GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

STATEMENT

Tel: (284)468-2730
Official Government Website:
https://gov.vg

Premier's Message for Diplomatic Week 2025

Release Date: 22 October, 2025



Message by Premier of the Virgin Islands

Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley

For Diplomatic Week 2025

21 October 2025

“Island Shores to Global Doors”

A pleasant Good Evening to each and everyone.

As a former educator now deeply involved in diplomacy, I recognised Diplomatic Week - our first in the BVI - as a vital opportunity to spotlight and encourage understanding of international relations and diplomacy, an area often overlooked and misunderstood.

The arena of international relations and diplomacy is one where ideas, interests, and identity meet on the global stage. Every Country’s developments and future developments are shaped by its relationships abroad, and in this regard the Virgin Islands is no different. One thinks of the nature of the Virgin Islands financial services industry – one of our two main economic engines - where London, Europe and Asia are our key markets, we realise how nimble we have to be to meet the demands of our markets – our industry is shaped by our relationships abroad.

As Overseas Territories and members of the Caribbean region, strong positive relationships with other countries and territories and their leaders play an important role when dealing with common and complex issues, such as negotiations with the United Kingdom or addressing global forums on trade and climate change, to name a few.

Diplomatic Week opens the door for greater understanding of how international relations and diplomacy shapes our lives, our economy, our governance, and our future, and how small island territories like ours connect with the wider world. The reality is that international relations and diplomacy are not distant or abstract concepts for the Virgin Islands. They are daily essential tools that help us build partnerships, advance our development goals, and safeguard our interests. They are a vital part of our journey toward self-determination. They enable us to

represent our own interests, tell our own stories, and shape how we are seen and understood in the global narrative.

Throughout our history, the Virgin Islands has been quietly but confidently charting its course in the diplomatic space. When we protested for the reinstitution of the Legislative Council and revived our political voice in 1950, we began our journey in international relations - first with the British, then with our Caribbean neighbours, and now globally. This journey continued in our negotiations for greater self-government with the UK leading to the 1967 Virgin Islands Constitution Order. We further strengthened our regional and international ties when we joined the OECS in 1984 and CARICOM in 1991.

By establishing the BVI London Office to engage directly with partners in the UK and Europe, and recently opening BVI Asia House to strengthen connections in the Asia-Pacific region, we expanded our global presence.

Although the Virgin Islands is small, our global footprint is significant. As an international financial centre with connections that span continents, it is essential that we continue to represent ourselves and our interests in the global arena - not through others, but with our own voice – as we continue to do now with greater confidence.

Diplomacy is fundamentally about building bridges - between nations, peoples, and possibilities. With pride and purpose, we launch this First Diplomatic Week, marking the start of an annual initiative that will help shape the Virgin Islands' engagement in international relations for generations ahead. Together, we step forward - from our island shores, through global doors - with confidence, clarity, and conviction.

I thank you.

###

For Additional Information Contact:

Angela U Burns
Information Officer II
Premier's Office
Government of The Virgin Islands
Tel: +1 284 468 9445
Email: aburns@gov.vg
Website: https://gov.vg/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/BVIGovernment/

Additional Documents or Media

- premier's_message_21oct25.pdf