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Bryan Outlines New Opportunities With Ghana After Trip Focused on Heritage and Future Collaboration

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Governor Albert Bryan Jr. returned from his official visit to Ghana with plans to expand trade, cultural exchange, and diplomatic engagement between the U.S. Virgin Islands and the West

African nation. During a Government House press briefing on Monday, he described the trip as the starting point for deeper ties rooted in shared history and future opportunity.

“Standing in Ghana as a Black governor of a small Caribbean territory was truly humbling,” Governor Bryan said, reflecting on the historic connection between Ghana and the Caribbean through the trafficking of enslaved people. He said he viewed his visit as part of a long tradition of Virgin Islanders engaging with the African diaspora. “I follow a path first cleared by Virgin Islanders like Edward Wilmouth Blyden, who is considered the father of Pan Africanism.” The governor added that his intention was to “honor that legacy by turning history into opportunity.”

Those opportunities, he said, will begin taking shape in early 2026, when at least two delegations from Ghana are scheduled to visit the Virgin Islands “to come and look at...the Free Trade Zone, our tourism product...our recovery, our resilience building.” Governor Bryan also shared that he extended a personal invitation to Ghanaian President John Mahama to visit the territory. “He's going to Barbados, so if that trip happens, then he will make a trip here,” he explained. He added that “I would like to see His Excellency the President come during Africa Week” as part of efforts to highlight the cultural ties between the Virgin Islands and the African continent.

The governor said the territory may also invite Ghanaian chefs to participate in Food & Wine Week on St. Croix “so that we can have that cultural exchange in terms of Jollof rice to seasoned rice.” He noted the similarities between the two dishes as another reflection of shared heritage.

Additional virtual meetings are being planned with representatives from Ghana’s Gold and Cocoa Boards. Governor Bryan also expressed interest in exploring whether the Virgin Islands could “bring nurses or teachers from Ghana to come over here.”

“This is just the beginning stages,” he said. “I want something established with them so we can ensure that the next governor continues this, because it's important...for the Virgin Islands to finally reflect our African heritage in our modern day culture – more than dancing the bamboula.”

The immediate work ahead, according to the governor, involves reinforcing commitments made during the trip and building the framework to deepen cooperation and cultural connections between the Virgin Islands and Ghana.