

I. Background Information

Guyana, a country whose landmass is 85% covered by forests, is also home to 78,500 indigenous peoples (2012 census). The indigenous population of Guyana consists of many sub groups, such as the Warao, Lokono Arawak and Carib, Arekuna, Akawaio, Makushi, Patamona, Wapichan, and Wai Wai (IWGIA Assistant). Although only making up around 10% of Guyana's total population, these indigenous people (often referred to as Amerindians), play a key role in preserving the rainforest heavy environment and containing their traditional knowledge of the lands to pass onto future generations. Even with all their contributions, however, the Amerindians face a large amount of marginalization by the majority, and the rising costs of climate change are only furthering these consequences. These conditions are similar to other countries in the same region such as Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia, since their indigenous population is also at risk from excessive floods and droughts, common problems of climate change. Guyana is especially susceptible to rising sea levels, harming the crops and living conditions of the many indigenous people it is home to, showing how climate change and rising global temperatures violate the multiple Amerindian communities.

II. Past International Actions

To actively solve these negative impacts, many plans have been enacted in the past. For instance, in June 2001, Guyana under the UNFCCC addressed a climate change action plan to "develop, apply, and diffuse technologies, practices and processes that control, reduce, or prevent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gasses in relevant sectors". This benefited native communities by increasing security of food and natural resources that are vital to them and it helped to protect the natural environment they integrate in their everyday lives. Also, in 2024, Guyana went through its' country review of the Biennial Transparency Report, actively participating in the Paris Agreement and allowing governments to enact environmentally friendly initiatives to preserve the environment from climate change. Indigenous people in the past have also launched efforts to protect their land from climate change. For instance, at COP26 (the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference), a Wapichan woman named Immaculata Casimero advocated for women's rights and how the lack of government regulation for recently booming mining activities have led to deforestation, flooding, lower crop yields, and food insecurity. This has aided native people since she and her team have advocated for "climate justice and actively working to gain legal ownership and control of these lands"(Canada).

III. Country Policy

Many country policies of Guyana have helped to solve this issue. On the 9th of August each year, Guyana celebrates the United Nations' International Day of the World's Indigenous People, specifically looking into how the native population lives in harmony with nature and how their way of life helps to combat negative effects of climate change ("Listening to the Voices of Indigenous Peoples Is the Only Way to Protect People and Planet | United Nations in Guyana"). Also, according to United Nations Climate Change, to specifically help preserve rainforests from climate change, Guyana has been working with Norway since 2009 through REDD+ and has been implementing renewable energy

sources and supporting sustainable development. Arguably one of the most important current efforts from Guyana to combat climate change and reduce violation of indigenous peoples' is its' Low Carbon Development Strategy that specifically aims to recognize indigenous populations' land tenure while also implementing conservation of forests and agricultural spaces. According to the Guyana LCDS website specific goals of this initiative include to create new incentives for a low carbon economy, protect against climate change and biodiversity loss, stimulate future growth, and align with global climate goals. This strategy is set to be the trajectory for the upcoming decade.

IV. Possible Solutions

There are many ways to advance in reducing the violations that climate change brings to the indigenous communities of Guyana. The first step in this is to give the native Amerindians more land tenure, since recognizing their rights to land gives them more authority to protect their rights and possibly even function the land more efficiently. This is a high quality solution since natives are more environmentally friendly and don't use as much technology that emits high amounts of carbon, reducing negative climate change effects. In addition to this, further climate change and country plans such as the LCDS should focus more on native populated areas and work to protect their land from miners that are displacing natives from their home. This, like giving more land tenure assures efficient and environmentally friendly use of the land that would benefit the entire country of Guyana and possibly even help neighboring countries like Suriname and Venezuela by influencing positive changes in the region to native populations. A country in South America that has successfully tackled negative impacts of climate change is Uruguay, and another solution for Guyana would be to work with Uruguay to do the same for their country and implement a higher amount of ecosystem friendly practices which would strengthen the diplomatic relations already established between the two countries and would help to solve Guyana's problem. In addition to working with Uruguay, it is important to continue working with Norway in REDD+ to preserve forests that the Amerindians use for farming, hunting, and maintaining their culture.