GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

STATEMENT

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Remarks by Premier Wheatley - Opening and Declaration of Senior Citizens' Month 2026

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My fellow Virgin Islanders – Good morning,

I extend a warm and special welcome to our cherished *Golden Gems*. We celebrate you with gratitude, admiration, and deep respect.

Today, I am very pleased to join with you as we mark the start of Senior Citizens' Month. This is the 37th Anniversary of the observance of Senior Citizens' Month in the Virgin Islands, and that says a lot about our society and our commitment to honouring our seniors.

Our seniors are the pillars upon which this Territory stands. It is your hands that tilled the soil, built our institutions, nurtured our families, and shaped the Virgin Islands we are blessed to inherit today. Every advancement we enjoy - every opportunity, every comfort, every achievement - rests on the sacrifices you made and the love you poured into this community. For this, we say thank you. We honour you. And we pledge always to treat you with the dignity and appreciation you deserve.

This year's theme, *"Champion Your Health,"* reminds us of an important truth: as we grow older, caring for our health becomes even more essential. But health is not only physical. It includes mental, emotional, and social well-being. It includes staying connected, staying active, and staying supported by family, community, and country. Senior Citizens' Month is a timely reminder that aging is not a decline - it is a stage of life that deserves intentional care, joy, and empowerment. With the right care, attention, and attitude, these years can be truly golden.

My Government remains committed to ensuring that our seniors have access to the services, programmes, and support systems needed to live healthy, fulfilling lives. Through the dedicated work of the Social Development Department and the Ministry of Health and Social Development, we continue to provide year-round activities, outreach, and wellness initiatives designed to uplift and protect our older population. Their efforts intensify during Senior Citizens' Month, and I extend heartfelt thanks to the Social Development Department for their unwavering service.

As we celebrate this month, I encourage the entire Virgin Islands community to reflect on the immeasurable contributions of our seniors to national development. Let us show them our love, our gratitude, and our commitment to ensuring that they continue to thrive.

To all our seniors: I wish you a joyful, healthy, and blessed Senior Citizens' Month. May you continue to shine as the Golden Gems of our beloved Virgin Islands.

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