GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

# PRESS RELEASE

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# 26 Successfully Complete Entrepreneurial Education Programme

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**Education, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Drive Future Economic Growth in the Virgin Islands**

On 28 June, 2026, Junior Minister for Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation, Honourable Lorna G. Smith, OBE, congratulated 26 entrepreneurs and business owners who successfully completed the Entrepreneurial Education Programme, a training initiative hosted by the Department of Trade in collaboration with the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College (HLSCC) - designed to strengthen business planning, marketing, financial management and operational skills.

Delivering the Feature Address at the graduation ceremony, Honourable Smith highlighted the importance of lifelong learning, adaptability and forward-thinking leadership in supporting the success of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and strengthening the Territory's economic future.

The graduates represented a diverse cross-section of the Virgin Islands business community, including entrepreneurs in steel works, marine services, bookkeeping, agriculture, and hospitality. Honourable Smith said the range of industries represented at the ceremony reflected the significant contribution MSMEs make to economic growth, job creation and community development throughout the Virgin Islands. She encouraged graduates to apply their newly acquired skills to further strengthen their operations and pursue new opportunities.

The Minister also urged entrepreneurs to embrace emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), and to invest in understanding the digital tools that are increasingly shaping modern business operations. Noting that AI is transforming industries worldwide, Honourable Smith stressed the importance of ensuring business owners are equipped to harness technological advancements effectively. She added that building digital capability within the local business community will be essential to strengthening economic resilience, improving productivity, enhancing competitiveness and positioning The Virgin Islands to capitalise on opportunities in an increasingly technology-driven global economy.

Honourable Smith also highlighted the value of partnerships in supporting business development, recognising the contributions of HLSCC, the BVI Chamber of Commerce and other organisations that continue to provide training, mentorship and practical support to entrepreneurs across the Territory.

Reflecting on the significance of the graduation ceremony, Honourable Smith stated:

"I am particularly encouraged by the entrepreneurs and business owners who completed this programme, especially those who have already spent many years building successful enterprises. Their willingness to continue learning, adapting and strengthening their skills demonstrates that long-term success is built on a commitment to continuous improvement. Whether you have been operating for two years or twenty-five years, there is always value in building knowledge, embracing new ideas and developing new skills to capture the opportunities of tomorrow, strengthening business and the wider economy.

As we navigate rapid technological change, including the rise of artificial intelligence, continuous learning has never been more important. Entrepreneurs who take advantage of the high-quality opportunities offered by valued partners across the Virgin Islands will be best positioned to innovate, adapt and seize new opportunities for growth."

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## Gallery


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