



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 DECADE OF
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES**

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution A/RES/74/135) proclaimed the period between 2022 and 2032 as the “International Decade of Indigenous Languages” (IDIL 2022-2032), to draw global attention on the critical situation of many indigenous languages and to mobilize stakeholders and resources for their preservation, revitalization and promotion; and

WHEREAS, the proclamation of an International Decade is a key outcome of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, for which the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) lead global efforts. The Organization will continue to serve as lead UN Agency for the implementation of the International Decade, in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and other relevant UN Agencies; and

WHEREAS, this is an opportunity for Virgin Islanders of Indigenous Amerindian Caribbean Descent to build a global community for the preservation, revitalization and support of indigenous languages and to reaffirm their patriotic ties to the original people and languages 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 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, since the International Decade of Indigenous Languages began in 2022, UNESCO has celebrated a truly transformative and action-driven International Decade of

Indigenous Languages to build a global community around Indigenous languages and their users, which is available for anyone to join; and

WHEREAS, languages play a crucially important role in the daily lives of all peoples, are pivotal in the areas of human rights protection, peace building and sustainable development, through ensuring cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. However, despite their immense value, languages around the world continue to disappear at an alarming rate due to a variety of factors. Many of them are indigenous languages. In response to these threats, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a Resolution (A/RES/71/178) on “Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, proclaiming 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages; and

WHEREAS, particularly, Indigenous languages are a significant factor in a wide range of other indigenous issues, notably education, scientific and technological development, biosphere and the environment, freedom of expression, employment and social inclusion; and

WHEREAS, research and DNA-testing have proven that there are descendants of Indigenous people throughout the Virgin Islands and neighboring Caribbean islands; and

WHEREAS, the 30th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands introduced a VI Amerindian Heritage Preservation Bill, 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, 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.”* Also, protections of Indigenous Amerindian sacred sites, lands, artifacts and cultural heritage traditions include, but are not limited to Salt River Bay, Reef Bay, Hull Bay, Cinnamon Bay, Botany Bay, Magens Bay, and Tutu Park in St. Thomas; and

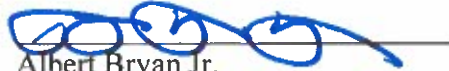
WHEREAS, Indigenous Amerindian people of the Caribbean have contributed to aspects of our national society—agriculture, science, language, and the arts. Respectful Indigenous Amerindian historic preservation, educational research and heritage restoration have been spearheaded by Opi’a Taino International, Inc., and the United Confederation of Taino People – inclusive yet not limited to established alliances, ancestral support and cooperative agreements with the Kalinago Tribe of Dominica, the Guainia Taino Tribe of Boriken (Puerto Rico) 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 Indigenous Amerindian people, languages, 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 2022-2032 as the “International Decade of Indigenous Languages”** throughout the United States Virgin Islands. May our communities continue to respect, join in

solidarity and harmony with our regional, national and international sisters and brothers commemorating observing, proclaiming and celebrating the “International Decade of Indigenous Languages.” As the international community celebrates and commemorates this decade to honor Indigenous languages, let us also reflect on the history of Indigenous people, their culture, and essential roles within the American and Virgin Islands heritage narratives. I call upon all residents of and visitors of the Territory to respectfully extend this call to our family in the wider Caribbean and Americas to support any organizational, individual and other multicultural event that may be scheduled in recognition of this decade.

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 26 day of August 2025 A.D.




Albert Bryan Jr.
Governor

Attest:

Tregenza A. Roach, Esq.
Lieutenant Governor