

# SIDS CIVIL SOCIETY ACTION PLAN AND ROADMAP (2024-2034)

MAY 29 2024

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have been recognised as a special case for development since 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Since 1994, decennial United Nations conferences on sustainable development for SIDS have been held, with three 10-year programmes of action developed.

Yet, sustainable development remains elusive in SIDS and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are generally not on track. The effects of climate change are already critical and are accelerating, yet the '1.5 to stay alive' target is being undermined by the failure of developed countries to take the strong actions required. Socio-economic inequality and intertwined injustices are increasing. Across SIDS, natural resources continue to be degraded and extractive patterns of accumulation and development persist which devalue the importance of earth systems and the health of the living planet as a foundation for development. Likewise, failure to adequately invest in the human capital of SIDS is leading to brain drain, stifling innovation and limiting the ability of SIDS to fully participate in sustainable development. SIDS remain extremely vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters and external economic and political shocks and other risks. Vulnerable and marginalised people in SIDS are disproportionately facing inter-sectional vulnerabilities and differential impacts on their lives and well-being.

Further, the challenge of completing decolonisation and achieving self-determination persists. Given that SIDS encompass independent countries as well as dependent territories, it is also critical to recognise the right to political self-determination as an inherent right that remains unfulfilled for some SIDS. This impacts the ability of SIDS to make decisions in their best interests and exacerbates challenges to well-being.

Governments have now developed the *Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS: A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity (ABAS)* which will be launched at the Fourth International Conference on SIDS (SIDS4) held from May 27 to 30, 2024, in Antigua and Barbuda. The theme of the SIDS4 conference is *Charting the course towards resilient prosperity*. The conference launched the inter-governmentally agreed, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented political agenda. The ABAS lays out priorities for what SIDS want in order to:

1. Build resilient economies
2. Foster safe, healthy and prosperous societies
3. Develop a secure future
4. Achieve environmental protection and planetary sustainability

## 2. RATIONALE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY'S ROLE

Section II of the ABAS on What SIDS Want, 25(ii) commits to, "Increasing public participation and consultation, promoting civic education and engaging civil society organizations to actively and meaningfully participate in policy and budget decisions, including by establishing citizen participation mechanisms and creating spaces for inclusive dialogue." In Section J(i) the international community commits to supporting SIDS Partnerships with, "New, innovative and bold approaches to partnership based on mutual collaboration and ownership, trust, alignment, harmonization, respect, results orientation, accountability, transparency, including with relevant stakeholders, and cooperation that leverages a whole-of-government and whole-of-society

approach,” including by, “Expanding and diversifying partnerships with local authorities, civil society and non-governmental organizations, foundations, the private sector, academia and international financial institutions to implement the ABAS.”

The importance of, commitment to, and requirement for meaningful engagement of civil society to deliver sustainable development in SIDS is also highlighted in the *2030 Sustainable Development Agenda* and other global agreements to which SIDS are signatories, as well as in regional and national agreements, policies and plans.

Despite the tremendous challenges being faced, the potential of SIDS civil society to contribute to sustainable development is not being fully leveraged to address the complex and pressing issues facing SIDS. Civil society organisations (CSOs) are seldom viewed as legitimate partners and expressly or meaningfully involved in decision-making or development and implementation of policies, programmes and initiatives. The roles they are already playing in delivering sustainable development are not fully recognised nor valued. Gaps also remain in institutional frameworks and practices which need to be enhanced to better enable operation of and action by the civil society sector. There is also an urgent need to provide tailored capacity building and financing to more effectively support outputs from civil society given the significant contribution civil society is making to sustainable development.

Implementation of the ABAS, therefore, must include a strong commitment to inclusive and effective partnerships with civil society – beyond token consultations – and provide clear pathways to deliver a participatory, multisectoral and whole-of-society approach.

Civil society in SIDS are key partners in delivering sustainable development and are calling for urgent action and a bottom-up process of transformation for effective delivery of sustainable development priorities in SIDS.

### **3. DEVELOPMENT OF A CIVIL SOCIETY FRAMEWORK**

To inspire and guide this engagement of civil society as partners in implementation of the sustainable development agenda, civil society from across the three SIDS regions – Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Seas (AIS), Caribbean and Pacific – have collaborated to develop this *SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap (2024-2034)*. This is aligned with and complementary to the ABAS and provides a strategic framework to support civil society's role in delivering the new 10-year SIDS agenda. This *Action Plan and Roadmap*:

- identifies key sustainable development priorities which civil society will help to deliver;
- outlines strategic roles which civil society can and should play in delivering the new 10-year SIDS agenda; and
- recommends actionable priorities to strengthen enabling institutional frameworks, practices and partnerships to better support civil society in SIDS to play meaningful and effective roles in delivering sustainable development.

The *SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap* therefore provides a framework and concrete recommendations for action by civil society in SIDS, as well as action by SIDS governments and development partners to better enable and support civil society and deliver a participatory, multisectoral and whole-of-society approach to sustainable development in SIDS.

The document has been developed by SIDS civil society through a consultative process, drawing on existing documents laying out civil society priorities, and consultations among civil society in the three SIDS regions in the lead up to the SIDS4 conference. Given the diversity of civil society

across SIDS, and the absence of a formal representative network of structure to facilitate coordination, engagement of civil society across the SIDS regions in development of the *SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap* was facilitated by a few leading organisations and networks from each region.

*The SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap* is only the start of a process of civil society taking this forward beyond SIDS4. Civil society organisations and networks will develop more targeted implementation plans based on their specific contexts, for example, via alignment with the *2050 Pacific Strategy and the African Agenda 2063* as a way to follow up on implementation of these priorities. Development of this shared *SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap* is therefore only the beginning of a process to reinvigorate and inspire more meaningful partnerships with and among SIDS civil society as key partners in delivering sustainable development, resilient prosperity and the ABAS.

#### **4. VISION, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

##### **Vision:**

The vision of the *SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap* is a strong civil society in SIDS which has capacity and is enabled and supported to effectively contribute to delivery of sustainable development and resilient prosperity priorities in SIDS, working in partnership with SIDS governments, the private sector and international partners as part of a participatory, multisectoral and whole-of-society approach to deliver inclusive, equitable and rights-based development.

##### **Goal:**

The goal of the *SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap* is to catalyse and mobilise independent and collective action by civil society, working in partnership with governments, the private sector and international partners in delivering the 10-year SIDS sustainable development agenda.

##### **Objectives:**

The *SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap* aims to:

- define the important roles played by SIDS civil society in delivering sustainable development and resilient prosperity;
- highlight priority actions for civil society to contribute to the delivery of the ABAS 10-year agenda; and
- recommend actions and mechanisms for governments, private sector and international partners to better support, enable and collaborate with SIDS civil society to deliver the SIDS agenda.

#### **5. DEFINING SIDS CIVIL SOCIETY AND THEIR ROLES**

Broadly, civil society can be understood as any collective of citizens operating outside of the public (governmental) or private (for-profit business) sectors which share some common vision, values, mission, purpose, commitment, or collaboration to achieve specific shared goals. This, therefore, encompasses diverse groupings of organisations and individuals which can be formal or informal; structured and unstructured organisations, or organic and evolving movements; of different forms, sizes, and functions; and working at different levels from local to global. Types of civil society may encompass:

- Non-profit organisations that are registered and have a clear structure and mission (membership-based or not)

- Informal groups, which are largely voluntary but come together around a common purpose (e.g., community groups)
- Professional and business associations (e.g., association of engineers, small business associations)
- Charities and foundations
- Faith-based, sports and cultural organisations
- Cooperatives
- Consumer organisations
- Social movements, including online communities with common interest, which can be organised or may be without formal structures
- Citizen activists
- Diaspora organisations
- Youth, women, minorities, Indigenous Peoples, people with disabilities and community-based associations
- Media
- Unions
- Academic and research institutes (e.g., universities)

This full range of civil society in SIDS is vital to the whole of society of approach, playing key roles in sustainable development, including in:

- Contributing expertise and scientific, local, and traditional knowledge, time and resources to development and implementation of policies, plans and initiatives
- Raising awareness, understanding and knowledge
- Building and developing capacities
- Representing and amplifying the voices and needs of vulnerable and marginalised stakeholders (e.g., women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ persons, minorities)
- 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)
- Serving as 'watchdogs' to hold governments, private sector and others accountable

## **6. PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION BY SIDS CIVIL SOCIETY**

Civil society will build alliances and partnerships to undertake collective advocacy on key sustainable issues facing SIDS. But beyond advocacy, civil society will work independently and collectively to deliver concrete actions to address sustainable development priorities, within the ABAS and beyond.

Overall, civil society will also play a critical role in monitoring and reporting on the alignment of government and private sector development initiatives with sustainable development goals and principles, including the ABAS, the SDGs, other international commitments, and national laws and policies.

Priority areas for advocacy and action by SIDS civil society are outlined below, aligned with the four areas for action under the ABAS.

## A. Resilient and inclusive economies

Creating resilient and inclusive economies demands prioritising ecosystems, communities and their well-being. CSOs and communities are essential in advocating for a sustainable and fair economic order and the multi-dimensional vulnerability index (MVI) focused on sustainability and equity. We champion dynamic growth indicators beyond gross domestic product (GDP) and demand a fair global finance system for SIDS, alleviating debt and ensuring climate justice. For locally-driven development, it is crucial to have community ownership. Together, we can build economies where everyone thrives.

### Advocacy

SIDS' civil society commits to advocate for:

- An economic order where ecosystems, communities and their well-being are at the centre, including via links to approaches such as social, solidarity and sharing economies.
- The adoption of dynamic and inclusive development indicators, including the MVI, which offer a more comprehensive assessment of economic progress than GDP.
- Addressing the impact of historical legacies resulting in racial wealth gaps and racialised and gendered processes of inequality, marginalisation and exclusion, especially from credit and financial markets.
- A comprehensive overhaul of the global financial architecture to guarantee fair and equitable access to climate finance for SIDS, alleviating the crushing burden of sovereign debt (including considering debt cancellation) and ensuring intersectional justice.
- Climate finance that is new and additional, with a significant proportion as public finance that is non-debt inducing for mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage.
- Development of enabling legislation, regulations and mechanisms to support green and social enterprises for locally-driven economic development.
- Measures to address the absence of up-to-date poverty and inequality data in SIDS and advocate for regular and comprehensive collection and publication of disaggregated data on poverty and key socio-economic and environmental indicators.
- Recognition of nature and natural capital as the foundation for economic development and regenerative economics, with biodiversity underpinning economic and social resilience in SIDS.
- Reparatory justice through access to trade markets.
- A transformation of the global food system to reduce its negative regional and local impacts on health, food insecurity and inequity, climate change, environment and socio-economic inequalities.
- A call for preferential market trade access by improving the application of trade rules and their transparency for SIDS in compliance with World Trade Organization commitments.

### Action

- Develop a combined, comprehensive research agenda and conduct research to better understand the structural, economic, social, environmental, and other barriers hindering development of a resilient, inclusive and sustainable economy and what is needed in specific SIDS contexts. This research should focus on understanding the unique challenges faced by each of these nations and pinpointing commonalities, specific needs and interventions required to overcome these. Publish and promote this research to inform decision-making, ensuring due credit is given to SIDS researchers.
- Develop, test, adapt and promote scaling of innovative solutions (including digital transformation) for community-level inclusive, sustainable, and resilient economic development, which are meaningful and appropriate in SIDS' contexts.

- Develop standards for the definition of what counts as green and blue economy and deepen research on the implications on environmental and ocean health.
- Develop and expand business incubators to deliver tailored support to local social and environmental micro and small enterprises particularly for youth, rural communities, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups, including using collaborative and cluster models to facilitate scaling and impact, especially in the following sectors:
  - Inclusive and regenerative green and blue economy, including agriculture, agro-business and small scale fisheries
  - Community-based ecotourism, cultural heritage tourism and regenerative tourism
  - Creative industries, cultural and environmental heritage conservation
- Develop and use innovative tools and approaches to support small and micro social and green enterprises and nature-based livelihoods to build resilience to climate change ('climate proof') and biodiversity loss.
- Identify sectors where employment will be impacted by climate change and climate change policies, as well as biodiversity loss and reversible biodiversity loss policies, and support development and expansion of livelihoods and reskilling strategies to engage in new and growing green and blue economic sectors, with a focus on the income poor and informal workers for a just transition.
- Support the development of healthy, culturally-appropriate food as well as agro-ecological farm practices supporting soil and farm productivity, including through research and education on food sovereign economic models.
- Engage in and facilitate SIDS-SIDS knowledge exchange and collaboration on alternative models of economic development.

## **B. Safe, healthy and prosperous societies**

Creating sustainable, safe, healthy, and prosperous societies hinges on the vital role of CSOs and community engagement. Strong health systems, robust institutions, gender equality and youth empowerment are essential, ensuring no one is left behind. CSOs are crucial in advocating for human rights and intersectional justice, promoting the right to a healthy and sustainable environment. Enhancing access to financial resources for marginalised groups and safeguarding human rights in climate migrations are paramount. By championing anti-violence and anti-discrimination policies, investing in public mental health, and supporting community-driven initiatives, we can build resilient, inclusive societies where everyone thrives.

### Advocacy

SIDS' civil society commits to advocate for:

- Human-rights and intersectional justice approaches as central to decolonisation and sustainable development, including promotion of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.
- Improved access to context-specific financing approaches, particularly by marginalised groups and direct funding for the sustainability of community work.
- Taking action to ensure that human rights and human dignity are protected in the face of climate induced displacement and for marginalised communities in sacrifice zones.
- The adoption of comprehensive mechanisms and policies to respond to and prevent multiple and intersecting forms of violence and discrimination, including all forms of structural violence.
- Investment in gender-based violence response mechanisms, and for the implementation of national strategic plans on gender-based violence, in addition to support for the adoption of all relevant recommendations to allow for substantive equality, non-discrimination, and urgent government action to advance the human rights of women and girls.

- Increased allocations and improved mechanisms to access public mental health services and the establishment of regulatory authorities for oversight of mental health professionals.
- The integration of comprehensive sexual, reproductive health and rights strategies into multisectoral, health emergency and disaster risk management policies and plans at national and local levels.

### Action

- Facilitate technical support in addressing impacts of loss and damage, including health.
- Build alliances and partnerships to amplify the voices of women and girls, LGBTQIA+ people, youth, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, the elderly and other marginalised groups to support intersectional justice and equity and ensure their meaningful participation in sustainable development initiatives.
- Deliver comprehensive health, education and social protection systems at the local level, including support to informal workers and other at-risk groups, using a gender responsive and transformative approach.
- Advocate for and contribute to development of new eco-social contracts to 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.
- Integrate resilient infrastructure, including eco-friendly and green spaces, which will contribute to healthy and prosperous societies.
- Promote healthy lifestyles (including food heritage and traditional knowledge) and strengthen social awareness of the impact of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) on the morbidity and health of SIDS populations and support initiatives to reduce the incidence of NCDs.
- Develop and implement culturally appropriate educational and action-based campaigns on mental health and expand initiatives to address stigma, prejudice and discrimination against people with mental illness.
- Develop and support community-based initiatives for knowledge sharing and transfer, such as community-based learning centers, and promote the inclusion of civil society frameworks in educational systems and curriculum design.

### **C. A secure future**

CSOs and communities are vital advocates for the 1.5°C target, emphasising its necessity for SIDS' survival and a just and equitable transition away from fossil fuels. They push for international frameworks that address SIDS' unique challenges and call for a transition away from fossil fuels, holding those with the most historical responsibility accountable. The grassroots work of CSOs and communities is essential for change; a just and equitable transition will not occur from the top down. Only together can the vision of 1.5°C be achieved. There is no just transition if we are unable to stay below global warming of 1.5°C and this requires responsible global climate action in a just and equitable manner. Localising climate finance, directed by community needs, is vital for SIDS.

### Advocacy

SIDS' civil society commits to advocate for:

- The 1.5°C target and countries fulfilling obligations for mitigation and a just and equitable transition away from fossil fuels.
- Just transition frameworks at the international level that address the unique circumstances of SIDS and unique challenges they face.
- Phasing out of all fossil fuels, including avoidable and problematic fossil fuel-based plastics and eliminating fossil fuel subsidies, recognising that it is the responsibility of those with the

most historical responsibility to go furthest and fastest.

- Transformation of the global food system to ensure security, sustainability and resilience.
- Swift operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund, seeing new, additional grants-based resources flowing to SIDS to address loss and damage.

#### Action

- Contribute to sustainable management of water resources, through stewardship of watersheds and source water protection, encouraging rainwater harvesting and other citizen water conservation practices, while recognising and supporting the role of women and youth in water resources management, and supporting access by the most vulnerable.
- Support sustainable and climate resilient small-scale fisheries and agriculture to contribute to food security and food sovereignty.
- Collaborate with governments to ensure that infrastructure development contributes to community resilience and integrity of ecosystems.

### **D. Environmental protection and planetary sustainability**

Climate change is an urgent and existential crisis for SIDS and the survival and well-being of our populations. Climate mitigation efforts must be in line with delivering the 1.5°C target. Meanwhile, SIDS are already feeling the impacts, and adaptation and addressing loss and damage continue to be high priorities. Climate migration is increasingly becoming the only option for survival rather than the last resort. CSOs are crucial in driving climate justice by advocating for the most vulnerable, including women, youth, LGBTQIA+, Indigenous Peoples, and persons with disabilities. Civil society pushes for urgent, equitable climate actions that prioritise sustainability and social equity. By demanding stricter regulations on extractive industries and sustainable ocean economies, and ensuring just climate financing reaches frontline communities, civil society ensures that real change happens on the ground. Civil society's work centres on intersectional justice and intergenerational responsibility, making the sector essential to achieving a sustainable and equitable future for all.

#### Advocacy

SIDS' civil society commits to advocate for:

- Climate actions that prioritise equity in climate policies and resource allocation, with the meaningful engagement of all stakeholders, particularly marginalised groups, in climate decision-making processes. These must address the needs and rights of the most vulnerable populations, including communities in sacrifice zones, women, youth, LGBTQIA+, Indigenous Peoples, and persons with disabilities.
- Urgent and ambitious climate actions that incorporate intergenerational responsibility, designed to safeguard the long-term health and well-being of the planet.
- Intersectional environmental, climate, social and gender justice for vulnerable and marginalised stakeholders who are disproportionately impacted by intertwined climate, environmental and socio-economic crises and inequities.
- Enhanced regulation of extractive industries and a call for States to reject deep sea mining.
- Ocean-based economies to apply the principles of ensuring environmental sustainability, climate resilience, socio-economic equity and justice, polluter pays principle and precautionary principle.
- Reform of financing to SIDS to ensure that it is just and equitable and addresses the debt crisis for SIDS, including but not limited to:
  - debt cancellation
  - access to more grants
  - better concessional loans



- appropriate capitalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund, including grant-based financing and consideration of SIDS with special circumstances
- adequate and appropriate climate financing, and ensuring that this is channeled to the local level
- ensuring that market-based mechanisms, such as carbon markets and green/blue bonds, allow for community-based approaches and prioritise community benefits
- Delivery of grant-based climate finance to local communities who are on the front line of both climate impacts and climate action.
- Public discourse on legislation allowing for safe, accessible pathways of asylum for climate refugees, and support for internally displaced persons facing loss and damage. Climate migration must be seen as the last resort.
- Efforts for a moratorium on deep sea mining until there is adequate scientific evidence about the potential impacts on livelihoods, biodiversity and climate regulatory function of the deep ocean. Compel the International Seabed Authority to ensure full transparency and include meaningful civil society engagement in the process.

### Action

- Contribute to stewardship approaches and area-based management to protect, sustainably use and restore biodiversity and ecosystems.
- Create platforms for community voices and ensure that their knowledge and experiences shape climate actions.
- Support the rights of indigenous and local communities to Free Prior and Informed consent in relation to any action that would affect their land, territories and rights, especially with regards to access to and sharing of biodiversity in their territories.
- Conduct monitoring and reporting to keep decision-makers accountable for their commitments to deal with the impacts of climate change, including the provision of accessible and equitable funding for loss and damage, adaptation and mitigation.
- Develop and implement a communications plan for climate adaptation and disaster risk management.
- Support implementation of ecosystem valuation and natural capital accounting systems to ensure that the value of ecosystems and biodiversity is incorporated in development decision-making.
- Support the elaboration of a reparatory rights-based environmental democracy that is consistent with the values and beliefs of the peoples inhabiting a shared territorial space and consistent with the principle of repair and healing.
- With caution and safeguards, develop and implement robust and community driven nature-based solutions which ensure ecologically sound, just and inclusive outcomes for biodiversity restoration and conservation, delivering essential ecosystem services for food and water security, climate adaptation and mitigation, supporting nature-based livelihoods and well-being of communities.
- Conduct community-based climate adaptation and disaster risk management, especially using nature-based approaches, to build resilience on the ground for local communities and vulnerable groups.
- Build capacity of local communities to implement stewardship approaches for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, protected area co-management and restoration.
- Co-manage protected areas and locally managed areas to conserve biodiversity, including facilitating community engagement and capacity building for stewardship and roles in co-management.

- Conduct research, including via citizen science, on environmental and climate change issues and develop tools and recommendations for policy and practice, for example, on drivers of ecosystem loss, valuing ecosystem services, climate change modelling, vulnerability assessments, etc.
- Develop capacity for citizen science and facilitate the utilisation of citizen science data in tandem with scientific knowledge for decision-making.
- Document and share local and traditional knowledge and practices to support environmental protection and planetary sustainability.
- Contribute to circular economy and pollution reduction approaches, particularly at the local level, including through local initiatives for waste management, recycling, reuse and upcycling.
- Support the establishment of transdisciplinary Centers for Sustainable Futures and collaboratories between the three regional seas to enable the development of ecosystem-based approaches to programme design and development.
- Support social change through awareness and action-based campaigns, including those aimed at littering and dumping, which especially target youth and schools, and support the enforcement of anti-littering and anti-dumping statutes. This must be accompanied by support for solid waste removal in communities with regular garbage collection and accessible containers for litter.
- Conduct research applying an intersectional lens to understand differential vulnerabilities and inform development and implementation of flexible and adaptive financing appropriate to realities on the ground.
- Conduct desktop review of legislation related to extractive industries, particularly deep sea mining.

## **7. ACTIONS TO BETTER ENABLE AND SUPPORT CIVIL SOCIETY'S ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SIDS**

To support the critical role of civil society, we must ensure inclusive participation of women, youth, Indigenous peoples, and people with disabilities in decision-making processes. Strengthening legal frameworks, providing appropriate financing, and ensuring access to technology and capacity building are vital. Establishing whistleblower protections, fast-tracking litigation for urgent civil society actions, and fostering diverse partnerships will enhance their effectiveness. Accelerating localisation by integrating context specific and traditional knowledge into education, supporting scientific research, and creating knowledge-sharing platforms will empower civil society. By implementing these measures, civil society can amplify its impact while driving sustainable development and fostering resilient, inclusive communities in SIDS.

Enabling actions required include:

- Establishing and strengthening mechanisms for including voices of women, youth, Indigenous peoples, and people with disabilities in the planning, decision-making, and implementation processes. Creating dedicated channels for their roles and contributions and developing robust mechanisms to ensure active participation to enable ownership in the policy space and facilitating community feedback on the implementation of activities.
- Strengthening laws and regulations to better support the non-profit sector by delivering on the following principles<sup>1</sup> :

---

<sup>1</sup> Inter-American Principles on the Creation, Operation, Financing, and Dissolution of Nonprofit Civil Entities which was adopted in March 2023 by the Inter-American Juridical Committee of the Organization of American States  
[https://www.oas.org/en/sla/iajc/docs/CJI-RES\\_282\\_CJI-O-23\\_corr3\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.oas.org/en/sla/iajc/docs/CJI-RES_282_CJI-O-23_corr3_ENG.pdf)

- exercise of freedom of association
  - autonomy of will
  - principle of legality
  - registration and<sup>1</sup> recognition by an independent and autonomous agency
  - simple and transparent registration procedures
  - freedom of operation; freedom to seek, obtain and use funds
  - appropriate control of illicit financing
  - access to public financing under equal conditions and without discrimination
  - special tax regime
  - proportional penalties and due process
  - voluntary and forced dissolution.
- Establishing appropriate whistleblower legislation to protect the rights of individuals and organisations with respect to integrity and transparency in government.
  - Through regional and national civil society organisations, setting standards to define the role of civil society in development decision-making to ensure their meaningful participation at all relevant stages. Creating formal space for civil society in legislative processes (e.g., through representation on Senates) and creating a framework for periodic formal consultation with civil society on national policies across all sectors.
  - Ensuring that civil society has access to appropriate financing to support its work, including via channeling finance to local levels to support civil society and local communities, as well as reforming the type of financing to ensure that it meets the needs of civil society and includes support for capacity building to enhance technical competencies, build strong organisations, and support civil society networks. Developing results-based financing models for civil society is key.
  - Strengthening capacity of SIDS' development research institutes including to work collaboratively.
  - Setting up and supporting the development of innovation capacity needed to support improved systems design and development.
  - Setting up and supporting knowledge sharing platforms and communities of practice which include civil society as partners in development.
  - Supporting scientific research and documentation of local and traditional knowledge by academia, research institutes and other civil society actors, implementing open data policies and facilitating open access to information, and incorporating all forms of knowledge to guide information-based decision making for sustainable development.
  - Expanding and diversifying partnerships with civil society to more effectively deliver on sustainable development priorities, leveraging the capacities, expertise and roles played by civil society.
  - Engaging civil society in multi-stakeholder partnerships.
  - Taking steps to reduce the time required for litigation to make its way through the courts, such as by establishing a fast-track procedure for actions brought by civil society which may be considered highly consequential and of urgent importance to the community.
  - Boosting community-based inclusion of local, traditional and indigenous knowledge and heritage into learning systems and curriculum setting.

## **8. ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING**

This SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap firstly, will mobilise and support individual and collective action by civil society to support key priority areas in the ABAS and other sustainable

development priorities for SIDS. Secondly, it serves as a guide for governments to develop enabling institutional frameworks and mechanisms which meaningfully support and enable a whole-of-society approach to delivering sustainable development. It is also a guide for development partners which can provide funding, technical assistance, capacity building and other support to help civil society perform these important roles. It can help to catalyse partnerships within civil society.

The intention is to stimulate and guide development of specific implementation plans for regions, specific sectors, networks and stakeholders. The Action Plan and Roadmap should not be seen as prescriptive, but rather providing a framework which can be tailored to suit specific contexts, needs and opportunities.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning from implementation of the SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap should be in line with what is established for the ABAS – with the process led by, for and with civil society.

Broadly, success with implementation of the SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap would result in a stronger and more effective civil society taking on significant roles in sustainable development in SIDS, working in a coordinated and collaborative manner to enhance effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Governments and development partners would be fully committed to meaningful engagement of civil society as partners in delivering sustainable development in SIDS. New, stronger and more diverse partnerships would exist between civil society, by governments and other development actors. There would be more enabling national, regional and global institutional frameworks (laws, policies, regulations, mechanisms) and appropriate and targeted financing and resources to support civil society actions. Governance mechanisms would meaningfully include all of civil society, and especially support engagement of vulnerable and marginalised groups such as youth, minorities, women, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ and indigenous peoples.

This document was developed by a coordinating group of SIDS civil society with broad inputs from representatives across all SIDS regions. In the Caribbean, this was led by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), which also played an overall facilitating role, and the SIDS4 CSO Coalition in Antigua and Barbuda, co-led by the Integrated Health Outreach (IHO) and the Marine Ecosystems Partnership Trust (MEPA Trust). In the Pacific, this was led by the Pacific Island Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (PIANGO). In the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS) region, this was led by the SIDS Youth AIMS Hub (SYAH) and Development Indian Ocean Network (DION).