



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802
340-774-0001

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

A PROCLAMATION

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, their traditions and heritage with their kith and kin throughout the lands of the Caribbean, Americas and the world. All residents 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 life of the Territory.

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. The 2017 theme: *10th Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Ten years ago, on the 13th of September 2007, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 61/295 by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a major milestone with respect to the cooperation and solidarity between indigenous peoples and Member States.

The Declaration is the most comprehensive international instrument on the rights of indigenous peoples. It embodies global consensus on the rights of indigenous peoples and establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for their survival, dignity and well-being. It elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms, as they apply to the specific situation of indigenous peoples.

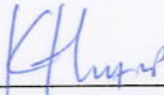
Over the last decade, the implementation of the Declaration achieved some major successes at the national, regional and international levels. Despite these achievements, there continues to be a gap between the formal recognition of indigenous peoples and the implementation of policies on the ground. The theme aims to highlight its importance through policies and programs at both the

national and international level working together towards this common goal with Governments, the United Nations system, indigenous peoples and other stakeholders. Research and DNA-testing have proven that there are descendants of Indigenous Amerindian people living in the Virgin Islands. 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 Kalinago, Boriken, Karifuna 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 government within the Virgin Islands and Caribbean for the Territory to recognize, unite, restore, preserve and to respect Indigenous Amerindian people, traditions, heritage, land, life and sacred resources.


NOW THEREFORE, I, Kenneth E. Mapp, Governor of the Virgin Islands of the United States, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Revised Organic Act of 1954, as amended, do hereby proclaim August 9, 2017 as *International Day of the World’s Indigenous People* throughout the Territory. May our communities continue to ring bells of freedom with respect, solidarity and harmony with our national and international sisters and brothers commemorating observing, proclaiming and celebrating similar Indigenous People of the World. I call upon all residents and visitors of the Territory to respectfully extend this to our family in the wider Caribbean and Americas to support the organizational, individual and other multicultural events scheduled in honor of this occasion.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, 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 10th day of August, 2017 A.D.





Kenneth E. Mapp
Governor

Attest: 

Osbert E. Potter
Lieutenant Governor