



THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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PRESS RELEASE

Speaker and Clerk Attend COTSC 2026

Thursday 16, July — Speaker and Clerk of the House of Assembly participated in the 5th Commons and Overseas Territories Speakers' Conference (COTSC2026), hosted by the Parliament of the Cayman Islands from 26–29 May.

The Speaker of the House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands, Honourable Corine N. George-Massicote, joined Speakers, Clerks and Overseas Territories representatives from across the British Overseas Territories and the United Kingdom to discuss the future of parliamentary democracies.

She was accompanied by the Clerk of the House of Assembly, Mrs. Bethsaida Smith-Hanley, whose role includes overseeing the daily operations of the Virgin Islands legislature and coordinating official functions and sittings.

COTSC2026 convened parliamentary leaders to examine how modern democracies can remain transparent, resilient and citizen focused, in an era of rapid technological and societal change.

Core themes included modernising legislative transparency, strengthening civic trust and sharing best practices on unique constitutional arrangements across the British Overseas Territories and the wider Commonwealth.



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The BVI London Office, led by the Director and U.K. Representative, was honoured to support Speaker George-Massicote's participation in COTSC2026 and to engage with global peers on these critical governance issues.

This collaboration reinforces the Virgin Islands' commitment to active diplomatic engagement and continuous improvement of parliamentary processes in line with international standards.

"COTSC2026 was an invaluable opportunity to showcase the work of the Virgin Islands House of Assembly and to learn from colleagues across the Overseas Territories and the United Kingdom," said Clerk of the House of Assembly, Mrs. Bethsaida Smith-Hanley. The Clerk added,

"The discussions on digital governance, transparency and citizen engagement will directly inform how we structure procedures, manage our sittings and communicate with the public. By sharing our experiences and listening to others, we are better equipped to strengthen the institution of parliament, ensuring that it has the capacity, resources and systems in support of legislative work."

The Virgin Islands delegation extends sincere thanks to the Parliament of the Cayman Islands and the organisers of COTSC2026 for hosting such a thoughtful and visionary gathering of parliamentary leaders.

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Note to Editors: Images (HoA)

3 Images of delegates present at COTSC 2026