

**PIANGO Statement to the SIDS4 High-Level Dialogue: Charting the Course
Toward Resilient Prosperity
Antigua & Barbuda, 29th May 2024**

Your Excellencies,

Pacific greetings from the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO), representing civil society across 24 Pacific Island countries and Territories.

To chart a course toward resilient prosperity, we must prioritize inclusive and meaningful engagement of civil society. As highlighted in Section II of the ABAS, public participation and consultation are crucial. We must create spaces for inclusive dialogue and establish mechanisms for citizen participation in policy and budget decisions.

The international community's commitment in Section J(i) of the ABAS to support SIDS partnerships with new, innovative, and bold approaches is vital. These partnerships should be based on mutual collaboration, trust, accountability, and transparency, leveraging a whole-of-society approach. This includes expanding and diversifying partnerships with local authorities, civil society, NGOs, the private sector, academia, and international financial institutions.

Despite the challenges, the potential of SIDS civil society to contribute to sustainable development remains underutilized. CSOs are often not viewed as legitimate partners or involved in decision-making processes. Their roles in delivering sustainable development are undervalued, and institutional frameworks need enhancement to support their operation and action.

Therefore, implementing the ABAS must include a strong commitment to inclusive and effective partnerships with civil society. This requires moving beyond token consultations to ensure participatory, multisectoral approaches. Tailored capacity building and financing are essential to support civil society's significant contributions to sustainable development.

Civil society in SIDS are key partners in delivering sustainable development. We call for urgent action and a bottom-up process of transformation to effectively address the complex and pressing issues facing SIDS.

Delivered by Vani Catanasiga of Fiji Council of Social Service/PIANGO