GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Cabinet Approves Virgin Islands National Tourism Policy

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(Stakeholders to Benefit from Clear Guidelines and Enhanced Tourism Development Strategy)

Cabinet has approved the National Tourism Policy, paving the way for a more strategic, coordinated, and sustainable approach to tourism development in The Virgin Islands.

The stamp of approval came during Cabinet's meeting of 17 June, marking the culmination of extensive stakeholder engagement aligned with the OECS Common Sustainable Tourism Policy.

Tourism is a principal driver of the local economy and directly affects employment, business activity, government revenues, community development, and the preservation of the Territory's natural and cultural assets. The policy establishes a clear framework to guide decision-making, investment, and development across the sector, and provides a shared vision and set of priorities for Government, industry stakeholders, and the wider community. It identifies the actions required to strengthen the competitiveness of the tourism sector, improve the visitor experience, support local enterprise, develop the workforce, and safeguard the resources upon which the industry depends, ensuring that tourism growth is managed strategically and sustainably.

Premier and Minister of Finance, and Tourism, Culture and Sustainable Development, Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley, said: "This policy positions The Virgin Islands to enhance visitor experiences, create opportunities for our people, support local businesses, and ensure that tourism development delivers meaningful benefits across our communities. Rather than being a document that remains on a shelf, the National Tourism Policy creates a basis for accountability, as it sets clear objectives and measurable outcomes, enabling progress to be monitored and assessed over time."

Premier Wheatley thanked the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sustainable Development, industry stakeholders, community partners, and all those who contributed their expertise and insights throughout the policy development process. He added: "Together, we have established a strong foundation that will

guide the future growth and competitiveness of The Virgin Islands tourism industry for generations to come.”

Junior Minister for Culture and Tourism, Honourable Luce Hodge-Smith, said: "The National Tourism Policy represents a significant step in advancing The Virgin Islands' vision for economic growth and sustainable development. By aligning government, industry, and community priorities, this policy positions the tourism sector to create greater opportunities for our people, strengthen resilience, and enhance The Virgin Islands' standing as a premier destination in the region and the world."

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sustainable Development, Mr. Joseph Smith-Abbott, said: “Approval reflects the Ministry's commitment to evidence-based planning, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable development. I commend the public officers whose professionalism, technical expertise, and dedication were instrumental in developing a policy that will guide the future growth and competitiveness of the industry.”

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About:

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sustainable Development is responsible for advancing the Territory’s tourism sector, preserving and promoting cultural heritage, and implementing policies that support sustainable growth and environmental stewardship.

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