



THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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STATEMENT BY

HONOURABLE CORINE N. GEORGE-MASSICOTE

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

**FIFTH SITTING OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTH HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
ON THE COMMONS AND OVERSEAS TERRITORIES SPEAKERS' CONFERENCE**

TUESDAY 21st JULY, 2026

Honourable Members,

I wish to update this Honourable House, and through it the people of the Virgin Islands, on my participation in the Commons and Overseas Territories Speakers' Conference, an initiative established by the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Rt Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, to strengthen collaboration, facilitate the exchange of ideas, and support the continued development of the Parliaments of the United Kingdom and the Overseas Territories.

The Conference brought together Speakers, Clerks and senior parliamentary officials from across the United Kingdom and the Overseas Territories to learn from one another



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and to identify practical ways to strengthen the work of Parliament. While our constitutional arrangements differ, we are united by a shared commitment to ensuring that our Parliaments remain effective, accountable and responsive to the needs and expectations of the people we serve.

This year's Conference was particularly timely for the Virgin Islands, coming at a point when the House of Assembly has entered a new chapter in its development following the enactment and commencement of the House of Assembly (Management) Act, 2025.

The progress made by the House attracted considerable interest from parliamentary colleagues, who were keen to learn about the Virgin Islands' legislative approach and its transition to an autonomous parliamentary administration. It was encouraging to share our experience and to demonstrate that, while we continue to learn from other legislatures, the House of Assembly is also contributing to wider discussions on parliamentary reform and institutional development across the Overseas Territories.

I was also pleased to contribute to the Conference through a presentation on the role of Parliament and the Speaker in constitutional reform. The discussions reinforced the importance of Parliament as the principal forum for national dialogue on constitutional matters and highlighted the need for constitutional development to be informed by transparency, meaningful public participation and respect for democratic principles.

One of the most valuable discussions focused on Parliament's responsibility for ensuring accountability in the use of public resources. We examined the important work of Public Accounts Committees, the responsibilities of Accounting Officers and the relationship between Parliament and the Public Service in safeguarding public funds. It was particularly instructive to learn how public officers in other jurisdictions receive specialised training to prepare them for their responsibilities as Accounting Officers and for their appearances before parliamentary committees.



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This reflects a shared understanding that effective accountability depends not only on informed Members of Parliament, but also on capable public officers who understand their responsibilities for sound financial management, transparency and stewardship of public resources.

I have prepared a report on my participation in the Conference and the principal themes that emerged from the discussions. The report considers their relevance to the continued development of the House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands and the work already underway to strengthen Parliament as a modern, accountable and accessible institution.

I have asked the Clerk to circulate the report to Honourable Members, and it will also be published by the House of Assembly so that the people of the Virgin Islands may benefit from the knowledge, experiences and best practices shared during the Conference.

As Speaker, I remain committed to ensuring that the House of Assembly continues to grow as a Parliament that serves with integrity, leads with purpose and remains firmly connected to the people of the Virgin Islands. The knowledge gained and relationships strengthened through this engagement will continue to support that commitment as we build an institution that reflects the highest standards of parliamentary democracy.

Hon. Corine N. George-Massicote
Speaker