GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Study Visit Highlights Opportunities for Stronger Sargassum Management in The Virgin Islands

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The Virgin Islands could benefit from practical strategies designed to improve public health preparedness, protect coastal ecosystems, strengthen tourism resilience and create economic opportunities through the productive use of sargassum.

These opportunities were highlighted by Deputy Secretary, Premier's Office, Dr. Lavon P. Chalwell-Brewley, following her participation in the OECS-European Union Study Visit on Sargassum Management and Valorisation in Martinique and Guadeloupe from 31 May to 5 June. Delegates came together to examine innovative approaches to managing the environmental, social, health and economic impacts of recurring sargassum influxes across the Caribbean.

Deputy Secretary Chalwell-Brewley represented The Virgin Islands at the programme, along with Ms. Atoya George, Climate Change Officer within the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change. They participated in technical briefings, site visits and stakeholder consultations focusing on sargassum interception, collection, monitoring and utilisation.

In her report, Dr. Chalwell-Brewley noted, "The observations and lessons emerging from the study visit may prove useful as The Virgin Islands continues to explore practical and sustainable approaches to sargassum management, environmental protection, coastal resilience, and public health preparedness. Given the increasing frequency of sargassum influxes affecting (our) coastlines, the study visit provided a timely opportunity to examine approaches being implemented elsewhere. The knowledge gained has direct relevance to ongoing discussions regarding environmental management, public health protection, tourism resilience, fisheries sustainability, and opportunities for the productive utilisation of collected sargassum."

Recommendations arising from the study visit include assessing the feasibility of air quality monitoring systems in sargassum-prone areas, exploring community-based collection programmes involving fishermen and coastal communities, evaluating the costs and benefits of barriers and barges, and investigating opportunities for composting of processed sargassum.

The study visit formed part of the SARSEA (Sargassum Regional Strategies for Ecosystem-Based Actions) Initiative, a regional programme supported by the European Union, Agence Française de Développement, Expertise France and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States.

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About:

The Government of The Virgin Islands is committed to promoting good governance and the sustainable development of the Territory with a view to ensuring a well-informed, prosperous, cohesive and stable society. The Premier’s Office serves as the focal point for coordinating cross-sectoral policies and programmes and promoting the sustainable development of The Virgin Islands to ensure a well-informed, prosperous, cohesive and stable society.

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Additional Documents or Media

- vi_represented_at_regional_sargassum_workshop.pdf