GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

Tel: (284)468-2730
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Ministry of Health Highlights the Importance of Safe Water and Equality

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The Ministry of Health and Social Development is joining the global observance of **World Water Day 2026** under the theme *“Water and Gender: Where Water Flows, Equality Grows.”*

World Water Day is observed annually to highlight the importance of freshwater and the need for sustainable water management. This year’s theme brings attention to the critical link between **access to safe water and equality**, recognizing that in many parts of the world, women and girls carry the primary responsibility for securing and managing water for their households. Limited access to safe and reliable water can impact health outcomes, education, and economic opportunities.

While the British Virgin Islands does not experience significant gender disparities in water access, the Territory stands in support of global efforts to promote **equitable and inclusive water management practices**.

Access to safe, clean water remains essential to public health. It is critical for **drinking, food preparation, hygiene, and disease prevention**, and plays a key role in supporting healthy communities.

Acting Deputy Chief Environmental Health Officer, Mrs. Shamelle Thomas, emphasized the importance of maintaining water quality across the Territory. “Safe water plays a critical role in preventing illness and supporting healthy communities. The Environmental Health Division continues to monitor water quality and promote practices that protect our water sources,” she said.

The Ministry is encouraging residents and businesses to take practical steps to protect and preserve water resources by:

- Practicing water conservation in homes and workplaces
- Properly maintaining cisterns and storage tanks to prevent contamination
- Supporting initiatives that strengthen water infrastructure
- Raising awareness of the link between water, health and equality
- Promoting inclusive decision-making in water management

Residents are also reminded that safe water practices support **proper hygiene, reduce the spread of disease, and contribute to healthier lifestyles.**

As the Territory observes World Water Day, the Ministry of Health and Social Development reaffirms its commitment to **protecting water quality, promoting public health, and supporting sustainable water use across the Virgin Islands.**

For Additional Information Contact:

Natasha Lettsome-Humphrey
Public Health Communications Specialist
Ministry of Health and Social Development
Telephone: 468-2286

Email: nlettsome@gov.vg