GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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VI Hosts Regional Meeting of Emergency Management Experts

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The Virgin Islands is hosting national disaster management coordinators from 20 states around the Caribbean as well as key regional hazard experts this week as part of the 17th meeting of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

The meeting is expected to strengthen the resilience of the Caribbean as a region, according said Mrs. Sharleen DaBreo-Lettsome MBE, who serves as the committee's chair from April 2026 to April 2027.

Mrs. DaBreo-Lettsome said, "Caribbean peoples and states rely on each other for comprehensive disaster management support through CDEMA mechanisms such as the TAC. This approach of regional cooperation makes us more self-sufficient because we are in a position to better anticipate and respond to all kinds of risks."

Mrs. DaBreo-Lettsome added that given the rapidly evolving hazard landscape, ongoing improvements to regional coordination have the potential to preserve economies and save lives.

"We have a strong regional strategy and are moving in the right direction, but this year's meeting will help make adjustments to account for a hazard landscape that is changing by the day," Mrs. DaBreo-Lettsome said.

Director of Disaster Management Mr. Jasen Penn said in addition to sharing expert advice on the regional comprehensive disaster management plan, national disaster coordinators and key partners will consider CDEMA's regional and local programs and activities.

"This is an opportunity for all the participating states to advocate for our individual needs, and to share what we have learned from recent incidents and hazard impacts," Mr. Penn said.

CDEMA's 20 participating states are Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Cayman Islands, Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Republic of Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, St. Maarten, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Republic of Trinidad & Tobago, Turks & Caicos Islands, and the Virgin Islands.

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Photo Caption: Scenes from the 17th annual meeting of the CDEMA TAC's session on April 14 in Road Town. (Credit: Dept. of Information and Public Relations/Franklin Skerritt)

About CDEMA's Technical Advisory Committee:

The CDEMA Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is the technical and programmatic advisory arm of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), responsible for guiding regional policy on comprehensive disaster management. It is comprised of 20 national disaster coordinators, plus representatives from specialist regional organisations. The TAC provides also recommendations on the Agency's work programme, strategies, and emergency procedures.

About the Department of Disaster Management:

The Department of Disaster Management was established to protect lives and maintain a resilient, sustainable economy and society by fostering comprehensive disaster management and climate change adaptation as a way of life. The Virgin Islands disaster management programme is accredited by the Emergency Management Accreditation Programme.

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