GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Environmental Sustainability Essential for the Virgin Islands' Future

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His Excellency the Governor, Mr. Daniel Pruce, has called on Virgin Islands residents to embrace environmental resources for sustainable development of the Territory.

This statement came during his delivery of the Speech from the Throne on Tuesday at the Second Sitting of the Fifth House of Assembly.

The Governor emphasised, "Environmental stability, hazard risk reduction and adaptation to climate change are essential pillars for the sustainable development of the Virgin Islands. As our communities face increasing threats from natural disasters and shifting climate patterns, it is imperative to prioritise resilient systems and proactive measures that safeguard both our ecosystems and livelihoods."

He announced that an Environment and Climate Change Policy will soon be presented to Cabinet to guide the development of the Environment and Climate Change Bill. The legislation will create a framework for environmental protection, resource management, and climate change adaptation, addressing governance gaps and supporting international commitments while safeguarding local ecosystems and the tourism economy.

The Governor also highlighted upcoming amendments to the Derelict Vehicles Act to enhance efficiency in vehicle collection and disposal, as well as the Litter Abatement Act to impose stricter penalties on offenders, among other initiatives.

He further stated that, "National Outcome 17 for the Environment focuses on hazard risk reduction and adaptation to climate change. Biosecurity is therefore essential for environmental sustainability and long-term prosperity in the Virgin Islands, preventing invasive species and diseases from harming tourism, fisheries, and agriculture". With support from the United Kingdom's Darwin Strategic Project, the Government is drafting a Biosecurity Policy to create an effective, unified biosecurity system addressing invasive alien species.

The Speech from the Throne is a tradition in the Commonwealth and Overseas Territories, written by the Government and delivered by the Head of State, or his or her representative. It marks the opening of a new legislative session and outlines the Government's key policies and legislative agenda to fulfill its objectives and responsibilities to the people.

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Additional Documents or Media

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