

THE ALDET CENTRE

-SAINT LUCIA Box MA 020, Marchand P. O., Castries, SAINT LUCIA
 Tel/Fax: + 1 758 452 5374 Email: aldetcentre@yahoo.com



Secretariat of:
 Indigenous People [Bethchilokono] of Saint Lucia Governing Council, BGC
 Caribbean Antilles Indigenous Peoples Caucus & the Diaspora, CAIPCD
 International Indigenous Peoples Think Tank, IIPIT



THE NEED FOR A CLEARLY DEFINED ENVIRONMENT POLICY IN THE STATE 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: Environment 4(b)

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

The results of decades of the State of Saint Lucia neglect, marginalization, dispossession of ancestral properties and inappropriate development by non-indigenous people, have all but manifested in deforestation, water pollution, beach erosion, negative effects on the biodiversity, indiscriminate garbage disposal, soil erosion and degradation of watersheds. The bulk of the national forest, watersheds, mountains, flora and fauna are located within the habitats of the Indigenous People (**Bethchilokono**) of Saint Lucia.

2001 Population by District

Choiseul	Soufriere	Total
5995	7338	13333

2001 Voluntary Registration of Indigenous People = 751

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

In the quest for an over-all national development in agricultural production, infra-structural development, inclusive of roads and tourism plants, increased pressure is brought to bear on an already fragile environment of a Small Island Developing States (SIDS), like Saint Lucia. This increases the pressure on the Indigenous People (**Bethchilokono**) of Saint Lucia to apply innovative methods in the sustainable use of their resources.

The Costal Zone and the Fisheries Sector

Beaches which are important sources for buffer zones for the protection of the costal land and infrastructure from wave action, habitats for terrestrial and marine life, continue to be

degraded by the indiscriminate removal of sand and stones and inappropriate infra-structural development, aided and abetted by State organs.

The mangals which provide fishery and avifauna habitats have been back-filled with debris for infra-structural development and or converted into marina bays for yachting.

Coral reefs and sea grass beds vital in costal stability and fish breeding and nursery grounds, avifauna habitat, silt traps and nutrient exporters, are dying or disappearing at an alarming rate due to inappropriate inland and costal developments, inclusive of tourism development.

Historically, due to the topography of Saint Lucia, the settlement pattern has been along the sea corridors of the Island. With the increase in population growth and inappropriate infra-structural development along the sea coast, the Island has become vulnerable to threats from natural and man made disasters.

The majority of the approximately 2000 fisherpersons in Saint Lucia belong to the Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia.

Human waste disposal

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

Solid waste disposal

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

Forest and Terrestrial Resources

Forest cover in Saint Lucia amount to 23, 157 hectares out of 61, 500 total land area. (16, 621 rainforest, 7,515 dry scrub forest, 2,666 grass and open woodland).

The perceived interest (visitor/tourist) in Saint Lucia's natural forest resources has mushroomed to include eco-tourism activities, necessitating the construction of trail space to accommodate increased traffic, resulting in additional pressure on the already fragile system. In the absence of a clearly defined State Land Policy, the Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia who for the most occupy and utilize the forest for their survival are further marginalized.

Human activities have also provoked changes in partners and the disappearance of several endemic species, necessary for the continued existence of the Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia.

Fuel for cooking

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

Freshwater resources

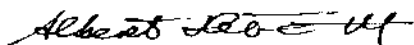
Saint Lucia is composed of impermeable rock which inhibits the movement of water underground reserves. The 37 main sources of water are the result of surface run-off from rivers, wetlands, streams and springs. This resource is highly susceptible to climatic variations such as natural disaster, heavy rainfall, low rainfall, drought, inappropriate development due to felling of forest cover, soil exposure and wastage.

The Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia participates in National and International Environmental Issues. The Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia Participatory Mechanism under Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity is one of the many important programmes being executed as their contribution to the Saint Lucia National Biodiversity and Environmental Policies.

Participation at the WSSD, the SIDS, the UNFCCC, the UNEP, the UNCTAD, the IUCN and the WIPO, among others, are the pre-occupation of the Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia.

Recommendation

The Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia Governing Council request that the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues call on all relevant United Nations Organs to assist to the State of Saint Lucia in the creation and implementation of sound Environmental Protection Policies and Programmes with the full participation of the Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia Governing Council.



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: Environment

Dr. Albert DeTerville, Chairperson
Ms. Keisha JOSEPH, Diaspora Rep.

Ms. Deanne D. DeTerville, Co-Chairperson
Ms. Wilma GASSIE, Administrative Assistant