



**Statement by Nicole Leotaud, Executive Director of the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
to
the Preparatory Committee for the fourth International Conference on SIDS
Second session, New York, 1-5 April 2024**

CANARI's work has confirmed that **Caribbean civil society has significant capacity, is already playing key roles in delivering sustainable development, and is eager to support governments** in a whole of society approach to sustainable development.

The SIDS4 conference and development of a new 10-year Plan of Action offer a critical opportunity for Governments and development partners to expand and deepen collaboration with civil society to address **four unmet sustainable development challenges** which must be priorities in this Plan of Action:

1. ensuring meaningful civil society participation in development decisions and initiatives;
2. transitioning to an economy that is both environmentally sustainable and just;
3. leaving no one behind by addressing the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised; and
4. protecting nature as a foundation for climate resilience.

To address these challenges, we have **four recommendations**:

1. Optimise the contribution of civil society through strong, mutually beneficial partnerships.
2. Promote and support locally owned environmental and social enterprises.
3. Incorporate environmental, social, climate and gender justice at all levels of governance.
4. Pursue only development and disaster mitigation options that are in harmony with nature and aligned to social development objectives.

I am therefore very pleased to announce that CANARI is working with civil society partners across all SIDS regions to develop a **SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap** which will be aligned with and complementary to the inter-governmental Plan of Action. It will outline strategic roles for civil society in delivering sustainable development priorities. It will recommend actions to strengthen enabling institutional frameworks, practices and partnerships to better support civil society to play meaningful and effective roles in addressing sustainable development challenges.

CANARI looks forward to your support in better **leveraging the power of civil society as partners in developing and delivering the new SIDS sustainable development agenda**.