



### **Statement**

**Nicole Leotaud, Executive Director of the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)  
at the SIDS4 Civil Society Forum**

It is my pleasure and honour to announce the launch of the SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap (2024-2034), developed by civil society representatives from across the three SIDS regions to outline key sustainable development priorities that civil society will address in the new 10-year Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS).

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 is seldom viewed as a legitimate partner and expressly nor 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.

The SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap highlights the diverse roles that civil society plays in delivering sustainable development, including in research, policy development, awareness raising, capacity building, advocating for and amplifying the voices of vulnerable and marginalised people, and developing and delivering innovative practical solutions on the ground.

The Action Plan and Roadmap also 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 Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) was pleased to play a convening and facilitating role in developing the joint Action Plan and Roadmap, working with colleagues from across the Caribbean, as well as leading civil society organisations from the AIS and Pacific regions.

New and deeper partnerships between governments and development partners with civil society can be a game changer for sustainable development in SIDS. This will leverage the expertise that civil society brings to the table, transforming our approach to addressing climate change, achieving inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic development, and delivering a human-rights approach to 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.

The SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap 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.

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