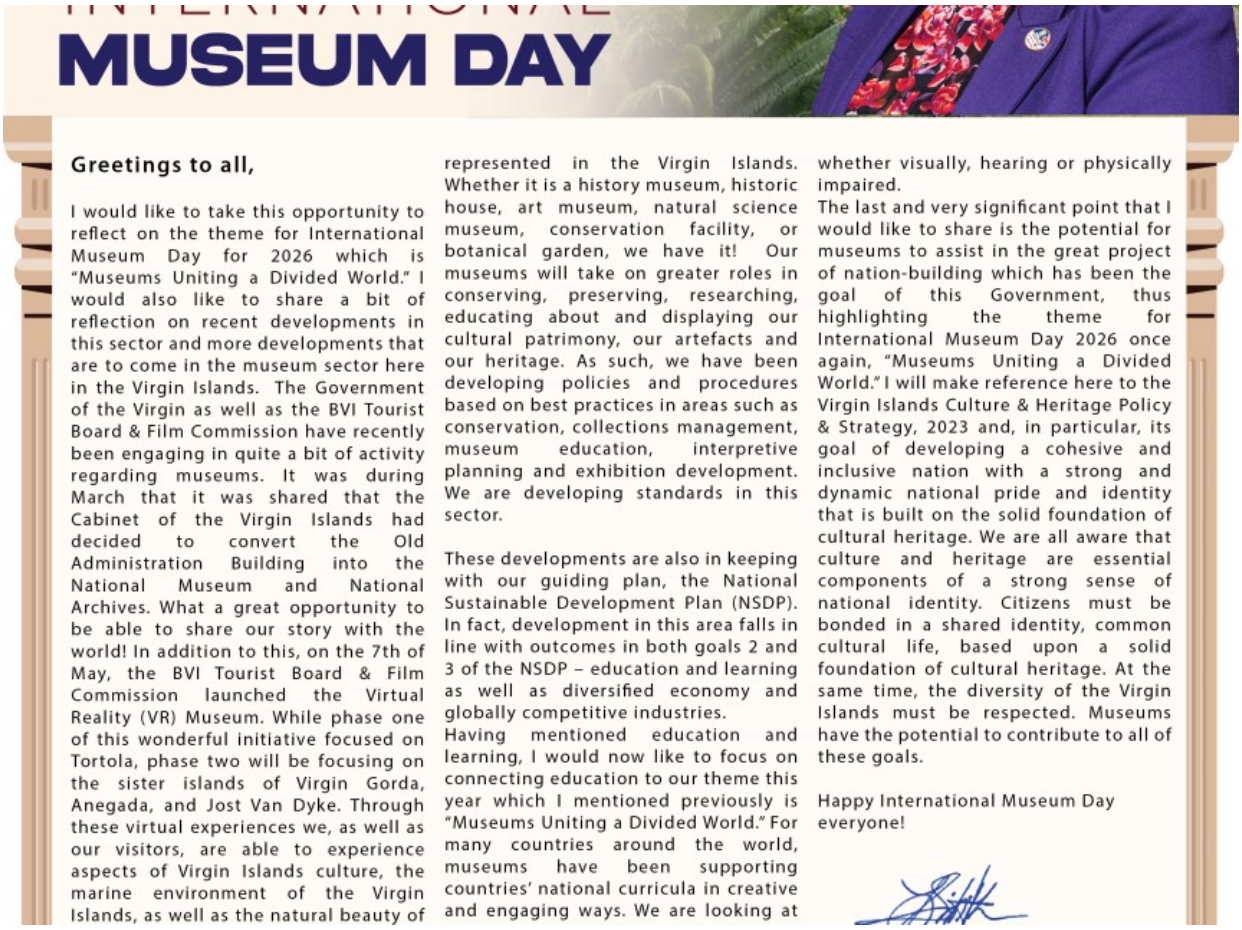
GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Tel: (284)468-2730
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The VI Observes International Museum Day under the Theme, “Museum Uniting a Divided World”.

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INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY

Greetings to all,

I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the theme for International Museum Day for 2026 which is “Museums Uniting a Divided World.” I would also like to share a bit of reflection on recent developments in this sector and more developments that are to come in the museum sector here in the Virgin Islands. The Government of the Virgin as well as the BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission have recently been engaging in quite a bit of activity regarding museums. It was during March that it was shared that the Cabinet of the Virgin Islands had decided to convert the Old Administration Building into the National Museum and National Archives. What a great opportunity to be able to share our story with the world! In addition to this, on the 7th of May, the BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission launched the Virtual Reality (VR) Museum. While phase one of this wonderful initiative focused on Tortola, phase two will be focusing on the sister islands of Virgin Gorda, Anegada, and Jost Van Dyke. Through these virtual experiences we, as well as our visitors, are able to experience aspects of Virgin Islands culture, the marine environment of the Virgin Islands, as well as the natural beauty of represented in the Virgin Islands. Whether it is a history museum, historic house, art museum, natural science museum, conservation facility, or botanical garden, we have it! Our museums will take on greater roles in conserving, preserving, researching, educating about and displaying our cultural patrimony, our artefacts and our heritage. As such, we have been developing policies and procedures based on best practices in areas such as conservation, collections management, museum education, interpretive planning and exhibition development. We are developing standards in this sector.

These developments are also in keeping with our guiding plan, the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP). In fact, development in this area falls in line with outcomes in both goals 2 and 3 of the NSDP – education and learning as well as diversified economy and globally competitive industries.
Having mentioned education and learning, I would now like to focus on connecting education to our theme this year which I mentioned previously is “Museums Uniting a Divided World.” For many countries around the world, museums have been supporting countries’ national curricula in creative and engaging ways. We are looking at whether visually, hearing or physically impaired.
The last and very significant point that I would like to share is the potential for museums to assist in the great project of nation-building which has been the goal of this Government, thus highlighting the theme for International Museum Day 2026 once again, “Museums Uniting a Divided World.” I will make reference here to the Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy, 2023 and, in particular, its goal of developing a cohesive and inclusive nation with a strong and dynamic national pride and identity that is built on the solid foundation of cultural heritage. We are all aware that culture and heritage are essential components of a strong sense of national identity. Citizens must be bonded in a shared identity, common cultural life, based upon a solid foundation of cultural heritage. At the same time, the diversity of the Virgin Islands must be respected. Museums have the potential to contribute to all of these goals.

Happy International Museum Day everyone!