

St John's Antigua and Barbuda - May 29, 2024

Recommendation Statement by Bonaire Human Rights Organization to the 4th International Conference on SIDS held in St John's Antigua & Barbuda:

Considering the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) that will guide and chart the course of Small Islands Developing States towards resilient prosperity through sustainable development in partnership with the international community, "where no one should be left behind",

Bonaire Human Rights Organization (BHRO) urge the 4th Conference on SIDS to address the pressing issue of colonialism in the Caribbean region. Despite the implementation efforts of the past three United Nations International Decades for the Eradication of Colonialism (1990-2020) no less than 20 colonies still exist in the Caribbean, directly impacting the inhabitants of the SIDS

One primary objective of the SIDS Conference which is held every ten years looks to drive support for implementing the ABAS to bring all SIDS closer to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure sustainable development through inclusive implementation for all people of the SIDS aligns with our recommendation.

We propose that the SIDS Conference adopts a key initiative that should prioritize inclusiveness and collaborate with efforts towards the decolonization of the remaining Caribbean SIDS to aspire and realize the sustainable goals

It is imperative for both the Caribbean and the international community to prioritize this issue.

The abolition of slavery in the Caribbean, spanning from 1834 to 1886, did not equate to complete emancipation and development of the SIDS. Instead, it ushered in over a century and a half of colonial rule before independence was achieved by many Caribbean nations the Caribbean SIDS. Yet, today, some 20 Caribbean SIDS remain colonized.

The years 2020-2030 are designated as the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, aiming to eliminate contemporary colonial practices that infringe upon the inalienable right to self-determination, as enshrined in the UN Charter, the Decolonization Declaration, and relevant human rights instruments. Resolution 48/7 of 2021 of the Human Rights Council highlights the negative impact of colonial legacies on human rights enjoyment.

World Wars I and II and their aftermath underscored the struggle of enslaved and colonized peoples for freedom and equality, resulting in over 80 million lives lost. This sacrifice has fostered a global consciousness that rejects the subjugation of any people or nation. Indeed, the very birth of the United Nations is rooted in the commitment to uphold international peace and security based on the principles of equal human rights and self-determination for all peoples.

The inalienable right to self-determination is enshrined in various international human rights instruments, affirming the freedom of all peoples to determine their political status and pursue their socio-economic and cultural development. These include Articles 1 and 55 of the United Nations Charter, Article 73 of the UN Charter, Resolution 1514 (XV) of 1960 (UN Decolonization Declaration), the

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In light of these principles and the sad reality of the persisting historical injustice of colonial rule and under-development, we urge the 4th SIDS Conference to take decisive action by prioritizing the decolonization of remaining Caribbean territories in the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS). This is not just a matter of historical rectification but a fundamental step towards achieving true sustainable development, equality and justice for all.

Bonaire Human Rights Organization (BHRO)

James Finies

Davika Bissessar Shaw