



**Statement by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)**  
on the  
**Zero Draft Outcome Document for the SIDS4 Conference**

Submitted at the 2nd Multistakeholder Webinar on SIDS4 held on February 15, 2024

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) has engaged a broad alliance of civil society organisations (CSOs), academia, creatives and other non-state actors and their networks from across the Caribbean region in dialogues on *“The Caribbean We Want: Civil society recommendations for transformative pathways to Caribbean sustainable development.”*

Key messages emerging from these dialogues, as well as CANARI’s extensive work across the Caribbean, on what SIDS want and how this can be achieved are as follows:

1. **REVITALISING ECONOMIES** must prioritise support for local green-blue enterprises delivering triple bottom line benefits (i.e., for People, Planet, and Profit) to deliver inclusive, environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economic development. These enterprises utilise green business models and products, sustainable practices, and stewardship approaches, are often centered on the sustainable use of nature, and especially benefit rural communities, women, youth, Indigenous peoples and other marginalised groups.

To deliver this:

- a. Enabling policy frameworks, tailored financing, comprehensive business support programmes, access to technology, financial services, linkages to specialised markets and access to land and natural resources are required.
- b. Local green-blue enterprises, especially those based on the use of nature (e.g., ecotourism; farming, fishing and agro-processing; natural crafts, medicines and cosmetics), also need special support to build their resilience to the impacts of climate change which will be felt along the value chains of their businesses.

2. **BUILDING STRONG INSTITUTIONS** demands a whole of society approach, with meaningful engagement of civil society in decision-making and as partners in implementing sustainable development solutions. There needs to be recognition of the range of civil society is playing in sustainable development including in raising awareness, understanding and knowledge; building capacity; representing and amplifying the voices and needs of vulnerable and marginalised stakeholders (e.g., women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities); contributing expertise and scientific, local and traditional knowledge, time and resources to development and implementation of policies, plans and initiatives; leveraging additional resources and implementing practical initiatives, including work on the ground supporting vulnerable and marginalised stakeholders; conducting research and developing innovations; advocating to influence change in policies and practices, including as allies to SIDS governments in global negotiations (e.g., the ‘1.5 to Stay Alive’ campaign); and serving as ‘watchdogs’ to hold governments, private sector and others accountable.

To deliver this:

- a. Supporting civil society as valuable partners in delivering transformative change will require development of more enabling laws, policies and financing.

- b. A whole of society approach to sustainable development in SIDS also requires (re)setting and (re)building new eco-social contracts where people’s voices are heard, and their priorities drive changes needed in economic and political systems which recognise that protecting ecological processes is essential for human life.
  - c. New eco-social contracts can be delivered through innovative participatory mechanisms such as participatory budgeting and deliberative democratic action for deeper engagement of citizens, and particularly those most vulnerable and marginalised, in driving transformation.
3. **BUILDING A SECURE FUTURE** requires promoting the right to a safe and healthy environment and delivering intersectional environmental and climate justice for vulnerable and marginalised stakeholders who are disproportionately impacted by intertwined climate, environmental and socio-economic crises and inequities.

To deliver this:

- a. Research is needed to better understand how vulnerabilities intersect with issues such as poverty, gender, race, age, disability and structural issues related to the legacy of colonialism, persistent underdevelopment and neoliberal extraction, contemporary imperialism and indebtedness.
- b. Human rights-based approaches must guide strengthening national laws, policies and mechanisms to better support access to information about development and policy proposals, in formats, modes and languages which are accessible to vulnerable and underrepresented groups; meaningful public participation in decision-making processes, especially with inclusion of vulnerable and underrepresented groups; fair distribution of resources where the most vulnerable and underrepresented groups receive the benefits of actions; strengthening access to justice by vulnerable groups so that those responsible for causing the problem are also held responsible for supporting climate and environmental action and repairing harms; and protecting environmental and climate defenders from all forms of violence.

4. **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND PLANETARY SUSTAINABILITY** must prioritise the use of nature-based solutions (NbS) for biodiversity restoration and conservation, delivering essential ecosystem services for food and water security, climate adaptation and mitigation, and supporting nature-based livelihoods. NbS approaches must ensure ecologically sound, just and inclusive outcomes.

To deliver this:

- a. Scaling up NbS requires supporting locally led climate adaptation, integrating local and Indigenous knowledge, sharing knowledge and experiences on good practices in the SIDS context, building capacity and technical confidence to integrate NbS alongside traditional ‘grey’ infrastructure solutions, and supporting stewardship approaches by local communities to protect ecosystems essential for livelihoods and well-being.
- b. Mobilising more grant funding and developing innovative financing models, including blended packages, green and blue bonds, debt for nature swaps, is critical to increase support and scale up NbS.
- c. Ensuring finance is effectively channelled to local levels to support CSOs and local communities implementing innovative NbS and stewardship is also important.
- d. Legal and policy frameworks need to be strengthened to fully enable NbS and allow for effective enforcement to address development pressures and environmental loss and degradation.
- e. Processes for meaningful stakeholder engagement in decision-making and use of local and Indigenous knowledge and relevant resources are needed to help achieve fair and equitable outcomes and balance conservation and development goals for ecological and socio-economic benefits.