THEME FOR THE FORUM: “Peace, justice and strong institutions: the role of indigenous peoples in implementing Sustainable Development Goal 16.” [GLOBAL 16 = inclusive societies for sustainable development, provides access to justice for all, and builds effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels]

[INTRO IN KERES] Good afternoon, esteemed colleagues, leaders, and friends. I’m Deb Haaland, Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior and proud citizen of the Pueblo of Laguna. Today, I’m sharing my recorded remarks from the ancestral homelands of the Anacostan and Piscataway people.

At this moment, our world is facing a global pandemic. It is a crisis that puts a spotlight on the disparities that exist in Indigenous and marginalized communities across our nations and calls us to address the interlocking challenges of injustice and the climate emergency.

I believe we can meet this moment with solutions that uplift communities everywhere with the power of Indigenous resilience, language, and knowledge.

With Indigenous knowledge, our world can usher in a new era of peace, justice and strong institutions to meet this moment and move our planet toward a more sustainable future.

Our ancestors lived sustainably and survived famine and drought with the understanding that future generations would rely on their hard work and sacrifice in moments like these.

Why are we here? Because we have an obligation to the future.

I learned this in my mother’s Pueblo household, on my grandparents’ cornfield on the at the Pueblo of Laguna, and meeting with Indigenous people from across the globe.

It is Indigenous resilience and worldview that every government, country, and community can learn from, so that we manage our lands, waters, and resources not just across budget years, but across generations.

I want to give credit to the Indigenous women who are meeting this moment with grassroots efforts, defending our Earth against human causes of climate change around the world. Women and young people lead efforts in all areas of justice. We must protect these defenders.

President Biden recognizes that each of the challenges we face impacts another and requires comprehensive solutions. We’ve unleashed a whole of government approach:

- To use nature-based solutions to conserve 30 percent of our U.S. lands and waters by 2030 as part of an international push for conservation restoring balance to lands, animals, plants, waters, and all living things that sustain life;
United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (Recorded)
Date, Time TBD

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- To closely coordinate with U.S. indigenous communities in our COVID-19 response efforts;
- To partner globally ensuring Indigenous Peoples and all marginalized communities have access to vaccines, testing, and treatment;
- To put the full weight of our federal government in a cross-departmental and interagency Missing and Murdered Unit, and continue to cooperate with Canada and Mexico and other Member States to combat Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls; and
- To work with the international community on our repatriation efforts to realize a global commitment of honoring and caring for all Indigenous Peoples, their lands, languages, cultural heritage, and sacred spaces.

I strongly affirm the United States’ support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and our commitment to advancing Indigenous Peoples’ rights at home and abroad. The Declaration guides us, where appropriate, to improve our laws and policies within the structure of the U.S. Constitution and international obligations. We need enhanced participation and meaningful engagement of Indigenous Peoples throughout all our UN bodies.

President Biden’s Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation to Nation Relationships outlines our commitment to respect Tribal sovereignty and self-governance, fulfill Federal trust and treaty responsibilities, and engage in regular, meaningful, and robust consultation with Tribal Nations. Our first White House Council on Native American Affairs meeting of this Administration will be held this Friday and I hope to address Indigenous issues through this Council.

I am honored to be the first Native American U.S. cabinet secretary, and fully understand my responsibility to future generations, and Indigenous Peoples everywhere.

Though this difficult moment has been thrust upon us, it is an opportunity to usher in a new era of peace, justice and strong institutions. But we will only rise to this moment by acknowledging the collective power of Indigenous peoples, and by doing it together.

Thank you [in keres]