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Premier Wheatley Underscores Need for a New Virgin Islands Constitution

As the second round of constitutional negotiations between The Virgin Islands and the United Kingdom is underway, there is growing recognition that the time has come for the Territory to embrace a modern Constitution that reflects the realities, aspirations, and ambitions of today's Virgin Islands.

In a National Address on Tuesday evening Premier and Minister of Finance, Honourable Dr Natalio D. Wheatley, underscored the importance of the ongoing constitutional reform process, describing it as one of the most significant national undertakings in recent history. He said, "it is not simply about changing laws on paper; it is about building the framework that will guide our development and shape our future."

The Virgin Islands' current Constitution came into force in 2007. Nearly two decades later, the Territory has matured politically, socially, and economically. Its institutions have evolved, its people have gained greater experience in self-governance, and new challenges and opportunities have emerged.

The Premier noted: "For a people on a journey of self-determination, a modern Constitution is essential. It strengthens our democratic institutions, protects our rights and freedoms, supports good governance, and provides greater clarity about how decisions affecting our lives are made. Most importantly, it helps define the relationship between the people of these Virgin Islands and the government that serves them. The decisions made through this process have the potential to influence the direction of our Territory for generations to come. They will help determine the opportunities available to our young people, the strength and effectiveness of our institutions, and the extent to which Virgin Islanders can shape their own destiny."

The Premier emphasised that the constitutional reform process is bigger than any government or any one generation." He said: "It is about ensuring that The Virgin Islands continues its steady progress with confidence, dignity, and purpose."

The first round of formal constitutional negotiations took place in July 2026 in The Virgin Islands and was followed by discussions in London with the United Kingdom Minister responsible for the Overseas Territories. According to the Premier, those engagements have been constructive, positive, and respectful, creating momentum for the current round of talks.

As negotiations continue, residents are encouraged to remain engaged and informed about a process that will have lasting implications for the Territory's future. The development of a new Constitution presents a rare opportunity to help shape the next chapter of The Virgin Islands' story and to ensure that the governance framework of the Territory reflects both its progress and its ambitions.

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About:

The Constitutional Negotiating Committee is responsible for leading discussions between The Virgin Islands and the United Kingdom on constitutional reform. The Committee is reviewing The Virgin Islands Constitution Order, 2007, with the objective of developing recommendations for a modernised constitutional framework that reflects contemporary governance needs, strengthens democratic institutions, and supports the Territory's future development and aspirations.