

Promoting partnerships with civil society and support for the inclusive implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS)

by Krshtee Sukhbilas

We are gathered here today as members of the civil society, to recognise, value and learn from each other. It is undeniable that our organisations have been working very hard for the wellbeing of our islands and our work is of paramount importance for the inclusive implementation of ABAS.

We are known as the catalysts for social development, and yet most of us find it very difficult to access funding and technical support for our initiatives, especially young people. But it's not only the big profitable corporations who deserve massive investments and the latest tech. It's also the social and environmental organisations working day and night with our communities.

This is where partnerships come in.

Gathering support, whether financial or technical is a must, and partnerships can actually be part of the solution. One of the main obstacles that I face, along with many young activists, is connecting to the people and resources which can truly help us create positive change. We often lack the platform to voice out our ideas, share our projects and expand our initiatives.

It's a shame because SIDS is home to millions of youngsters with brilliant minds and big hearts. We have the potential to contribute much more to the sustainable development of our countries, but without collaborations, it's very difficult for us to do so. But through partnerships, whether with the private sector or government or international organisations, we can become more represented, upskilled and empowered.

In many AIS and Pacific islands, for instance, partnerships between local communities, NGOs, and international agencies have led to the successful implementation of several mangrove restoration projects. These projects not only protect shorelines but also provide vital ecosystems for marine life and enhance local livelihoods through eco-tourism and sustainable fishing practices.

However, to fully leverage these strengths, we must ensure that our partnerships are rooted in mutual respect, trust, and shared goals. Enhancing collaborations is critical, through inclusive dialogues, capacity building, policy integration, monitoring and evaluation, and resource mobilisation.

Together, we can transform the vision of ABAS into a vibrant reality. The future of our islands is bright, and together, as partners, we can achieve remarkable success with the implementation of ABAS.

Thank you.