GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Premier Wheatley Attends Landmark International Cooperation Conference in Dubai

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Premier of The Virgin Islands, Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley, is participating in a landmark global forum in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, that seeks to deliver tangible and high-impact outcomes for the sustainable development of the Greater Caribbean Region.

The 10th Association of Caribbean States ACS International Cooperation Conference (ICC) is being held from 3rd – 4th February 2026, in the margins of the prestigious World Governments Summit. For the first time, the ICC is being convened on a global platform that underscores innovation, resilience, and South–South cooperation.

In an invitation extended to the Premier, the ACS said the conference will serve as a forum for enhanced dialogue on the ACS' flagship initiatives, including the digitisation of maritime transport and logistics, regional strategies on sargassum, ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction, and the implementation of the ACS Strategic Plan 2025–2035. To facilitate the Territory's participation, the trip was fully sponsored by the World Governments Summit and the ACS, an organisation dedicated to promoting consultation, cooperation, and concerted action across the region.

ACS Secretary-General H.E. Noemí Espinoza Madrid emphasised that Premier Wheatley's presence is invaluable in advancing the region's shared development agenda.

"By participating in this high-level exchange, The Virgin Islands is continuing to position itself as a proactive leader in regional diplomacy and environmental stewardship," Premier Wheatley stated. "Our participation allows us to align our development goals with broader regional strategies. By leveraging global partnerships and South–South cooperation, we can more effectively address challenges like sargassum and maritime efficiency that no single nation can solve alone."

The Premier is accompanied to Dubai by Special Envoy, Mr. Benito Wheatley.

While Premier Wheatley is away, Honourable Julian Fraser, RA, Deputy Premier and Minister responsible for Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change, has

been appointed to carry out the duties of Premier and Minister of Finance, from 1st to 10th February 2026.

Honourable Fraser's acting appointment is in accordance with Section 55(1) of the Virgin Islands Constitution Order, 2007, which states: "If the Premier is expected to be absent from the Virgin Islands for more than forty-eight hours, the Governor shall authorise the Deputy Premier to perform the functions of the office of Premier; and the Governor shall revoke this authority on the return to the Virgin Islands of the Premier."

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About:

The Government of The Virgin Islands is committed to promoting good governance and the sustainable development of the Territory with a view to ensuring a well-informed, prosperous, cohesive and stable society. The Premier’s Office serves as the focal point for coordinating cross-sectoral policies and programmes and promoting the sustainable development of The Virgin Islands to ensure a well-informed, prosperous, cohesive and stable society.

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Additional Documents or Media

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