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International Indigenous Peoples Think Tank, IPTT



MARGINALIZATION AND NEGLECT OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE (BETHECHILOKONO) OF SAINT LUCIA

Presented at the Third Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, UN Headquarters, New York, USA 10-21 May 2004

Mandated area: Economic and social development 4(a)

For and on behalf of the Indigenous People (Bethechilokono) of Saint Lucia Governing Council, BGC

The Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia are by far the majority of functionaries in the main traditional occupations in Saint Lucia. Changes on the global scene have impacted negatively on them, as they relate to economic and social development of the Island State.

This presentation relates to a sample of 214 Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia out of 751 who volunteered registration in the 2001 National Population Census.

The majority of respondents were from the **Bethechilokono** Districts of Choiseul (**Yukahu**) and Soufriere (**Atabeyra**), having the highest frequency of Indigenous People, with an estimated 60% of the combined total of the two Districts. That amounts to approximately 7998.

2001 Population by District

| Choiseul | Soufriere | Total |
|----------|-----------|-------|
| 5995 | 7338 | 13333 |

Indigenous People Population by Sex

| Male | Percent | Female | Percent |
|------|---------|--------|---------|
| 345 | 45.9 | 406 | 54.1 |

Indigenous People Population by Age Group

| 0-14 | Percent | 15-34 | Percent | 35-64 | Percent | 65+ | Percent |
|------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-----|---------|
| 170 | 22.7 | 230 | 30.7 | 231 | 30.8 | 120 | 15.9 |

During the past 10 years the predominantly Indigenous People's Districts showed an inter-censal decline in proportion of children with the age range of 0 to 14.

Agriculture

The agricultural sector has contracted significantly since 1993, due to severe tropical storms, droughts, farmers' strikes and the effects of trade liberation. The performance of the banana sub-sector fell from US\$35M in 1993 to US\$8.7M in 2001. Preferential treatment for the Island's banana exports to the European Market will soon be a thing of the past.

The sector now contributes to 21.4 percent of the employed labour force. The shift toward a service-oriented economy, with tourism at the helm, has triggered migration to the capital and the second city in the north of the island; causing a greater increase in the food import bill and a further reduction in the capacity of the agricultural sector to be self-sufficient in food production.

Fishing

The fishing sector has been plagued by the depletion of the fishing stock within the continental shelf due to pollution and destruction of reefs; and the inability of local fisherpersons to compete with Japanese Fishing trawlers which employs dragnets that destroys small fishes. The Biological diversity of the States of Saint Lucia is adversely affected as a result of greed and non-protection policy.

During the past 10 years there has been a further widening of the gap between the labour force and the employed labour force, due to the shift to a service oriented economy and reduced employment opportunities. For the same period, the labour force increased as a result of increased involvement of women, 63 percent in productive employment. The downward slide in the growth of the labour force has reached a crisis point.

Indigenous People Occupation

| <u>Manufacturing</u> | <u>Services</u> | <u>Agriculture</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| 50 | 145 | 19 | 214 |

Indigenous People Employment

35.2 percent

Migration

During the past 50 years, external migration has had its impact on the development of the Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia, in particular the Districts of Choiseul (**Yukahū**) and Soufriere (**Atabeyra**), as thousands left their communities for other Caribbean Islands, South America, Central America, North America and Western Europe.

Poverty

The consequences of poverty among the Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia may be deduced from the statistics already provided. The majority of the active indigenous population is concentrated in the agricultural, fishing, traditional craft and manufacturing sectors. Living conditions are for the most part, appalling. Inadequate water supply, and solid waste disposal mechanisms, and poor housing are unsatisfactory conditions needing immediate attention.

Indigenous People Housing

| <u>Owned</u> | <u>Rented</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| 153 | 61 | 214 |

Indigenous People Land ownership

| <u>Owned</u> | <u>Rented</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| 120 | 94 | 214 |

Indigenous People Access to portable Water Supply

| <u>Public</u> | <u>Other</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| 124 | 90 | 214 |

In a March 2004 Socio-economic Survey conducted by the Department of Statistics, Government of Saint Lucia, it became evident that out of the top 20 poorest communities in Saint Lucia, 18 were predominantly Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia communities. This confirms ages of economic and social neglect and marginalization. The status of Saint Lucia as a small island developing State means little or nothing at all to the Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia, as they are the poorest of the poor in Saint Lucia.

Indigenous People Human waste disposal

| <u>Treatment tank</u> | <u>Other</u> | <u>None</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 113 | 72 | 29 | 214 |

Indigenous People Solid waste disposal

| <u>Garbage collection</u> | <u>Other</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| 183 | 31 |

Indigenous People Fuel for cooking

| <u>Gas</u> | <u>Wood</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|------------|-------------|--------------|
| 175 | 39 | 214 |

Recommendation

(1) The Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia Governing Council, BGC, calls on the appropriate United Nations Organs, to provide the necessary structural support to the Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia, to guarantee their survival.

(2) The Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia Governing Council, BGC, call for the promotion of a Strategic Framework on Indigenous Development in Saint Lucia, to ensure social inclusion and equality of opportunity.



Signed:

Dr. Albert DeTERVILLE

Executive Chairperson/Head-of-Delegation/Representative to the UN



Signed:

Deanne D. DeTERVILLE

Deputy Chairperson/Alternate Representative to the UN

PF III Mandated area: Economic and social development

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