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PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

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## **FROM WASHINGTON, FOCUSED ON HOME: A NEW PATH TO JOBS, INVESTMENT, AND BETTER LIVES FOR ALL VINCENTIANS.**

Greetings from Washington DC.

Over the past few days, I, along with my colleagues, Foreign Minister Bramble and officials, have been attending the World Bank's Spring Meeting to make it clear where our priorities lie, namely delivering for the people of SVG, creating more and better-paid jobs, lifting the debt burden so we can invest in our country, and ensuring that the benefits of our policies are seen in your pay.

Across the Caribbean, jobs are our first line of resilience. Throughout last year's election campaign, I made it clear that our focus is always on people over projects. That means the needs of our people must be at the centre of everything we do, and that every government action is driven by one simple goal: to make your lives better. In small island economies, employment is not just about income; it underpins social stability, recovery after shocks, and long-term confidence. The theme of the World Bank's Spring Meetings this year, "Building Prosperity Through Policy," resonates strongly with us because, in small states, policy predictability is a form of economic infrastructure. It allows us to ensure that we develop the economic and social infrastructure to deliver for our people. A monumental economic mess was left by the previous government, but we are taking the necessary steps to turn this ship around.

The Spring meeting in Washington comes amid great international uncertainty. The impact of conflict in the Middle East and Ukraine continues to be felt across the world, and it is incumbent on everyone to ensure we do all we can to address those impacts. Throughout the week, we seek to address the crushing burden of debt accumulated by the previous administration. We must ensure that we give ourselves the space and ability to invest in our people. By unleashing the potential

of individuals and businesses across SVG, we will create jobs, raise living standards and tackle the many social problems facing our country.

But of course, we cannot do that alone; we must work together. We are committed to working with our international partners, whether that is with CARICOM, the OECS, global agencies here in Washington, or with international partners such as Taiwan. This week, there is a joint ceremony of the honour guard of the Taiwanese Navy and the Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force. It is a demonstration of the strength of this relationship, and while I am disappointed not to be there, I know it will be a wonderful event. It underscores what this entire week is about: working with all to improve our country.

There are so many reasons to be positive. Across the Caribbean, there is a shared sense of unity of purpose and recognition of how important it is to work together to improve the lives of all. An image came to my mind that exemplifies this. Our Caribbean waters draw visitors from all over the world. During the Christmas season, when the yachts arrive, the sea can look like a Christmas tree, with lights across the bay. That is a reminder that what we are selling to the world is a shared Caribbean asset. And it is why we must address our challenges with unity and diversify in ways that allow our islands to complement each other rather than compete with each other.

If we stay united, governments, people and development partners, we can ensure that policy translates into prosperity, and that prosperity is evident not only in GDP figures but also in jobs, dignity and opportunity for Caribbean people.

Thank you, and may God bless you all.

STATEMENT BY:

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