

FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, INC.

Public Briefing on the Outcomes from Rio+20: Implications for the Caribbean and the Virgin Islands

On September 6, 2012, the Foundation for Development Planning, Inc held a Public Briefing in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, on the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development. The objective of the Public Briefing was to provide public sector managers, academics, and members of the general public with an overview of the outcomes of the conference, and the implications of the outcomes for Caribbean development.

Remarks and Presentations

The Briefing was opened by the President of the Foundation for Development Planning, Inc., Mr. Lloyd Gardner, who welcomed the participants and the main presenters. In his introductory remarks, Mr. Gardner informed the participants of the purpose of the Foundation, which is to support all facets of Caribbean development, whether through research and development activities, or by providing technical support to community, national, or regional organizations involved in the development process.

Brief remarks were given by the Honourable Donna Christensen, U.S. Virgin Islands Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives and Mr. Basil Ottley, Department of Interior, Virgin Islands Field Representative.

The Briefing centered around two presentations. The first, by Dr. Carlyle Corbin (Executive Secretary, Council of Presidents, United Nations General Assembly), identified the main outcomes of the conference that are relevant to the Greater Virgin Islands (U.S. and British). Dr. Corbin also presented a number of perspectives on the outcome of the process, with a reminder that Caribbean institutions must consistently and actively participate in such global processes in order to ensure that the outcomes of such processes are appropriately translated to meet the unique development goals of Caribbean peoples. **The Statement by Dr. Corbin is attached.**



From left: Dr. Carlyle Corbin, Dr. the Hon. Donna Christensen, Dr. the Hon. Kedrick Pickering, and Mr. Lloyd Gardner.

The Keynote Speaker was introduced by Dr. Michael O'Neal, Vice President of the Foundation for Development Planning, Inc. The Keynote Speaker was Dr. the Honourable Kedrick D. Pickering, Deputy Premier and Minister of Natural Resources and Labour, Government of the British Virgin Islands. Dr. Pickering's address focused on Green Economy initiatives in the British Virgin Islands, placing those initiatives within the context of Caribbean development, particularly the evolving process involving the Overseas Countries and Territories of the European Union. [The Statement by Dr. Pickering is attached.](#)

Discussions

The discussions following the main presentations dealt with a number of the implications for Caribbean development processes, mainly; Caribbean regional cooperation mechanisms and initiatives, the role of civil society organizations, access to information, improved planning and management of critical development issues (natural resources management, development of renewable and alternative energy sources, trade and movement of labour, and waste management), improvement in institutional capacity, science and technology, and determination of approaches for Green Economy/Blue Economy development in the Caribbean.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Gardner reminded participants that the Foundation for Development Planning, Inc has a Program of Work that is based on the development priorities of the Caribbean. As such, the Foundation intends to participate in the dialogue about what constitutes sustainable development for the Virgin Islands and Caribbean communities, in addition to facilitating the development and application of appropriate tools, methods, and strategies.

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**A Public Briefing on the Rio + 20 Conference
on Sustainable Development**

**6th September 2012
10:00 AM**

**Statement of Dr. Carlyle Corbin
Executive Secretary
Council of Presidents
United Nations General Assembly**

Dr. Donna Christensen, Delegate to the U.S. Congress; The Honourable Kedrick Pickering, Deputy Premier and Minister of Natural Resources and Labour of the Virgin Islands Government; Mr. Lloyd Gardner, President, Foundation for Development Planning; Colleague members of the Board of the Foundation; Members of the university community; Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

Allow me to add my welcome to Deputy Premier **Dr. Kedrick Pickering** who I have not seen since, perhaps, my tenure ended as Secretary-General of the Inter-Virgin Islands Council over five years ago. Of course, I have continued to follow Dr. Pickering's career, and am anxious to hear his important perspectives on prospects for a green economy, both from the standpoint as Minister of Natural Resources and Labour, and also as his country's representative to the Conference of Environment and Sustainable Development Ministers of CARICOM.

I would like to thank the President of the Foundation for Development Planning, **Mr. Lloyd Gardner**, for putting together the arrangements and logistics for this public briefing on the United Nations Rio + 20 conference. It is important that institutions of civil society such as FDP provide a space for further elaboration on such important global issues as sustainable development which have regional and territorial, as well as global implications. This is the niche which activist NGOs can fill, and I again commend our President, Mr. Gardner, for his work.

My role today is to place Rio+ 20 in the global context of United Nations action, identify some of the main outcomes relevant to the Greater Virgin Islands, and examine varying perspectives on the outcome of the process – a process which, is, of course, an ongoing and continuous one.

Rio+20 – The Context

The very reference to “Rio + 20” implies that there was an original “Rio” – and in fact, there was. Some 20 years ago in 1992 the original United Nations Conference on Environment and Development – also known as the Earth Summit – was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This was the first in what would become a series of U.N. world

conferences ongoing through present day. This was the method by which the U.N. General Assembly organised the nations of the world under the umbrella of the United Nations to deal with the emerging “Earth Crisis,” in the words of the Reggae artist Steele Pulse.

The original 1992 Rio Conference adopted what you may recall as Agenda 21, also referred to as the “Earth Charter” which remains very much the contemporary blueprint for the implementation of ‘planet friendly’ solutions to development. But it is a blueprint which has not yet been implemented, and carrying out the mandate of the nations continues to be the Achilles heel of the United Nations.

The 1992 Earth Summit was followed by review sessions at the U.N. at five year intervals. Rio + 20 was the latest in such review sessions, and it is expected that an activity commemorating 25 years of the Earth Summit will be held to examine the level of implementation at that time.

It is important to note at this juncture that the original Rio process served as a catalyst for the focus by the United Nations on other aspects of the sustainable development continuum. One closely related aspect was the initiative taken by the small island countries of the Caribbean and Mediterranean Seas and the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans, that actually emerged from the Rio Conference in 1992.

The initiative to which I refer was the original Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) which convened in 1994 in Barbados (with subsequent five-year reviews) designed to focus attention on the unique sustainable development issues of SIDS. This initiative was coordinated by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) which comprised some 44 countries. The US Virgin Islands, by the way, was the first non-independent territory observer to AOSIS during my tenure as the territory’s representative to various U.N. bodies. We later sponsored American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Netherlands Antilles to become part of the process as observers to this dynamic group which continues to drive the agenda as it relates to issues specifically affecting the island countries worldwide. As a result of the activist approach taken by AOSIS, most of our territories were given the opportunity to participate fully as official observers in the Rio and in the SIDS processes, and in all of the follow-up review sessions since that time. The U.N. is presently negotiating the terms and conditions, as well as the venue, for the SIDS + 20 conference scheduled for 2014.

There have been other U.N. world conferences on various aspects of sustainable development which also maintained the five-year reviews. These included the original 1994 International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo; the 1995 World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held in Yokohama, Japan; the 1995 World Conference on Social Development held in Copenhagen; the 1996 International Conference on Human Settlements held in Istanbul; and the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva in 2003, and in Tunis in 2005; and the International Meeting on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS),

among others. The territories were eligible for full participation in all of these events and this served to enhance the prospects of their access to discussion and engagement on global issues at the highest levels. The consistency of participation varies, however, owing to a number of factors which is outside of the remit of this briefing to discuss.

Suffice to say that Rio + 20 is the latest in the series of global initiatives which served to accelerate world attention on the sustainability of the planet, and to identify ways and means to address environmental and other related challenges to sustainable development. So this is the context.

Major Outcomes

As to be expected, the deliberations at Rio+20 were intense, eliciting a wide range of opinions on the compromises made to achieve an outcome acceptable to the majority of the world's nations. Accordingly, decisions reached in the outcome document addressed a variety of areas in the sustainable development context including food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture; energy; water and sanitation; sustainable tourism; sustainable transport; sustainable cities and human settlements; health and population; employment; oceans and seas; small island states; disaster risk reduction; forests; biodiversity; desertification, land degradation and drought; mountains; chemicals and waste; sustainable consumption and production; and sustainable development goals.

From the small island perspective, the Pacific Islands Forum which met in the Cook Islands just last week (*with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in attendance*) spent considerable attention on the specific outcomes of the conference and began to develop strategies for implementation from the Pacific regional perspective.

The Pacific countries expressed their support for inclusion in the outcome document of reference to the special case for SIDS, as well as the emphasis placed on oceans.

The Pacific was especially heartened by the decision taken to advance sustainable development goals, and welcomed the decision of the Rio + 20 Conference to convene the Third International Conference on SIDS in 2014. It is suggested that Caribbean and Pacific territories should continue to work collectively toward securing their inclusion in the rules of procedure of the 2014 conference so that they can participate not only in the deliberations, but also in the programmes on adaptation which are emerging.

Other perspectives on the outcomes of Rio + 20 took a broader view from the prism of the concerns of the developing countries. This view emphasised the 'right to develop' which was seen as being restricted by the developed countries out of a newly-found concern for the environment. The developed countries, as the argument goes, have produced 75 per cent of the world's greenhouse gases while the level of economic and social advancement of the developing countries continued to lag far behind. Thus, the developing countries argue that if they are to restrict their carbon emissions as they

seek to accelerate their development process, the transfer of technology from developed countries was necessary. This transfer, however, has always been problematic for the developed countries who guard closely the ownership and control of their technology.

There were other perspectives, as well. Some countries were deeply disappointed with the outcome which they viewed as containing little new initiatives for urgent action, while merely reaffirming what had been adopted in the past.

One of the biggest issue was the effort to convince the developed countries to renew the original commitments of the 1992 Earth Summit. This was evident throughout the preparatory process preceding the conference, and was agreed, virtually, on the final day. The matter of transferring technology to the developing countries was recognised on the basis of commercial terms. There was also a sense of softening of language which had heretofore committed to “new and additional financial resources” for the sustainable development process. The new language in the outcome document now calls for “a variety of sources” of financial assistance and “new partnerships.” This is seen as a retreat from the longstanding commitment for the developed countries to bear the brunt of the costs for the international sustainable development process.

One particular highlight of the outcome of Rio + 20 was the thirty-member U.N. working group to be formed to address the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. And from the technical perspective was the recognition in the outcome of Rio + 20 that geospatial information is crucial to sustainable development, thus providing a clear mandate for the continued work of the *U.N. Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management*. This focuses on the utilization of geography, cartography, mapping, remote sensing, hydrography, meteorology and environmental protection as tools in the sustainable development process. This assists greatly in areas of water management, food supply, agricultural planning and sustainable energy. In this context, Rio + 20 recognised the importance of establishing accurate, reliable and up-to-date geospatial information as part of advancing sustainable development.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the outcome – which Dr. Pickering will address in the context of the Virgin Islands – is the section on the “Green Economy.” Concerns were raised in Rio that this new concept might be used to replace the focus on sustainable development, that it might justify trade protectionism, and that it would require new commitments on the part of developing countries. The compromise was that the ‘green economy’ was recognised as one of the tools – rather than, the tool – for sustainable development.

Finally, Rio + 20 agreed to establish a high-level political forum on sustainable development to replace the existing Commission on Sustainable Development to provide coordination within the U.N. system. This was done with the understanding that the declarations and action plans on sustainable development over the years have not

been accompanied by strong institutions that would ensure that the commitments made by the international community would be implemented.

In the final analysis, Rio + 20 does not represent the end of the process, but rather, a new beginning. For those of us in the territories – specifically, the Greater Virgin Islands – I would suggest that it is critical that we continue to not only follow the process, but to advocate for our inclusion in that process. In the final analysis, we can only depend on our own ingenuity and talent to ensure that the goals of Rio + 20 are properly translated in our own unique development context.

Thank you.



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY DEPUTY PREMIER
AND MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES & LABOUR
DR. THE HONOURABLE KEDRICK D. PICKERING
“GREENING THE ECONOMY”
FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, INC.
PUBLIC BRIEFING ON OUTCOMES FROM RIO+20:
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CARIBBEAN AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

September 6, 2012, 10:00 a.m.

Ladies and gentlemen, I bring you greetings from the Government and people of the British Virgin Islands.

It is indeed an honour for me to stand here and address this audience on such an important topic, my sincere thanks for the invitation. As Minister with responsibility for the environment, in the British Virgin Islands, I shall endeavour to do my part to keep the issue of the environment at the forefront.

The United Nations defines a Green Economy as 'one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities'.

The Psalmist David reminds us that the earth is the Lord's and fullness thereof.

A Green Economy is one in which our economic development is driven by a development framework that is grounded in sustainability. Reduction of pollution, improved efficiency in the use of energy and our natural resources and the adoption of healthier lifestyles and habits are some of the key building blocks to a "Green Economy".

No matter the term used we can rest assured that the environment is changing, and changing rapidly, and it demands that we act quickly to mitigate against the unfavorable effects of this change that will engulf us.

Whether we have accepted it or not, phenomena such as rising temperatures, sea level rise and stronger hurricanes will continue to impact this region. We are warned by the experts that the cost of climate change to the GDP of small islands of the Caribbean will be significantly higher than the global average.

The Cabinet of the British Virgin Islands, in March of this year, approved the Virgin Islands Climate Change Policy which was funded through the United Kingdom based Enhancing Capacity for Adaptation to Climate Change (ECACC) Project with technical help provided by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center (CCCCC) based in Belize.

This policy is intended to guide the mainstreaming of the Territory's adaptation to the impacts and effects of climate change with the aim of achieving low-carbon climate resilient development.

Specifically, the policy deals with, among other things, enhancing the resilience and natural adaptive capacity of our natural resources, including terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems as well as the fishery resource base. It creates and maintains a better managed, more resilient, diverse and environmentally sound tourism industry, thus promoting energy conservation and efficiency and encouraging the use of renewable energy to reduce our national energy bill and increase our energy security.

Many of the directives under this policy will become a part of the day to day business of the Territory. I am not sure where you are in your preparations to mitigate against the effects of climate change, but I implore you to make haste.

We are told by the experts that in 50 years a number of island nations around the world will cease to exist. As far as I am aware they have not mentioned any of the islands in the Caribbean basin, but this does not mean that we are not at risk.

Living in harmony with our environment to ensure that it continues to provide us the resources that we depend on to sustain our life, our health and our economy is important to long term survival. What would we do without our clean air or beautiful landscapes and seascapes that attract millions of visitors to our shores each year? Unfortunately, we may soon find out, as these are quickly becoming marred by poor development practices and polluted by litter and other wastes. We depend intimately on our diverse and highly valuable coastal and marine resources from our beaches, to the reefs that sustain our fisheries and other marine life, to the water we drink.

In March of next year the Caribbean will converge in the British Virgin islands for the first ever Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI) of Caribbean Political leaders and CEOs. This summit of political and business leaders is being spearheaded by the Prime Minister of Grenada Honorable Tillman Thomas, the Premier of the British Virgin

Islands, Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando Smith, OBE and Sir Richard Branson's Company Virgin Unite.

The meetings are scheduled to take place on Necker Island and Bitter End in North Sound Virgin Gorda. This initiative will bring together, Government and business leaders from nations across the Caribbean region to "challenge" ourselves to protect at least 20 percent of our near-shore marine and coastal environment by the year 2020, Nations that have also committed to instituting mechanisms that will generate long-term funding for protection of the marine and coastal environment.

The resources that we have not fully harnessed as yet, like the brilliant sunshine and the Northeast Trade Winds could power our homes and businesses.

Perhaps in no other setting than a small island is the connection and dependence between the environment and man so explicit. We depend on finite and fragile resources, we have the capacity to fundamentally impact our environment and the impact we have on our environment eventually has an impact on us.

The global business community is awakening to this reality and it is time that we do too. As quoted from an American Express commercial, *"we're part of nature and as we destroy nature, we destroy ourselves. It's a selfish thing to want to protect nature."*

Because of this understanding, we also have to recognise that we cannot leave the charge of protecting the environment, our lifeline, to only a few. If we are concerned about the development of this region, we ought to be concerned about our environment. And if we are concerned about how we will live tomorrow, next year and how our children will live for that matter, we ought to be concerned about our environment. There is no tourism without the environment.

Unless and until the environment becomes everyone's business, and is thought about, and seriously considered in every decision we make, we can forget about an environment that will be in any condition to maintain our economy, secure our development or continue to provide the lifestyle we now enjoy.

On January 23, 2012 twenty one (21) Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) of the European Union (EU), including the British Virgin Islands, signed a Political Declaration in Brussels, Belgium. In item number six (6) of the declaration the OCTs have agreed to *"facilitate the participation of meetings/seminars amongst OCTs, with the EC and with other relevant partners, by informing them about the EU policies and strategies on biodiversity, environment, and sustainable marine management. Climate change, access to appropriate resources, and assistance in generating knowledge about the*

OCTs' unique biodiversity, the threats faced due to climate change as well as adaptation to these changes whilst being mindful of the long term objective of the cooperation with the European Commission on environment and climate change;"

"Continue funding the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories (BEST) Scheme with the objectives of strengthening the EU-OCT partnership, increasing awareness of biodiversity and climate change in the OCTs, building the bridge between the OCTs and Europe on the environment and biodiversity and securing the future of BEST Scheme whilst recognizing the limited human and administrative resources in the territories and the need to simplify the application process; further consider the challenges faced by some OCTs in accessing the programme, the right of OCTs to control access to their environmental assets and their desire for more robust guidelines that respect the environment interests of the OCTs and appropriately balance them with those of third parties conducting programmes under BEST."

On February 22 and 23 the Joint Nature Conservancy (JNCC) and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) held a two-day conference in the British Virgin Islands. The focus of the conference was to bring awareness to the participants on how to integrate the environment into decision making.

Other topics discussed were, communicating the value of the environment, greening the tourism industry and undertaking an economic assessment of the value of the environment to the British Virgin Islands economy.

As a follow up to the forum in Brussels, on April 26, 2012, ten (10) Overseas Countries and Territories (Dutch and English Speaking), including the British Virgin Islands, met in Curacao and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing the Caribbean Overseas Countries and Territories Council. During the meeting, matters for discussion included, among other topics, issues relative to the heightened concern about environment. BVI was nominated to host the Secretariat.

In this sub-region and indeed the greater Caribbean region we face a number of practical dilemmas that going "Green" can help to solve. There is the cost of energy and climate problem. We are all intimately aware that the cost of electricity and gas continues to rise and energy security remains a serious issue.

Also, inherent in the import and use of fossil fuels is the possibility of oil spills that, if occur will seriously pollute our coastlines. Climate change is a direct result of humans' unchecked use of fossil fuels to produce energy. While the Caribbean region, as a whole, contributes little to the problem, we are on the frontline of the impacts and must be a part of the global effort to curb the problem.

Secondly, there is the water issue. Traditionally a dry climate, we have very limited freshwater resources. This situation will intensify as the climate changes and to further compound the issue, the Caribbean region is predicted to receive less overall rainfall in the future. Thirdly, the solid waste situation across the region is out of control and we need to move swiftly towards recycling and using more biodegradable containers. We have not been doing a very good job of treating these islands we call home well or using our resources wisely. If we are concerned about living in and passing on healthy islands, we have to take strong actions now to rewrite the storyline.

To rephrase an ancient American proverb, "Treat our islands well: they were not given to us by our parents, they were loaned to us by our children."

Our commitment is to change the way we think and live. This does not mean going back to the Stone Age; rather it means rethinking and getting smarter about how we do things.

We can use a standard toilet that requires five gallons per flush or a low-flush model that uses only 1.6 gallons per flush? We must reduce excessive volume of unnecessary waste that will quickly find its way to our dump sites to be burnt and ultimately pollute the air. We must find methods to reduce the waste we produce and ultimately to recycle. The sun and wind energy are at our ready disposal; we don't have to continue to solely rely on fossil fuels.

As Government Leaders, as business leaders, as community leaders and as individuals, we all have a role to play. Government's role should be as the facilitator and example setter. Only Government can provide the policy and legal framework, set and enforce environmental standards and provide the basic public infrastructure, such as proper facilities for waste management, to ensure the environment is protected. Government must play a role through providing incentives that then drive businesses and individuals to making smarter and "greener" decisions.

We find a perfect example right here in our region in the case of Barbados. Presently, there are over 50,000 solar water heaters installed in Barbados, this represents about 50 percent of the housing stock. Cumulative consumer savings as a result of this massive "Green" conversion is over \$US400 million to date. This represents serious savings on the country and individual level when we consider that a solar water heater can pay for itself in one to two years. There were many important factors and actors, but chief among them was the important role the government played through provision of fiscal incentives.

Also happening within the British Virgin Islands, is a push to have a number of sites declared as Ramsar and World Heritage sites; these are very long and involved processes, that can take years, but we have started.

Additionally, to enhance our system of protected areas we are on the verge of declaring a number of sites, such as Long Bay Beef Island, Smugglers Cove, and Belmont as national parks.

In the British Virgin Islands I have adopted as my mantra the following statement, “There is no tourism without the environment” therefore, we are moving forward with all deliberate speed to ensure that the environment is protected. With that in mind the British Virgin Islands is moving ahead to enact legislation to protect our ocean. There is evidence that the ocean have suffered at the hands of mankind for decades and in the British Virgin Islands, and indeed across this region, it’s no different.

We have done so much damage that our near shore waters are turning brown and green from micro organisms that feed on the waste water while our coral reefs and sea grass beds are dying. The water quality is also falling and there is loss of marine life caused by waste water pollution. Waste water is high in phosphorus and nitrogen which results in a depletion of oxygen in the water as the organism die and decompose. This creates the infamous ocean dead zones, where the water is so low in oxygen that it makes it difficult for marine life to survive, including fish.

Businesses have a special role to play; businesses are the ones making the day to day decisions that really matter! The private sector has a special gift of innovation and creation and in the British Virgin Islands we have extended a challenge to the business community to spur this critical “green” transition. In the British Virgin Islands, June is celebrated annually as Environment Month, coordinated by the Conservation and Fisheries Department. This year the theme was “The Green Economy: Does it include you?”

And all businesses were challenged to take meaningful action to create this “Green Economy” by making their own “Greening Pledge”.

“Greening Pledges” include any action(s) that each business decides to implement in 2012 to help protect the environment. Pledges included actions to cut down on waste production, energy or water use; actions to properly dispose of wastes; actions to help educate consumers about better environmental practices, and actions to support environmental work.

The incentives to businesses are:

Their bottom line, as they save water, energy, and produce less waste, they save money.

Their brand reputation, especially for those in the hospitality sector of the tourism industry.

By taking the pledge their business were awarded with the Department of Conservation and Fisheries' official "Greening Seal" and publicly recognised as a "Green" leader.

The "Green" Pledge Initiative, received a total of 55 pledges from organisations pledging to protect and preserve the environment. While the pathway to a truly green, sustainable future, is a long one, where we fully integrate the environment in all of our decisions, from those made at the highest levels in government, to the board rooms of businesses and the dining tables of homes across this region, it is also one full of opportunity and excitement.

And so as I conclude, it is timely to remind us that the complex nature of the problems facing our region cannot be handled by Government alone. History has shown that it is individuals and entities outside of Government that often create the innovations and solutions to our most pressing challenges. Each and every citizen and resident must make a commitment that they too will do their part. Even though we will not be able to totally eliminate these problems, we can in concert mitigate against their overall impact on our societies, and in so doing ensure a better and brighter future for generations to come.

Small island states are highly dependent on their natural environments, it is as the Psalmist said, "*The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.*" The concept of the 'Green Economy', where economic development is achieved without having a negative impact on the environment, is developing rapidly within the Caribbean region.

The long term economic future of the region, in the face of climate change, demographic shifts and evolving patterns of energy demand, require a strategic approach to national planning. This approach must recognise the value of the environment as a vital asset whilst developing strategies for economic growth.

In the "Greater Virgin Islands" it is important to note "There is no Tourism without the Environment."

God Bless you and God continue to bless these Virgin Islands.