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First Round of Constitutional Negotiations with United Kingdom to Commence Next Week

The Government of The Virgin Islands will host the first round of formal constitutional negotiations with the Government of the United Kingdom from 14–15 July, as both parties engage in discussions on possible revisions to The Virgin Islands Constitution Order, 2007.

The negotiations mark a significant milestone in the Territory's ongoing constitutional review process and represent the next phase following the work of the Constitutional Review Commission, deliberations by the House of Assembly, the establishment of the Constitutional Negotiating Committee (CNC), and a series of public consultations held throughout the Territory.

The United Kingdom delegation will comprise four officials led by Mr. Nicholas Wareham MVO, Head of Delegation. Accompanying Mr. Wareham will be Ms. Susan Dickson, Constitutional Adviser, Overseas Territories Directorate; Ms. Sarah Baddeley, Legal Adviser, Overseas Territories Directorate; and Ms. Vaishali Patel, British Virgin Islands Desk Officer.

Premier and Minister of Finance, Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley, will lead The Virgin Islands delegation.

Over the past several weeks, members of the Constitutional Negotiation Committee, under the leadership of Premier Wheatley, have been engaged in a series of planning meetings in preparation for the negotiations. Committee members have reviewed the recommendations approved by the House of Assembly and have responded to requests for additional information from the United Kingdom negotiating team.

The Virgin Islands Negotiation Team is being supported by Sir Jeffrey Jowell KC, a leading authority on public, constitutional and administrative law. Sir Jeffrey has advised on constitutional matters in the Cayman Islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands, Gibraltar, Myanmar (Burma), Sri Lanka, Georgia and The Gambia.

Premier Wheatley said, "The commencement of these negotiations marks an important milestone in the constitutional advancement of our Virgin Islands. The objective is to secure a modern Constitution that reflects the aspirations of our people, strengthens democratic governance and provides an appropriate framework for greater self-government while maintaining our valued partnership with the United Kingdom. We enter these discussions in good faith, committed to respectful dialogue and expecting practical outcomes that will serve the best interests of all Virgin Islanders.

Discussions are expected to continue in the United Kingdom later this year, with the aim of concluding negotiations by the end of 2026 and preparing the agreed constitutional amendments for enactment in 2027.

Premier Wheatley said the Government of The Virgin Islands remains committed to keeping the public informed and will provide updates following the conclusion of the meetings.

About:

The Premier's Office provides strategic leadership and policy direction for the Government of The Virgin Islands and is responsible for advancing the Territory's priorities in governance, constitutional development, external affairs and sustainable national development.