

**YACHAY WASI Sacred Sites Event - Submission 26 – SAINT LUCIA –
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THE ALDET CENTRE-SAINT LUCIA

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Territory: **HIWANARU** (State of SAINT LUCIA)

The island of **HIWANARU** (State of SAINT LUCIA) shows a continuous history of the Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia. Estimated at approximately one-third of the national population, the **Bethechilokono** are to be found throughout the island, but in larger numbers in the traditional Districts of **Yukahu** (Choiseul) and **Atabeyra** (Soufriere), on the west coast of the island. The **Bethechilokono** continue to suffer from systematic state marginalization and deprivation and have little or no access to their sacred sites.

In a Letter dated 14 August 2003, the Secretariat of the Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia Governing Council (**BGC**) reminded the State of Saint Lucia about a significant recommendation arising out of the Second Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; E/2003/43 E/C.19/2003/22; Section 6 paragraphs 103:

Par. 103 “The Forum recommends that the Economic and Social Council, States and the United Nations system promote the co-administration of archaeological sites which are administered by the state in order to contribute to the care, preservation and conservation of those sites and to facilitate processes of development of Indigenous Peoples.”

The sacred sites referred to above, are located within the Pitons World Heritage Site, inclusive of areas where the Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia have resided, occupied and engaged in the continuous sustainable use of their natural resources for thousands of years. The Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia Governing Council (**BGC**) recommended the way to remedy the historical bias and bring a balance, so that the **Bethechilokono** would have recourse when their sacred sites were threatened by development that they consider inappropriate.

On 02 November 2003, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee ignored the concerns of the Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia Governing Council (**BGC**) and designated the Pitons World Heritage Site, without the free, prior and informed consent of the **Bethechilokono** of Saint Lucia.

The following are the sites under review

Yukahu (Gros Piton) Sacred and Ceremonial Sites and natural habitats;

Atabeyra (Petit Piton) Sacred and Ceremonial Sites and natural habitats;

Stonefield Sacred and Ceremonial Sites;

Malgretoute Sacred and Ceremonial Sites;

Jalousie Estate Sacred and Ceremonial Sites and natural habitats;

Beausejour Sacred and Ceremonial Sites and natural habitats;

The Caribbean Sea towards the Pitons Sacred and Ceremonial Sites;

The Anse L'Ivrongne River Sacred and Ceremonial Sites and natural habits;

Fondjanlib **Bethechilokono Liberation Fighters Headquarters** Site;

The Sulphur Springs Sacred and Ceremonial Sites;

Belfond Sacred and Ceremonial Sites;

Dauphine Estate **Bethechilokono Liberation Fighters Battlefield** Sites;

The rest of the District of **Atabeyra** (Soufriere); and

The predominantly **Bethechilokono** of **Yukahu** (Choiseul), containing several sacred, ceremonial and cultural sites and natural habitats.

Convention concerning Indigenous and tribal Peoples in Independent Countries; Convention C169 of 27 June 1989.

Article 7(1):

“The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. In addition, they shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programmes for national and regional development which may affect them directly.”

Article 13(1):

“In applying the provisions of this Part of the Convention governments shall respect the special importance for the cultures and spiritual values of the peoples concerned of their relationship with the lands or territories, or both as applicable, which they occupy or otherwise use, and in particular the collective aspects of this relationship.”

Even after the inscription of the Pitons World Heritage Site, there continue to be large-scale indiscriminate and inappropriate development projects “clumsily defined as economic development” which have impacted negatively on the **Bethechilokono** of Saint Lucia.

Convention concerning Indigenous and tribal Peoples in Independent Countries; ILO Convention C169 of 27 June 1989.

Article 6(1):

“In applying the provisions of this Convention, governments shall:”

Article 6(1a)

“consult the peoples concerned, through appropriate procedures and in particular through their representative institutions, whenever consideration is being given to legislative or administrative measures which may affect them directly.”

Article 6(1b):

“establish means by which these peoples can freely participate, to at least the same extent as other sectors of the population, at all levels of decision-making in elective institutions and administrative and other bodies responsible for policies and programmes which concern them.”

The action of the State has raised another vexing problem for the **Bethechilokono** of Saint Lucia. Traditional occupations forms part of the economic, social and cultural fabric of the **Bethechilokono**; in particular those residing within the Pitons World Heritage Site, the remainder of the District of **Atabeyra** (Soufriere) and the District of **Yukahu** (Choiseul). There is a significantly greater involvement of indigenous women in such traditional occupations. The Pitons World Heritage Site, negates the empowerment and the enhancement of the economic position of the indigenous women.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 18 December 1979.

Article 2(d)

“States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation.”

The traditional occupations are also family structured occupations, which encourage youth participation. The State was warned to exercise extreme care in the implementation of the Pitons World Heritage Site programmes, in the absence of durable alternative sustainable developmental programmes for those who were dispossessed of their traditional and historical lands and properties. The Indigenous People (**Bethechilokono**) of Saint Lucia Governing Council (**BGC**) reiterated its position on a co-administration mechanism, to ensure the perpetuation and continuity of the flow of traditional knowledge from parents to

youth, in recognition of regional and international human rights instruments, to which the State of Saint Lucia subscribe; namely:

Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989.

Article 30:

“In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.”

Charter Of Civil Society for the Caribbean Community of 1997.

Article XI:

“The States recognize the contribution of the Indigenous Peoples to the development process and undertake to continue to protect their historical rights and respect the culture and way of life of these peoples.”

Annex I A Charter for the Pitons

Annex II Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination review of the situation in Saint Lucia at its 67th Session. Letter dated 19 August 2005. (Not included)

A Charter for the Pitons

We, the People of Saint Lucia, recognise that the Pitons:

- were sacred in the world of our Amerindian ancestors, possess high symbolic and cultural value, and must be treated with reverence;
- offer a record and an expression of the country’s history, from its pre-Columbian roots to modern times;
- reflect and shape collective national identity;
- exemplify excellence, and stimulate the aspirations and potentials of Saint Lucians, far beyond their current limits;
- serve as a source of inspiration, and symbolize the individual and collective challenges that Saint Lucians face;
- express strength and permanence, thus offering comfort and protection to us all; and
- are priceless, majestic, and unique.

We further understand that the values and significance of the Pitons are many:

- to the local community, the twin peaks are a navigational landmark for fishers, an indicator of the weather, a brand name, an almanac for farmers and a source of income to farmers and tour guides;
- to the nation, the site is a component of identity, a part of the St. Lucian spirit, a source of renewal and creativity, and the indirect provider of significant economic benefits;
- to our visitors, they provide a unique spiritual and recreational experience, and they exemplify this nation’s commitment to environmental quality and sustainable development; and
- to the world, they give a unique international brand, an easily identified icon, with peculiar and spectacular physical features.

The Pitons Management Area and the nearby Sulphur Springs derive their universal value and their potential as a World Heritage Site from the visual impact and aesthetic quality of the Pitons, and from the unique geological features of the area.

The Pitons Management Area is a unique assemblage of natural and cultural assets, and we pledge to preserve and manage it for the benefit of Saint Lucia, and of the whole of humanity. In order to achieve this, we commit ourselves to:

- maintaining the integrity of the natural and cultural resources contained within the Pitons Management Area; and
- optimising the contribution of the Pitons to the **spiritual, cultural, social and economic** development of Soufriere (and particularly of the communities located at the immediate vicinity of the Area) and of Saint Lucia as a whole.

The following principles guide the use and management of the Pitons Management Area:

- equity: opportunity and access for all, in a controlled and managed fashion;
- appreciation and pride: cultivation of a profound admiration and respect for this site and its meaning in all that is done;
- sustainability: optimal use of the benefits for present and future generations and respect for the site in all its diversity; and
- participation: full participation of all sectors of society, in a manner that engenders a profound sense of responsibility and identity.

The management of the Pitons Management Area is guided by the following policy directions:

- full representation of stakeholders in management;
- efficient and effective management arrangements;
- adaptability and responsiveness to change;
- fair and equitable distribution of benefits and sharing of responsibilities;
- support for management through adequate legislative instruments;
- appropriate use of incentives and other economic instruments;
- continuous effort at public education and awareness; and
- advancement of management objectives through a detailed and specific management plan for each of the major components of the Pitons Management Area.

The Pitons Manage Area, once officially declared, will be managed under the auspices of a co-ordinating body bringing together all governmental, community-based and other non-governmental agencies that have direct management responsibility over the area. These agencies will otherwise retain their management authority over specific sections or sectors.

The people and the Government of Saint Lucia pledge to adhere to this Charter, respect its principles, and work towards the realisation of its vision.

Development and management agencies in Saint Lucia, both governmental and non-governmental, commit themselves to the establishment and implementation of effective, efficient and participatory management regimes and instruments that serve the Charter's objectives.

The Government pledges to establish and maintain a flexible and effective institutional arrangement that will provide a mechanism for co-ordination of management activities, and for compliance with standards and requirements of World Heritage Site designation.

Approved by Cabinet Conclusion No. 1216 of 16th December 2002.

Signed at Soufriere on the 26th day of January, 2003.

P Louisy

Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy

Governor General of Saint Lucia