

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Normalized Cuba/US Relations Give Virgin Islands 'Unprecedented Opportunity To Lead,' Milling Young Says

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ST. THOMAS -- "The normalized relations [between the United States and Cuba](#) gives the territory an unprecedented opportunity to lead with strength and focus on cooperation among us.

Those were the words attributed to Senator Janette Milling Young through a press release her office issued last Thursday. Mrs. Millin Young, vice president of the 31st Legislature, has been an optimist on the reopening of Cuba, seeing the advent as an opportunity for collaboration with the potential to spur greater tourism activity not only for

Cuba, but also for the jurisdiction from which she hails.

"It is our duty as regional leaders to shape the future in a way that will promote increased commerce and exchange between all Caribbean island states and Central America," Mrs. Millin Young told participants of the 39th Caribbean-Central America Action's annual conference in Miami last week. "Now more than ever," she added, "Caribbean nations, territories and Central America must grasp this golden opportunity to make normalized relations a win-win situation for all of us.

According to the release, Mrs. Millin Young said that there was a shared sentiment among the speakers at the conference that being at the forefront of maximizing the benefits of Cuba joining the regional stage following normalized relations with the U.S. is critical. But that the actions must be entrepreneurial and private sector driven. She said she will work with her colleagues, the delegate to Congress and the governor to establish the policies and framework for this to happen.

"Should the U.S. Virgin Islands and Cuba have the opportunity to build such bridges in addition to economic development, we must explore the advantages for educational exchanges mainly in the areas of agricultural and scientific research, medicine and nursing, marine biology and technology,

The senator, who serves as the chairperson of the Committee on Economic Development, Agriculture and Planning, said last week's conference was filled with very interesting opportunities.

"Now, we have the awesome responsibility of figuring out which ideas and policies will work to the advantage of each country, territory and island nation. The task before us is catching up and collectively moving ahead. Let us work together to seize the moment."