THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE
Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802
340-774-0001

VIRGIN ISLANDS OBSERVANCE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE
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BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
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A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the annual observance of the International Day for the World’s Indigenous People on August 9th is an occasion for Virgin Islanders of Indigenous Amerindian Caribbean Descent to reaffirm their patriotic ties to the original people of the Caribbean and the United States of America, their cultural ties with Indigenous people and their traditions and heritage with their kith and kin throughout the lands of the Caribbean, Americas and the world. All citizens of the diverse ethnic and cultural communities in the Territory are invited to acknowledge and celebrate the vital individual, community and institutional contributions of Indigenous Caribbean Amerindians and all Indigenous people of the world to the economic, political, cultural, scientific, educational, spiritual and religious life of the Territory; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations designated August 9th annually as the International Day of the World’s Indigenous People by UN Resolution 49/214 on December 23rd, 1994, and strengthened by the UN Resolution 61/295 on September 13th, 2007, with the creation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. This year’s theme is “Covid 19 and Indigenous Resilience” and will focus on the current situation around the world. Resilience from an Indigenous Perspective is a dynamic process of social/psychological adaptation and transformation that occurs in individuals, families, communities or larger social groups. Resilience can be considered as any positive outcome in the face of historical and current stressors; and

WHEREAS, as part of the commemoration, the Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch – Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues/DISD/DESA, organizes an event that brings together indigenous peoples’ organizations, UN agencies, Member States, civil society and relevant stakeholders. Research and DNA-testing have proven that there are descendants of Indigenous Amerindian people living in the Virgin Islands; and

WHEREAS, On August 8, 2014, the 30th VI Legislature introduced a VI Amerindian Heritage Preservation Bill No. 30-0453 proposed as: “An Act providing for the recognition of and respect for our sacred national patrimony, and the rights of the Taino, Carib (Kalinago) and other Caribbean Indigenous Peoples as pre-Columbian inhabitants of the U.S. Virgin Islands, recognizing that their
descendants continue to exist today; designating Salt River Bay and Magens Bay as Amerindian Sacred Places, amending 29 V.I.C. Section 964 and 32 V.I.C., sections 31 and 52 providing for the Magens Bay authority to perform preservation activities and providing for other related purposes.” The Bill included protections of Indigenous Amerindian sacred sites, lands, artifacts and cultural heritage traditions, inclusive yet not limited to Salt River Bay, Maroon Sanctuary in Annaly Bay and Salt Pond on St. Croix; Reef Bay, and Cinnamon Bay on St. John; and Botany Bay, Hull Bay, Magens Bay and Tutu Park on St. Thomas; and other sacred VI historic and cultural heritage sites. It is essential that the Legislature take up the provisions of this Bill again; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous Amerindian people of the Caribbean have contributed to the national tradition of every aspect of our society—from agriculture and science to business and the arts. As the international community celebrates and commemorates the UN’s International Day for the World’s Indigenous People, let us honor their history, culture and essential roles within the American and Virgin Islands heritage narratives. Respectful Indigenous Amerindian historic preservation, educational research and heritage restoration have been spearheaded by Opi’ a Taino International and the United Confederation of Taino People—inclusive yet not limited to established alliances, ancestral support and cooperative agreements with Carib (Kalinago), Boriken, Karifuna, Kiskeia, and other organizations, nations and families of the Virgin Islands, wider Caribbean and beyond. With sacred intentions and respect to this rich cultural heritage of the Americas, these historic observances and annual events provide a foundation for the creation of a collaborative and cooperative governmental entity within the Virgin Islands and Caribbean for the territory to recognize, unite, restore, preserve and respect the Indigenous Amerindian people, traditions, heritage, land, life and sacred resources.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Albert Bryan Jr., Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, by virtue of the Authority vested in me by the Revised Organic Act of 1954, as amended, do hereby proclaim August 9th as International Day of the World’s Indigenous People throughout the United States Virgin Islands. May our communities continue to exhibit respect, solidarity and harmony with our regional, national and international sisters and brothers commemorating observing, proclaiming and celebrating similar Indigenous People of the World events. I call upon all residents of and visitors to the Territory to respectfully extend this celebration to our family in the wider Caribbean and Americas to support the organizational, individual and other multicultural events scheduled in honor of these occasions.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands to be affixed at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas Virgin Islands, this 27th day of July, 2020.

Albert Bryan, Jr.
Governor

Attest:

Tregenza A. Roach, Esq.
Lieutenant Governor