GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

STATEMENT

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Remarks by Premier Wheatley - Sunrise Airways Inaugural Flight

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Thank you, and welcome to the BVI. Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.
It is a pleasure and an honour to welcome all of you to the Virgin Islands on this historic occasion. Today, we celebrate the inaugural Sunrise Airways flight to the BVI, marking the beginning of Sunrise's direct air service between the Virgin Islands and the Dominican Republic (DR). To the passengers who have just arrived - bienvenidos, welcome to your home away from home. And to the executive team of Sunrise Airways who are with us today, we extend a very warm Virgin Islands welcome.

This new service is deeply appreciated by our community. The Virgin Islands and the Dominican Republic share a long and meaningful relationship. Many families in our Territory have strong ties to the DR, and they will certainly appreciate the convenience these direct flights will offer them to visit loved ones, conduct business, and maintain the bonds that unite our peoples.

At the same time, the BVI is strengthening our trade and commercial relations with the Dominican Republic, and these flights will open timely opportunities for entrepreneurs, investors, and professionals travelling between Tortola and Santo Domingo, and seeking connections to other destinations. More seats mean more convenience, more flexibility, more travellers – and hopefully lower fares, for travellers.

I want to express sincere thanks to Sunrise Airways for choosing the Virgin Islands and for recognising the potential of this market. You will find that the BVI is bursting with opportunity - not only for travel between Beef Island and Santo Domingo, but also for broader intra regional connectivity and travel to the US mainland. I wish to encourage Sunrise to explore additional BVI routes within the Caribbean, where there is strong demand from our residents, many of whom are Caribbean nationals who would welcome more options to visit family or manage business across the region. As the Virgin Islands continues to deepen its engagement with CARICOM, the need for reliable intra regional travel will only

grow – particularly travel for business.

I must also commend the dedicated teams whose hard work has made today possible: the Ministry of Communications and Works; the Board and Management of the BVI Airports Authority; the Airlift Committee; the ground handlers; and all partners who contributed to this achievement. Your commitment to expanding airlift and improving connectivity for our people is evident, and the Virgin Islands people are grateful.

Once again, we warmly welcome Sunrise Airways to the Virgin Islands. We look forward to a strong and lasting partnership, and the Government pledges its full support as we continue to grow opportunities in the aviation sector for the benefit of our residents, our economy, and our future.

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