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# Federal Officials Meet in USVI to Combat Fraud, Waste and Abuse of Federal Funds

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Dozens of federal Inspector General officials gathered in St. Thomas on March 22-23 for the first Virgin Islands Office of Inspector General Spring Symposium, U.S. Attorney for the V.I., Delia Smith, announced this week.

According to the release, the federal oversight and law enforcement officials spent two days collaborating and sharing information as part of their ongoing commitment to protect federal funds awarded to the Virgin Islands.

“As a result of Hurricanes Irma and Maria and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Territory received tens of billions of federal funds,” Ms. Smith said. “We are committed to ensuring that these funds are properly utilized to improve the lives of the people of the Virgin Islands.”

Sponsored by the United States Attorney Office and the Virgin Islands OIG Council, the symposium focused on identifying strategies to combat waste, fraud and abuse, and to improve efficiency in the federally funded programs in the Virgin Islands.

“The symposium was an excellent opportunity to do what the Inspector General community does best: work together to combat fraud, waste and abuse across federal government programs,” said Mark Lee Greenblatt, Inspector General of the U.S. Department of the Interior and Chairperson of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. Greenblatt thanked United States Attorney Smith for bringing together such a diverse array of federal law enforcement organizations. “Collaboration with our on-island partners – including the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the Virgin Islands OIG and local law enforcement – is critical to the DOI OIG’s success here. I look forward to bolstering those partnerships as we work together to identify and address misconduct in DOI programs in the U.S. Virgin Islands”, Greenblatt said.

Inspector General of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Hannibal “Mike” Ware, added that “the inaugural symposium showcased the unwavering commitment of the Inspector General community to combatting waste, fraud and abuse. With potential fraud on the rise, the IG community has implemented a whole-of-government approach by investing in partnerships to bring wrongdoers to justice and reclaim stolen taxpayer dollars.”

“This symposium represents the unprecedented commitment of the IG community and federal and local law enforcement partners to interagency collaboration in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Thank you to U.S. Attorney Delia Smith for hosting this historical symposium. We look forward to continued partnership with our local partners in the Virgin Islands to combat fraud, waste and abuse and to protect the integrity of HUD programs”, said Rae Oliver Davis, Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The U.S. Attorney's Office said representatives from 16 Inspector General Offices and federal oversight agencies, including Small Business Administration, Interior, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Education, Treasury, Transportation Security Administration, General Services Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, Internal Revenue Service, Transportation, U.S. Postal Service, Energy, Labor, Department of Justice and Commerce, attended the symposium. Federal law enforcement agents and analysts stationed in the Virgin Islands also attended the symposium, as well as representatives from the Virgin Islands Office of the Inspector General. The symposium was held at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office in Smith Bay, St. Thomas.