

SIDS4 CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

A SPECIAL EVENT IN CONNECTION WITH THE SIDS4 CONFERENCE

Empowering Resilient Prosperity: Civil Society's Engagement in the Implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS)

29 May 2024, 18:30 – 20:00, Interactive Dialogues Room

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The [4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States \(SIDS4\)](#) will be held in Antigua and Barbuda from 27 - 30 May 2024, under the theme “*Charting the course toward resilient prosperity*”. It will aim to assess development obstacles and present opportunities to steer the development trajectory of Small Island Developing States towards resilient prosperity and the ability of SIDS to achieve sustainable development, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. The SIDS4 Conference will bring together leaders to agree on a new programme of action for SIDS with a focus on practical and impactful solutions and to forge new partnerships and cooperation at all levels.

In the 2014 Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action ([Samoa Pathway](#)), Member States reaffirmed the importance of engaging a broad range of stakeholders at the global, regional, subregional, national and local levels around the sustainable development of SIDS. Civil society brings important contributions, including by holding governments and others accountable for their actions, representing the needs of communities and of vulnerable and marginalized stakeholders, protecting ecosystems, and by providing services and directly implementing projects to support sustainable development and resilience in SIDS countries. The SIDS4 Conference aims to generate spaces to deepen civil society as partners in delivering the next 10 years of the SIDS sustainable development agenda. Stronger civil society involvement will be strategic to drive public policy innovation, promote effective service delivery that leaves no one behind, as well as to ensure transparency, accountability, and citizen participation.

The SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap

The Forum will launch a SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap, which will be developed by SIDS civil society for SIDS civil society to provide a framework of concrete recommendations for action by civil society in SIDS, as well as recommended action by SIDS governments, the UN system and development partners to better enable and support civil society to deliver on this ambition.

For credibility and relevance, development of the SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap will be led and owned by civil society in SIDS. 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 will be facilitated by a few leading organizations and networks from each region.

They will form a coordinating group and engage CSOs from their respective regions and coordinate regional input into a shared document. In the Caribbean, this will be led by the Caribbean Natural



Resources Institute (CANARI) 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 will be led by the Pacific Island Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (PIANGO). One or more civil society partners will be identified to support the engagement of SIDS in the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas (AIMS) region. Support to this civil society-led and bottom-up initiative will be provided by SIDS governments and the UN system.

Interested CSO representatives should reach out to sids4@canari.org and info@ihoab.com for information about how to engage in this process. (For questions related to logistics and participation at SIDS4, please, reach out to sids4@un.org)

The SIDS4 Civil Society Forum

The SIDS4 [Civil Society Forum](#) will be held on **29 May 2024, from 18:30 – 20:00**, as a special event in connection with the SIDS4 Conference. It will be an opportunity to bring together diverse voices and perspectives to deliberate on strategies for achieving resilient prosperity in SIDS over the next 10 years, and to rally and mobilize civil society, including non-profit organizations, indigenous peoples, women's and youth organizations, persons with disabilities, academia and other stakeholder groups to highlight their contributions to the sustainable development of SIDS and to share reflections, priorities and announce commitments towards the implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS).

This forum will foster a collaborative and inclusive approach, recognizing the unique contributions of civil society in driving the sustainable development agenda in SIDS. The forum will also foster enhanced collaboration between civil society and SIDS governments, the UN system, and other development partners.

Objectives of the SIDS4 CSO Forum

- To bring together the main messages from civil society of all SIDS regions to the SIDS4 Conference including commitments and recommendations for implementation, follow up and review of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS).
- For civil society representatives attending the SIDS4 Conference to share innovative approaches and to showcase best practices to achieve resilient prosperity in SIDS based on their experiences in supporting the implementation of national development plans, as well as the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda, with a special focus on the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of the sustainable development of SIDS. Those will include, among others:
 - **Economic Resilience:** Sustainable economic models, inclusive growth, and innovative financing mechanisms to enhance economic resilience in SIDS.
 - **Social Well-being:** Social development issues, including healthcare, education, accessibility, inclusion, and community resilience, ensuring the well-being of SIDS populations.
 - **Environmental Sustainability:** Sustainable resource management, climate change adaptation, reduction of biodiversity loss, and ocean preservation to enhance SIDS environmental resilience.

- To discuss key challenges, opportunities and actionable strategies for civil society and stakeholders to actively engage in the implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) – a Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity.
- To facilitate dialogue and exchange, including with senior officials from Member States and high-level officials of the United Nations, development partners, civil society organizations and networks and other stakeholders’, on the role of civil society in advancing the SIDS sustainable development agenda, particularly to ensure the voices of the most vulnerable groups be heard, including youth, women, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, among others.

Format and Participation

The 1,5-hour event will be held fully in-person at the SIDS4 Conference premises.

Participants will include representatives from civil society organizations, SIDS governments, UN entities, inter-governmental organizations, development partners, and other stakeholders registered to attend the SIDS4 Conference. The event will be held in English.

Organization

The event will be organized by the following CSO Networks and organizations: Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), Pacific Island Association of NGOs (PIANGO), the NGO Major Group, the SIDS4 CSO Coalition in Antigua and Barbuda, co-led by the Integrated Health Outreach (IHO) and the Marine Ecosystems Partnership Trust (MEPA Trust).

The event is facilitated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), in consultation with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda (host country) and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS).

Outcomes

Civil society networks and constituencies at the Forum will present the SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap indicating proposals and recommendations to support implementation and follow up of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS).

SIDS governments, UN entities, inter-governmental organizations, development partners will also be encouraged to announce initiatives to support civil society in delivering the 10-year SIDS sustainable development agenda.

Key messages from the CSO Forum and of the SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap will be consolidated and reported back to the SIDS4 Conference on the last day of the Conference (30 May 2024).

For questions/comments, please email: sids4@un.org using the subject: [SIDS4] – CSO Forum