



13 FEBRUARY 2022

PRESS STATEMENT
FROM GOVERNOR OF THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS
MR JOHN RANKIN CMG

Today I am pleased to share with you my second Quarterly Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry (COI) Report. This is a key mechanism for monitoring progress. As of the end of December, fifteen of forty-eight recommendations had been completed. In January, we saw further progress, including the receipt of various reviews and audits.

In my Review I have summarised some of the positive progress made over the last four months, including progress on procurement practices. I am encouraged by the positive trend towards open and transparent public procurement.

More work is however required. I am concerned that the overall pace of reform is slower than expected and it is important that the public do not lose confidence. It is essential that together we step up our efforts to achieve these important and urgent reforms, committing resources accordingly. I believe these reforms will lead to a fairer society, whereby public funds are safeguarded and used more effectively to support public services such as education, health and infrastructure.

In my report I also raise concerns that the implementation of reform has on occasion missed the essence of what we are all trying to achieve: open, transparent and accountable governance.

For example, whilst I assented to the Register of Interests Act in December, I remain concerned that barriers are in place which limit the ability of people to hold their leaders to account. I expect the House of Assembly to return to the issue this year.

It is also disappointing to see that very little progress has been made in the last few months in progressing and deciding applications for residency and belongingship. It is imperative that the BVI Government



prioritises resources to deliver on their commitments. I will continue to monitor this closely.

I am pleased to report that five reviews and three audits have now been received by myself and the Premier: these include a review of the Commission of Inquiry Act, a review of Welfare benefits & grants, two reviews of Statutory Boards, and a review of Crown Land disposal. Audits have been completed in relation to Assistance Grants, government contracts for consultancy with Claude Skelton Cline and contracts with EZ Shipping for radar barges.

Over the next few weeks, the reviews and audits which have been received will be available to the public once they are tabled in Cabinet, and the House of Assembly as appropriate.

The numerous findings and recommendations within each of the reviews and audits must now be considered and implemented in a way which is timely and in the interests of the people of the BVI.

I continue to welcome the approach of the Premier and Cabinet and their express commitment to the reform process. As Governor, I remain committed to working in partnership with the BVI Government to ensure that these reforms are experienced positively and without delay by the people of the Virgin Islands in their everyday lives.