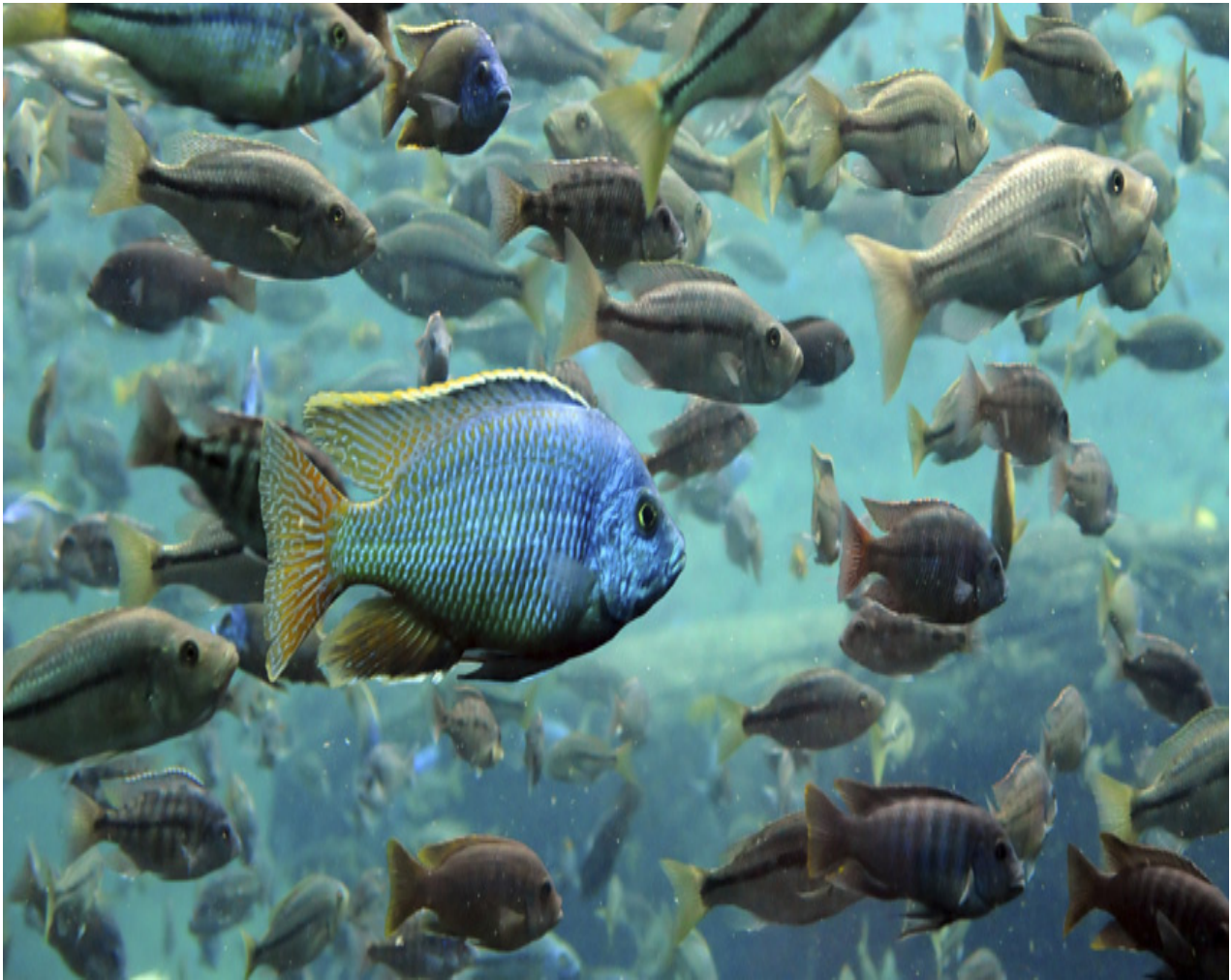


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Ambitious Project To End World Hunger To Launch In USVI

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Bass and tilapia underwater

Nobel laureate and renowned anti-apartheid leader Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu has agreed to lend his name to an ambitious agricultural initiative by Jacksonville, Florida-based FreshMinistries, Inc. to combat world hunger.

According to a release issued Monday, FreshMinistries, under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Robert V. Lee III, will launch the first of several global aquaponics "pilots" in the U.S. Virgin Islands, as part of the newly christened "Desmond Tutu Program to End Global

Hunger, a FreshMinistries Initiative.”

“Your program is quite exciting and has such a great potential for helping to eradicate poverty,” Archbishop Tutu recently wrote to Dr. Lee. “You and your colleagues already have an enviable record of making a difference. I commend you and your colleagues on a superb record. Well done.”

“We are thrilled to be working with our friends in the Virgin Islands to create a model that will not only help people worldwide but will develop agribusiness opportunities that will positively impact every Virgin Islander”, said Dr. Lee. “Our sincere thanks goes out to our partners—Farmers In Action, the Episcopal Church, and to former Commissioner of Labor, Albert Bryan, Jr. without whose early vision and leadership this could not have been accomplished.”

Aquaponics is a closed-loop system in which organic fish and produce are cultivated using significantly less space and water than traditional soil-based farming. In addition, the systems are far more productive than traditional soil-based farming, according to the release.

FreshMinistries has a 6,000 square-foot model facility operating in Jacksonville, and has received a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to build its 27,000 square-foot aquaponics training center in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Construction on that project will begin in Bethlehem, St. Croix, before the end of the year, on land leased from the U.S.V.I. government by Farmers In Action, the release said.

FreshMinistries also plans to launch an aquaponics facility near Kruger Park in South Africa in 2019.