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## viNGN Pushes Forward with Diaspora Link Project to Establish U.S.-Africa Fiber Optic Connection

Despite a change in administration, viNGN continues to advocate for the Diaspora Link project, which aims to create a direct telecommunications link between the U.S. and Africa. CEO Stephan Adams highlighted economic and national security benefits.

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Despite the recent change in administration on the mainland, the Virgin Islands Next Generation Network (viNGN) remains "aggressively pushing" forward with the [Diaspora Link project](#), an initiative aimed at establishing a direct telecommunications link between the United States and Africa via fiber optic cables.

According to Stephan Adams, president and CEO of viNGN, “with a way-station in St. Croix, [it] provides a transit opportunity to lower our costs to virtually nothing.” He told members of the Public Finance Authority on Wednesday that viNGN is expected to be a leading candidate to manage the cable, positioning the agency to develop data centers. Adams emphasized that abundant, low-cost data, combined with the territory’s tax incentives, could make the U.S. Virgin Islands an attractive destination for new businesses, particularly those in artificial intelligence (AI) and technology sectors.

In addition to spurring business investment in the territory, Mr. Adams also highlighted what he sees as the project’s national security advantages. Diaspora Link could serve to “push back the Chinese Belt and Road initiative on the content of Africa through the digital market,” he said. This strategic opportunity, he added, has actually led to somewhat of a stalemate in Congress, which must approve the massive project. Having found two sponsors for the enabling legislation in the Senate, Mr. Adams said that a “committee tug of war occurred about where it would sit.”

According to Mr. Adams, “Commerce Department is where we wanted it because they deal with NTIA and fiber and the State Department wanted it for national security reasons.”

The territory’s Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, who sits on the House Intelligence Committee, is working to bring the legislation there, Mr. Adams disclosed, expressing confidence in the project’s prospects. “There seems to be continued interest in Diaspora Link,” Mr. Adams told PFA members.