region and gain support for the continued use of BVI (offshore) structures by Governments in Asia."**



Drawing on its unparalleled experience of the Asian market, its extensive business contacts and mature infrastructure, the British Virgin Islands remains committed to building and deepening relationships with clients, business partners and vested third parties in Hong Kong, China and across Asia. During his visit, Premier Smith met with officials of the Hong Kong SAR Government as well as the Tianjin Government. He also delivered keynote speeches at several engagements in China, Beijing, Tianjin, Hangzhou and Shanghai.

The BVI's engagement in the Asia Pacific Region also included a strategic cooperation agreement being signed between the British Virgin Islands and the Tianjin Government.

Premier Smith was accompanied by Permanent Secretary in the Premier's Office, Mr. Brodrick Penn; Financial Secretary, Mr. Neil Smith; and Interim Executive Director in BVI Finance, Mrs. Lorna Smith. They will be joined by the Executive Director of BVI House Asia, Ms. Elise Donovan and other industry stakeholders in China.



262. PREMIER SMITH CONCLUDES SUCCESSFUL JOINT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE held discussions in December 2015 on a range of critical issues for the Territory including economic development, environment, health and child safeguarding.

Discussions were also held on infrastructure and the Premier encouraged the UK to support these initiatives, particularly with respect to tourism related infrastructure.

The Honourable Premier in his statement to UK and OT Ministers said, **"For many Territories,**

tourism makes a significant contribution to the economy. If access to our islands is difficult because we cannot invest in seaports and airports, we risk seeing our market share decline and our public finances suffer. If we cannot provide an attractive location for business because we cannot invest in infrastructure, our ability to diversify our economies and further improve our public finances will be constrained."

The Joint Ministerial Council is an annual meeting that brings together



United Kingdom and Overseas Territories Ministers to discuss UK-OT relations in a number of areas.

263. PREMIER SMITH PROMOTES TERRITORY'S INTERESTS IN BVI-UK TALKS

The progress on economic development in the Territory and the continued growth of the twin pillars of the economy were discussed by Premier Smith in his annual visit to the United Kingdom (UK) in December 2015.

The Premier met with the Overseas Territories Minister, James Duddridge MP and discussed UK-BVI relations. The Premier also updated the British Virgin Islands All Party Parliamentary Group on the Territory's progress.

Premier Smith said, **"I discussed my Government's progress on infrastructure development, led by the completion of our cruise pier and development of its landside development. I also underscored our commitment to continue investing in**

our transportation infrastructure, particularly the expansion of the Terrance B. Lettsome International Airport, to improve access to our beautiful islands. I am pleased that the UK Government shares my view that investment in infrastructure will boost commerce and deliver greater growth and benefits for our economy."

The Premier reiterated the BVI's continued commitment to the fight against money laundering, tax evasion, illicit finance and corruption and explained the enhancements the Territory is making to its regulatory regime with respect to beneficial ownership information, which will be held onshore from 2016. The further improvements being made in order to maintain the Territory's global competitiveness in the financial services industry were also discussed.



Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

264. BVI ASSUMES LEADERSHIP OF UK OVERSEAS TERRITORIES ASSOCIATION

BVI London Office Director and United Kingdom (UK) Representative Mr. Benito Wheatley was unanimously elected Chairman of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories Association (UKOTA) in January 2016 on behalf of the Government of the Virgin Islands.

Mr. Wheatley will lead UKOTA's collective efforts to defend and advance the interest of the Overseas Territories in the UK for the next 12 months.

"It is an honour to have the full confidence of my colleagues to lead the work of our association

as Chairman. UKOTA gives each territory a greater voice than it would on its own. As Chairman I look forward to engaging the UK Government, UK Parliament, Commonwealth and other stakeholders on matters of interest and concern to the Overseas Territories", Mr. Wheatley said.

Mr. Wheatley's chairmanship also confers on Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE, the Presidency of the UKOTA Political Council.

As President, Premier Smith will have the responsibility of chairing the

council's annual Meeting of Political Leaders in London later in 2016 ahead of the annual Joint Ministerial Council between the Overseas Territories and UK.

Speaking on the BVI's new leadership role in UKOTA, Premier Smith said that the BVI is well-positioned to make a positive contribution. He expressed full confidence in Mr. Wheatley who has done an excellent job as the Territory's UK Representative, and who as Chairman, will bring his energy and fervour to UKOTA which will benefit the BVI and the other Overseas Territories.



265. PREMIER SMITH CONNECTS WITH BVI STUDENTS STUDYING IN THE UK



Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE, met with over 40 of the Territory's students studying in the United Kingdom during his annual visit for the Joint Ministerial Council meeting in December 2015.

Premier Smith connected with the students to provide them with a progress report on the Territory and also to give them a chance to ask questions and share their concerns.

Premier Smith said, **"I was very pleased to once again meet with our students in London. It is indeed a testament to my Government's commitment to**

the development of our Territory that we have so many young people studying in various subject areas, all of which would add to the diversity of skills and professions in the British Virgin Islands."

The students also had the opportunity to have their concerns and questions answered by other members of the Government. These included Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labor, Dr. the Honourable Kedrick Pickering, along with District Representatives Honourable Melvin "Mitch" Turnbull and Dr. the Honourable Hubert O'Neal.

266. PREMIER SMITH SAYS BARONESS SCOTLAND IS A TRUE FRIEND OF THE BVI

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE congratulated Dominican born Commonwealth Secretary General Designate, Patricia Scotland, Baroness Scotland of Asthal on her recent appointment to the post of Commonwealth Secretary General. Premier Smith, during his annual Premier's Reception at BVI House in London in November, praised Baroness Scotland for her support of the Overseas Territories (OT) over the years.

Premier Smith said, **"Baroness Scotland will make an excellent Secretary General who will serve the Commonwealth well. There is no doubt in my mind**

that she will continue being a true friend of the British Virgin Islands."

The former United Kingdom Attorney General and OT Minister thanked the Premier for his warm congratulations and said the Overseas Territories are an important part of the Commonwealth and that the 53 nations of the Commonwealth and their diversity holds great potential.

Baroness Scotland's appointment to the post of Secretary General makes her the sixth Commonwealth Secretary General and first woman to be appointed. She took up her new post on April 1, 2016.

The Premier's reception is an annual event that takes place during the Premier's official visit to the UK for meetings of the Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) between UK and OT Ministers.



Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

267. BVI MAKES MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTION AT EUROPEAN UNION MEETINGS

The British Virgin Island's response to global warming and its engagement with the EU on Financial Services were discussed in meetings of the Overseas Countries and Territories Association (OCTA) and European Union (EU) in February 2016.

Director of the BVI London Office and United Kingdom (UK) and European Union (EU) Representative, Mr. Benito Wheatley; Deputy Director of the BVI London Office, Dr. Sandra Besson; and Director of the International Affairs Secretariat, Ms. Sylvia Moses, represented the Virgin Islands at the meeting held in Brussels.

The BVI delegation attended the OCTA Ministerial Conference where Mr. Wheatley co-chaired a meeting of the OCT/EU Financial Services Partnership Working Party (PWP). He delivered a report on the Overseas Countries and Territories' (OCT) engagement with the EU on financial services for the year. Mr. Wheatley also signed the OCTA Political Declaration and Administrative Resolution on behalf of the Territory.

Mr. Wheatley said, **"The BVI was very active in 2015 in helping to facilitate policy dialogue between the OCTs and EU on financial services matters. We**

will continue to work with our partners to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes in this area which is of critical importance to the BVI and other OCTs".

The Director also made an official statement on climate change in which he highlighted the BVI's response to global warming, particularly the establishment of the Virgin Islands Climate Change Trust Fund to finance adaptation activities, and elaborated on the Territory's position on the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change.



268. PREMIER SMITH STRENGTHENS BVI RELATIONS WITH UK PARLIAMENT



The Government of the Virgin Islands strengthened relations with the United Kingdom (UK) Parliament when Premier, Dr. the Honourable D Orlando Smith, OBE attended the annual Joint Ministerial Council meetings in December 2015.

The Premier met with the new Chairman of the BVI All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), Mr. Henry Bellingham; Member of Parliament (MP) former Overseas Territories

Minister and the group's President, Mr. Lindsay Hoyle MP; as well as the Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons.

He also held meetings with Baroness Scotland, a peer in the House of Lords and also former UK Attorney General and Overseas Territories Minister; and Mr. Conor Burns MP, Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

Premier Smith said, **"I am pleased that our relationship with the UK Parliament remains strong and that our friends in both Houses support the continued growth and development of the BVI. I will continue to engage MPs on how the BVI can strengthen its relationship with the UK for mutually beneficial outcomes."**

The Honourable Premier provided an update on the economic development of the Territory and plans for infrastructure development in his meetings. He also discussed his Government's ongoing efforts to bolster the two pillars of the economy, tourism and financial services, and BVI-UK relations.



269. BVI HOUSE ASIA DISCUSSES VISION FOR STRONGER TIES WITH SHENZHEN

The Territory's role in facilitating Chinese enterprises in cross-border trade was highlighted at the second International Sister Cities Roundtable Conference held in Shenzhen in November 2015.

Executive Director of BVI House Asia, Ms. Elise Donovan addressed the conference and spoke about the vision of stronger ties between the British Virgin Islands and Shenzhen in various fields, such as financial services, tourism and education.

Twenty-six official representatives from 15 cities and regions around the world attended the five-day conference, the goal of which was to promote exchanges and partnerships between Shenzhen and the rest of the world. To date, Shenzhen has 63 sister and friendship cities in 41 countries.

The BVI and Shenzhen signed a Memorandum of Understanding in January 2014 to further increase friendship, expand exchange and cooperation, and enhance friendly relations.



Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

RELIEF/HELP

270. PREMIER SMITH PLEDGES US\$100,000 TO DOMINICA RELIEF EFFORTS

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE joined the international community in September 2015 in demonstration of solidarity for the island of Dominica, and pledged US\$100,000.00 towards relief efforts on behalf of the Government of the Virgin Islands.

Premier Smith stated at the time that the Government wanted to reach out in a tangible way to the Government and people of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Residents were encouraged to support any fundraising efforts that were organised to assist those affected by Tropical Storm Erika. A number of civic and other organisations in the BVI galvanized themselves to provide significant support, supplies and assistance to the country.

Premier Smith added, **“We are very proud of their initiative and generosity, and want to encourage as much support as possible. We are a giving people and as part of the Caribbean community we must do our part to help in rebuilding Dominica.”**

Government also partnered with community organisations to transport much needed supplies to Dominica. Premier Smith also issued a statement of condolence to the Government and people of Dominica, and a rallying call to the BVI community to aid in the relief efforts organised to provide assistance to the country.



271. FIRE OFFICERS TRAVEL TO DOMINICA TO PROVIDE RELIEF SUPPORT



Seven Virgin Islands Fire and Rescue officers were deployed to assist with recovery efforts in Dominica in September 2015.

The contingent included officers Marcus Malone, Gaston Walters, Joseph Graham, Cuthbert Roberson, Rico Penn, Nathan McLean and Travon Gumbs. The officers were accompanied by Dr. Nicholas Redhead, pathologist at the New Peebles Hospital and accommodated at the Dominica Fire and Rescue Services Department.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando

Smith said that the Government of the Virgin Islands recognised that regional support for the Government and people of Dominica was critical, and had pledged to do its part to assist the country.

The Premier made a public appeal to the people of the Territory to support any fundraising efforts that were organised to assist those affected by the storm. He said the people of the Virgin Islands are a giving people and along with donations, which were critical in helping Dominica rebuild, the BVI community also provided human resources to aid in the relief efforts.

272. PREMIER SMITH SENDS SUPPORT TO THE BAHAMAS

A team was deployed to support the response and recovery efforts in the Bahamas in October 2016, following the passage of Category 4 Hurricane Joaquin.

Premier and Minister of Finance Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE said his Government received requests for assistance for personnel from the Department of Disaster Management and the BVI Electricity Corporation to provide immediate technical support to the Government of the Bahamas.

He said he readily agreed to provide support following a request from the Regional Response mechanism and the Caribbean Electric Utility Services Corporation (CARILEC).

Premier Smith stated, **"The Impact from a Category 4 hurricane can be significant and although there has been destruction in many of the affected islands, there has only been one death reported in Haiti. We must be thankful for that. We must now turn our efforts to supporting our brothers and sisters who have lost their homes, livelihoods and who are now living in very difficult circumstances."**

The Premier added that his Government responded to the requests from its Caribbean neighbors by providing support to the Commonwealth of Dominica and the Bahamas.



Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

273. DISASTER MANAGEMENT LAUNCHES EMERGENCY TRAINING FOR BUSINESSES

Employees of Delta Petroleum were the first to benefit from the newly introduced Business Emergency Response Training (BERT).

The programme was facilitated by the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) and the BVI Red Cross. BERT, adapted from the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is specifically designed for businesses and is similarly intended to build resilience, specifically within the business community.

DDM's Training Officer, Ms. Carishma Hicks commended DELTA Petroleum for being the first business to capitalise on the opportunity to train its entire staff from its five locations on Tortola and Virgin Gorda.

Ms Hicks said, **"Through the BERT initiative, the DDM is continuing efforts to build resilience within the private sector, focusing specifically on the capacity within individual businesses. This is the first of many**



sessions we will host and we encourage the business community to get on board as quickly as possible."

The DDM partnered with the BVI Red Cross to facilitate the course.

274. NEW EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM FORMED IN SEA COWS BAY

A new Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) has been established in Sea Cows Bay, Tortola.

CERT training is aimed at strengthening disaster resilience within communities by empowering people to be able to respond to and cope with hazard impacts.

23 individuals successfully completed the training, from October 17 to 24, 2016 at the Ebenezer Thomas Primary School.

The training was funded under the BVI Red Cross' Disaster Risk Reduction Programme and exposed participants to basic lifesaving and support techniques, such as fire suppression, search and rescue, disaster medical operations, first aid and CPR.

This is the second Community Emergency Response Team formed in the Sea Cows Bay Community. The first team includes teachers and parents of the Ebenezer Thomas Primary School.



275. INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION

The Department of Disaster Management (DDM) commemorated the International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) with a series of activities aimed at raising awareness about disaster risk reduction while highlighting how the department and the people of the BVI have been reducing disaster risk. This year's slogan was "Live to Tell".

The local campaign activities implemented by the DDM took place in October 2015. International Day for Disaster Reduction is celebrated annually on October 13.

Director of the DDM, Ms. Sharleen DaBreo stated, **"Empowering people to be able to take more control over their lives in times of crisis is absolutely critical**

for reducing deaths caused by emergencies and hazard impacts."

The campaign included the airing of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on radio, a video message by the DDM's Director, publications in both

newspapers, pictorial on the BVI DDM Facebook page, an art competition for youth 12 – 18 years old, and a video documentary on hazard effects encountered by residents including Obel Penn, Elton Georges, Margaret Boarde and Genevieve Myers-Harris.



276. ELECTRICITY LINESMEN PROVIDE RESTORATION SUPPORT IN BAHAMAS

The British Virgin Islands Electricity Corporation (BVIEC) sent a four-member team to provide hurricane restoration support in the Bahamas, as a result of the damage caused by Hurricane Matthew.

Minister for Communications and Works, Honourable Mark Vanterpool was noted to have said, **"I am pleased that we can be**

of assistance to our Caribbean neighbours and that we are able to respond swiftly once again."

The contingent was comprised of Foreman of Transmission and Distribution, Mr. Trevor Stevens; and Electrical Linesmen Messrs. Toriano King, Damien Richardson and Ronald Baird. The team went to Nassau in October 2016. Teams were deployed upon arrival by the Bahamas Electricity Corporation to the various islands needing assistance.

BVIEC General Manager, Mr. Leroy Abraham said that the team assisted the Bahamas Electricity Corporation with the restoration of electricity to the islands.



Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

LONDON/ASIA OFFICE

277. BVI ELECTED VICE CHAIR OF UNITED NATIONS SUBREGIONAL BODY

The British Virgin Islands (BVI) was unanimously elected as one of the Vice Chairs of the Caribbean Development Cooperation Committee (CDCC), a permanent subsidiary body for of the United Nations' (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The decision was taken at the 26th Session of the CDCC in St. Kitts and Nevis in April 2016 where that country assumed the Chair by rotation. Antigua and Barbuda and Dominican Republic were elected Vice Chairs along with BVI, while St. Vincent and the Grenadines was elected Rapporteur. Each will serve in their post until the 27th Session of the CDCC in 2018.

As a Vice Chair of the CDCC, the Territory will support the new CDCC Chair, in advancing the work of the subsidiary body to promote development cooperation among Caribbean countries via its agreed decisions and programmes. Additionally the BVI, in its role, will advocate for the greater economic

integration and cooperation of Associate Members of ECLAC in the sub-region.

BVI London Office Director, Mr. Benito Wheatley, attended the meeting on behalf of Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. Hon. D. Orlando Smith, OBE and welcomed the election result.

He said, **"To serve as a Vice Chair of the CDCC is a progression in the BVI's relationship with ECLAC with whom we have had a longstanding relationship as an Associate Member. ECLAC support for the BVI and other members of the CDCC can contribute significantly to our development in the sub-region".**

The BVI's participation in the CDCC supports the Government's policy to strengthen its International Relationshipships in the region. The BVI joined ECLAC in 1984 and is the oldest Associate Member of the regional commission.



CELEBRATIONS

278. BVI CELEBRATES HERTFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP

Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE has hailed the success of the BVI's twinning partnership with Hertfordshire County Council at his annual Premier's Reception at BVI House in London in October 2016.

The event celebrated the five year anniversary of the signing of the BVI-Hertfordshire County Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in which there have been successful

cultural and youth exchanges and cooperation on sports, education and professional development, among other things.

Premier Smith said his Government and the people of the BVI are grateful for all of Hertfordshire's support over the last five years, particularly in the area of education.

"I am also pleased that some of Hertfordshire's young professionals and students have

been able to gain valuable experience in international affairs here at the BVI London Office over the last two years," he added.

The Premier also presented a local painting to the Council in appreciation of Hertfordshire County Council's support to the BVI.



Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

CELEBRATIONS

279. SALT BREAKING CEREMONY BEGINS HER MAJESTY'S 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

A Salt Breaking and Gifting Ceremony was held by the Government of the Virgin Islands to commemorate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's 90th Birthday Celebrations.

His Excellency the Governor, Mr. John S. Duncan, OBE, Premier of the Virgin Islands, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE and descendants of the people of Salt Island participated in the traditional Salt Breaking Ceremony.

The ceremony was the first official event in the celebrations, and saw the descendants of Salt Island presenting a bag of salt to the Honourable Premier, who presented the package to Governor Duncan as a gift to the Queen on her birthday.

The gifting of a bag of salt to the Queen is an integral part of the oral history of Salt Island and dates back to the 18th Century.

His Excellency, Governor Duncan stated **"I am very pleased to be a part of the renaissance of this tradition which not only celebrates the unique history and heritage of the islands but also the values of the original communities – integrity, respect for others and resourceful self-sufficiency."**

Governor Duncan in 2015 revived the tradition of giving a gift of salt from Salt Island to the Queen which has received global notoriety. It is hoped that the ceremony will become an annual event, adding yet another





aspect to the Territory's tourism product.

In commemoration of the occasion of Her Majesty's 90th Birthday, Buckingham Palace approved the request conveyed by His Excellency the Governor, Mr. John S. Duncan, OBE, from the Virgin Islands Cabinet



to mark this historic event on the actual date of Her Majesty's 90th Birthday on April 21.

A grand parade and two ceremonies highlighted Her Majesty's 90th Birthday celebrated on April 21. The cultural aspect of the Territory was showcased during simultaneous

Beacon Lighting Ceremonies on Tortola, Anegada, Jost Van Dyke and Virgin Gorda. The Territory's youth took centre stage and delivered items of poetry, song and dance.

A pictorial commemorative magazine capturing the life and reign of Her Majesty and the 1966 visit to the Territory was also available to the public at the official ceremony.

Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II became the longest reigning monarch in September 2015. The Queen is Head of State of the United Kingdom and 15 other Commonwealth realms.

280. TERRITORIAL TIES HIGHLIGHTED AT 43RD USVI/BVI FRIENDSHIP DAY



The historical and cultural journey through the past was the focus of the 43rd Anniversary of the USVI-BVI Friendship Day celebrations.

The territorial ties were highlighted in an educational cultural programme on the shared history and culture of the Virgin Islands hosted at the Reichhold Center for the Arts in September 2016.

This year's activities were hosted by Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, the Honourable Kenneth E. Mapp and took place in St. Thomas,

United States Virgin Islands under the theme, "Ties Across the Water that Bind Us."

Her Excellency the Acting Governor, Mrs. Rosalie Adams and the Premier and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE led the BVI delegation.

Premier Smith said, **"Each year the Virgin Islands looks forward to this annual event that celebrates our common heritage, our strengths and unique ties. We have a shared cultural**

experience that we want to pass on to the younger generation, and we also want to foster deeper ties going into the future."

Governor Mapp said, **"Our islands are linked by geography, history and ancestry."** He added, **"Few among us cannot claim a family connection in the British Islands. We share many mutual interests and challenges and I'm encouraging even greater collaboration between our governments going forward."**

In honour of this year's USVI-BVI Friendship Day, the British Virgin Islands hoisted flags of the United States of America and the United States Virgin Islands together with the Union Jack and British Virgin Islands flags at the Government Central Administration Complex from sunrise on Friday, September 16 to sunset on Sunday, September 18.

Re-establishing and Strengthening Regional and International Relationships

CELEBRATIONS

281. PREMIER SMITH HOSTS 3RD ANNUAL UNITY CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Residents and citizens in the Territory joined Premier of the Virgin Islands, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE in the third annual "Premier's Christmas Around the World: A Celebration in the BVI" event held in December 2015.

This annual event provides an opportunity to share how Christmas is celebrated around the world in the British Virgin Islands.

Premier Smith called for unity among nationals residing in the Virgin Islands, and added, **"No matter where you are from, whether you are from another Caribbean island, Europe, the United Kingdom, North, South,**

or Central America, the African region, Asian region, we want everyone to get involved."

"Premier's Christmas Around the World: A Celebration in the BVI" is a cultural/festive celebration in which the public dress in their countries' cultural wear.



282. PREMIER'S 4TH ANNUAL UNITY CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION A SUCCESS



PASSED IN 2015 - 2016 (Since June 8 Elections To Present)



No. 14 of 2015 - **Tourist (Duty-Free Shopping System) Act, 2015**

This Act would seek to establish a tourist duty-free shopping system permitting duty concessions on goods for export and to provide for related matters.

No. 15 of 2015 – **Employee Mobility (Amendment) Act, 2015**

This Bill seeks to effect Cabinet’s decision Memo No. 172.2015, to amend the Employee Mobility Act, 2012 (No. 6 of 2012) (“the Act”) to save the service of an officer or member of the Force which has accrued up to the point of mobility to a statutory corporation, so

that it can be taken into account when calculating pension and other benefits. The same will apply with respect to an employee of a statutory corporation upon mobility to the public service

No. 16 of 2015 – **Insurance (Amendment) Act, 2015**

This Bill seeks to amend the Insurance Act, 2008 (No. 1 of 2008) to introduce new features and streamline existing provisions (where considered necessary) as a mechanism of updating and modernizing the provision of insurance business in and form within the Virgin Islands

No. 17 of 2015 – **Mutual Legal Assistance (Tax Matters) (Amendment) Act, 2015**

This Act amends the mutual Legal Assistance (Tax Matters) Act, 2003 (No. 18 of 2003). This amendment clarifies the types of underlying documentation required to be kept by the entities that are subject to this record keeping obligation under the Mutual Legal Assistance (Tax Matters) Act, 2003. The amendment is also made following the recommendation made in the Phase 1 report of the Virgin Islands and published by the OECD.

No. 18 of 2015 – **Trade Marks (Amendment) Act, 2015**

This Act amends the Trade Marks Act, 2013 to allow for entities established as general partnerships to register as trade mark agents. To qualify for registration as a trade mark agent an applicant must be either, an individual, a partnership or a legal person. In relation to a partnership, the Trade Marks Act provides that the partnership must be registered under the Partnership Act, 1996.

No. 19 of 2015 – **BVI Business Companies (Amendment) Act, 2015**

This bill amends the BVI Business Companies Act, 2004 (“the Act”) to make adjustments to the particulars of directors that a company’s register of directors must contain.

No. 1 of 2016 – **Legal Profession (Amendment) Act, 2016**

This Bill seeks to make provision for the fusion of the branches of the legal profession, for legal education and for the discipline of legal practitioners.

No. 2 of 2016 – **BVI Business Companies (Amendment) Act, 2016**

This bill amends the BVI Business Companies Act, 2004 (“the Act”) to make adjustments to the particulars of directors that a company’s register of directors must contain.

No. 3 of 2016 – **Legal Profession (Amendment) (No. 2) Act, 2016**

This Act amends the Legal Profession Act No. 13 of 2015 (referred to hereinafter as “the principal Act”).

No. 4 of 2016 - **Education (Amendment) Act, 2016**

This Act amends the Education Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004) (referred to hereinafter as “the principal Act”)

No. 5 of 2016 - **Higher Education Licensing Act, 2016**

This bill deals with the establishment, functions and powers of the Higher Education Licensing Board; the licensing of Higher Education Providers and; the obligations of licensed Providers

No. 6 of 2016 – **Appropriation Act, 2016**

This Act provides for the appropriation of monies for and towards the defraying of charges and expenses for the services of the Government of the Virgin Islands for the period commencing 1st January, 2016 and ending 31st December, 2016

No. 7 of 2016 – **Virgin Islands Deposit Insurance Act, 2016**

This Bill seeks to establish the Virgin Islands Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Deposit Insurance Fund for the purpose of providing limited compensation to insured depositors under certain circumstances and to provide for matters connected therewith. There are three major reasons why this Bill is felt to be necessary.

No. 8 of 2016 – **Financial Services Commission (Amendment) Act, 2016**

This Bill essentially effects amendments to the Financial Services Commission Act, 2001 (“the Act”) following a review of the Act. The sections amended, including the new provisions added, take into account the relevant recommendations arising from the 2010 IMF Report and matters considered fundamental to good governance as the Government continues to ensure that the Financial Services Commission (“the Commission”) has all the necessary, regulatory, supervisory and enforcement tools to effectively carry out its work. In addition, the Bill seeks to streamline some of the provisions of the Act to ensure better clarity on issues that had surfaced in the practical implementation of the Act.

No. 9 of 2016 - **Financial Services Appeal Board Act, 2016**

This Bill seeks to establish an independent Financial Services Appeal Board (“the Board”) which will have statutory responsibility of receiving and hearing appeals emanating from decisions made by the Financial Services Commission (“the Commission”) in the exercise of its powers and the performance of its functions under the Financial Services Commission Act, 2001 (FSCA) and related financial legislation.

No. 10 of 2016 - **Immigration And Passport (Amendment) Act, 2016**

This Act amends the Immigration and Passport Ordinance (Cap. 130) (referred to in this Act as “the principal Ordinance”).

