GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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House Of Assembly of The Virgin Islands Participates in Fourth COTSC in the UK

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The 4th Commons and Overseas Territories Speakers' Conference (COTSC) took place in London from May 13 to 16, 2025. The event was graciously hosted by the Speaker of the UK House of Commons, the Rt. Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP. Delegates included Speakers and Clerks from various UK Overseas Territories such as Anguilla, Bermuda, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, St Helena, and The Virgin Islands.

Representing the House of Assembly of The Virgin Islands were the Speaker, Honourable Corine N. George-Massicote, and Deputy Clerk, Mr. Linton V. Leonard. Honourable George-Massicote delivered the keynote address during Session Four, titled **"Keeping Democracy Running."**

In her address, Honourable George-Massicote explored the critical ways parliaments manage a range of security challenges, including incidents within parliamentary buildings, cyber threats targeting parliamentary networks, and other security incidents that could disrupt parliamentary operations. She outlined **the Top 10 Protective Security Measures** essential for safeguarding parliamentary institutions:

1. Understand the specific threats facing your institution
2. Establish a comprehensive security governance framework
3. Foster a strong security culture among all personnel
4. Install and maintain effective physical security systems
5. Implement robust Information and Communication Technology (ICT) protections
6. Develop a personnel security framework
7. Protect sensitive information rigorously
8. Maintain strong online security practices
9. Identify and respond promptly to suspicious behaviour and security incidents
10. Regularly review and update your security framework

Honourable George-Massicote emphasised that despite differences in size and unique challenges, parliaments worldwide face common physical and virtual threats that can affect their stability, productivity, reputation, and prosperity. She stressed that intentional and well-structured security frameworks are vital to

protecting people, infrastructure, technology, and information.

Following her presentation, an expert panel from the UK House of Commons—comprising the Director of Cyber and Information Security, the Director of Security, and the Director of Strategic Business Resilience—validated her insights. They shared real-world examples and experiences, underscoring the critical importance of robust security frameworks in parliamentary institutions.

The conference delegation, including Speakers from the UK and Overseas Territories, was honoured with a special audience at Buckingham Palace with His Majesty King Charles III, Patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). His majesty engaged the speakers and had short dialogue with them.

As a proud member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the House of Assembly is committed to promoting democratic governance, transparency, and security within its parliamentary operations. Through active engagement in international forums and conferences, the House continuously strengthens its institutional capacity and fosters collaboration with other Commonwealth legislatures.

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Note to Editors: Royal Audience and Delegation

The delegation of Speakers from the UK and Overseas Territories was honoured with an audience at Buckingham Palace with His Majesty King Charles III, Patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

Above: The delegation of Speakers from the UK Parliament and UK Overseas Territories pictured with HM King Charles III (image credit: Buckingham Palace).

Picture 2: Hon. Corine N. George-Massicote – Sharing at the Conference

Picture 3: The delegation of Speakers from the UK Parliament and UK Overseas Territories with the Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle (Centered)

Picture 4: The delegation of Speakers from the UK Parliament and UK Overseas Territories in session.

(image credit: House of Commons)

Speakers and Presiding Officers Attending the Conference Included:

Rt Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP, Speaker of the UK House of Commons

Hon. Tara K. Carter, Speaker of the Anguilla House of Assembly

Hon. Dennis P. Lister, JP, MP, Speaker of the Bermuda House of Assembly

Hon. Corine N. George-Massicote, Speaker of The Virgin Islands House of Assembly

Hon. Keith Biles, JP, Speaker of the Falkland Islands Legislative Assembly

Hon. Karen Ramagge, MP, Speaker of the Gibraltar Parliament

Hon. Marjorie Smith, Speaker of the Montserrat Legislative Assembly

Hon. Cyril Gunnell, Speaker of the St Helena Legislative Council

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Additional Documents or Media

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