

**REMARKS BY PREMIER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE
THE HONOURABLE DR. D. ORLANDO SMITH, OBE
AT THE OFFICIAL SWEARING-IN CEREMONY FOR THE PREMIER AND
MINISTERS OF GOVERNMENT
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION COMPLEX
5:00 P.M., JUNE 10, 2015**

Fellow Virgin Islanders and Residents:

This is a Government in the sunshine.

I am grateful and honoured to be able to lead the Virgin Islands as your Premier as we continue to make progress together.

We started this journey almost four years ago, and I wish to thank ALL of you for again reposing your confidence in this NDP Administration, last Friday and Monday at the Polls.

I offer congratulations to all of my colleagues from both Parties who will shortly begin the next term with me in the third House of Assembly. All of us fought very hard and sacrificed much for our individual victories. But our individual sacrifices were rewarded with the trust that has been placed in us by the people of this Territory.

Each of us are indeed grateful to you for giving us your vote of confidence.

To those who were not successful - especially first time candidates. I commend you on your strength, fortitude and most of all for offering yourselves to serve the people of this territory. As one person commented on Face Book a few days ago: win, lose or draw: consider your selves winners!

Over the last few weeks I have been recounting to you some of the great things that have happened for BVI under our stewardship: great things such as our returning to positive growth, great things such as now having a healthy reserve, improved education and health care, enhanced infrastructure, greater protection and sustainability of our environment and so on.

All of these important things and more have placed the BVI firmly on the road to greater prosperity and long term sustainability. So we thank you for staying the course with us as we worked together.

This is why our success at the polls is not merely a NDP success. Rather it also represents your triumph - anchored in your faith and trust in the NDP team to act in the best interest of this territory. Indeed it is a triumph for each and every one of you, the people of this Territory.

And let me be clear: this triumph will embrace every man, woman and child in this territory! We will continue to work in the interest of every single BVIlander, every resident, every visitor. You have given us a clear mandate with an overwhelming majority in the House to do so.

And therefore I pledge to work only in the interest of the BVI, to foster progress and prosperity for ALL our people.

A lynch pin of our campaign was to ask that you allow this Administration to finish the important work which we started. Again I thank you for this opportunity to do so.

It is traditional today to announce changes in the Administration. However in order to finish the work we started, the ministerial architecture will remain intact. That is, Ministers will remain with their assigned portfolios. In the coming days however, I will be reviewing some subject areas to see how these might be made more efficient.

In that regard I am happy to announce that as a priority I will be assigning certain responsibilities to some elected representatives, thereby creating the equivalent of a Minister of State in some Ministries to support and enhance the work of the particular Ministry.

In fact I have already mentioned my intentions to His Excellency the Governor and we will be working together to make this a reality, in keeping with our Constitution.

But I am happy that the campaign is over for another reason: we launched the NDP 2015 Manifesto ten days ago. That Manifesto represents our contract with you for another term. It will therefore be the basis of our Legislative Agenda which we shall be developing as a matter of the highest priority.

Within that contract – our Manifesto - we have set out an ambitious agenda, but one that I am confident that we can deliver on. Some of the programmes continue and build upon the significant progress we have already made. Others are new and will require harder work, as we seek to solidify plans that have been shaped by your views.

Today our culinary team left for Miami for the annual Taste of the Caribbean Competition in Miami. We are so proud of our team and we are confident that the support that we all gave to them that they will bring home the gold again. Go Team BVI!

Our culinary team is but one example of the best of the BVI. It showcases this territory on a global scale. Moreover, it exemplifies that there are a number of important pieces to our Tourism sector that must fit together to ensure strong, sustained, and beneficial growth within that Industry.

This notion rings through to all our sectors - whether it be Tourism, Financial Services, Education, Youth development, our National and Natural Resources, our Health and social Services, our Infrastructure and Public Utilities, Law and Order - you name it...

Our goal is to work together from Anegada to Jost Van Dyke to improve all sectors of our economy, our social sector, and most importantly the lives of every BVIlander and resident.

I need to share a story, quite humorous to me actually: the rumor mill continues to churn steadily, even after the spectacle of various election shenanigans. I was awakened just after six this morning with the story that I was planning to retire. Well I have news for those who think that if they spread it widely enough it will happen: I intend with God's help to occupy that office up stairs for the next four years, serving the people of this Territory who elected me to do so!

I am truly anxious to continue the work that we started. As we begin our next term together, let us all pray for God's continued guidance and blessings on our Territory.

We will continue to listen to you whom we serve and to work with all our might to fulfil our commitment to you.

My team and I are truly committed to advancing the development of the BVI, so that all of you can enjoy, good health, good fortune, a high quality of life and personal fulfillment.

I am confident that over the next four years we will work together, with God's help and the support of hard working public sector to ensure continuous prosperity for all the people of this territory; and that we will, make this Territory a shining star not just in the Caribbean but in the world.

Given the long tallying process that I hope, Your Excellency, will be fixed by next election. I was unable to say a proper thank you all who made our success possible. I therefore crave your indulgence as I now do so:

I therefore express my sincere thanks to the Party's Campaign and Public Relations Committee, the NDP Youth Movement, all of our District Committees and all those who have worked tirelessly for Monday's victory at the polls. Thanks for a job well done. Thanks of course to all our supporters.

Ladies and Gentlemen: at the end of this ceremony I am delighted to invite all of you to join us for a short NDP sponsored Reception across the street at the Noel Lloyd Positive Action Park in celebration of our success, but more so to celebrate this new term and the promise of what it holds for BVI: one people, one Territory working collectively to continue on our path of progress and prosperity.

May God continue to bless each of you and may he continue to bless our beautiful BVI.