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

SIXTH SITTING OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTH HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

WELCOME REMARKS-BUDGET ADDRESS 2027

TUESDAY 27th OCTOBER, 2026

Good morning, Honourable Premier, Honourable Members of this House, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is indeed my pleasure to welcome each of you to the House of Assembly on this very important occasion, the presentation of the Budget Address by the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance.

Today, we are pleased to have among us our current Honourable Members of the House of Assembly and their spouses, as well as former Premiers, former Speakers and former Members of this Honourable House.

I extend welcome to our Clerk and Deputy Clerks of the House of Assembly, former Clerks, including my cousin, Ms Julia Leonard, and Deputy Clerks, and our current and former staff of the House of Assembly, whose dedication and service have contributed to the work and development of this institution over the years.

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I welcome the Deputy Governor and former Deputy Governors, Permanent Secretaries, Financial Secretary Heads of Departments, other senior public officers, members of the diplomatic and wider community, and all our specially invited guests.

I wish to extend a particularly warm welcome to the students joining us today. We are always pleased to see our young people taking an interest in the work of Parliament and the affairs of our Territory. You are not only the leaders of tomorrow, but an important part of our community today. I hope that this experience will deepen your understanding of the parliamentary process and inspire you to remain engaged in the future of our Virgin Islands.

To the members of the public joining us here, and to our listening and viewing audience throughout the Virgin Islands and beyond, we are equally pleased to have you share in today's proceedings.

I wish to take a moment to especially acknowledge those who have served this Honourable House and our Territory in years gone by.

Your presence today is particularly meaningful. Each of you, in your own way, has contributed to the journey of our parliamentary democracy and the development of these Virgin Islands. The work we continue today builds upon the foundation laid by those who came before us, and it is always a pleasure to welcome you back to this institution.

The presentation of the Budget Address is an important occasion in the life of our Territory. It is a time when we look not only at where we are, but also at where we hope to go as a people.

Beyond the figures and financial projections, the Budget speaks to the priorities, aspirations and future of our Virgin Islands. It speaks to our communities, our families, our young people and the generations who will follow.

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As Members of this Honourable House, we are entrusted with the responsibility of carefully considering the proposals presented, asking the necessary questions, and ensuring that the interests of the people remain at the centre of our deliberations.

We may not always agree on the way forward, and that is part of a healthy democracy. But I trust that, as we undertake this important work, we will do so with mutual respect, thoughtful engagement and a shared commitment to the people we have been called to serve.

To the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance, I wish to acknowledge the work that has gone into preparing today's Budget Address, as well as the efforts of the many public officers who have contributed to this process.

I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Clerk and staff of the House of Assembly, the public officers, and all those who have worked diligently behind the scenes to make today's occasion possible. From the planning and coordination to the decorations, ushering, technical arrangements and the many other details that go into hosting an event such as this, your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

It is often the work that takes place quietly behind the scenes that makes occasions like today so special. To each of you, thank you for your dedication, teamwork and commitment to ensuring that this occasion is a success.

It is my hope that today's proceedings, and the deliberations that will follow, will be guided by wisdom, respect and a genuine desire to see our Virgin Islands continue to grow and prosper.

Regardless of the different roles we hold, or the different paths we have travelled, we all share something in common, a love for these Virgin Islands and a desire to see our people and our Territory flourish.

Once again, on behalf of the House of Assembly, I extend a heartfelt welcome to each and every one of you.