

Report on the SIDS4 Civil Society Forum

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During A Moment of Declaration: Reporting back from Special Events
The Plenary Hall | Thursday, May 30th, 2024 | 2:00 - 2:30 PM

The SIDS4 Conference, AUA, Antigua, May 27th-30th

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests:

It is a privilege for Integrated Health Outreach to make the Civil Society statement reporting on the outcome of the SIDS4 Civil Society Forum held last night. Civil society organisations from across all SIDS regions gathered to speak our truth with one voice, sharing the message that we **will not be silent or silenced** on the actions needed to support the communities we serve, to address the degradation of our ecosystems, the intersectoral and multidimensional inequalities faced by the SIDS Regions.

Achieving sustainable development and resilient prosperity is only possible when civil society is respected as a key partner beyond token consultations and included in participatory processes. “It is important to remember that for SIDS communities, the oceans are not just a topic of conversation, they are essential for our livelihoods”.

And so, **with one voice**, we declare the following:

We call for equitable and flexible finance to support civil society participation and activities that provide solutions to the climate crisis and address intersecting social issues including but not limited to the preservation of our cultural heritage, mental health, gender-based violence, educational and technological advancement.

- We declare the rights of the most vulnerable people must be addressed **simultaneously** as any group left behind defeats the power of a whole society approach. We commit ourselves to the work of ending inequity and inequality for indigenous peoples, women, girls, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ and **all** groups at the margins of society.
- We declare the pivotal role civil society plays in addressing the climate crises through grassroots actions to preserve our natural environment. These actions complement the work

of our governments. **We must be included and given equal access to financial and technical capacity resources.**

Yesterday, we launched the **Civil Society Roadmap and Action Plan**. This collaborative effort of the SIDS4 steering committee and CSO consultations highlights the goals of civil society in supporting sustainable development.

We declare the need for civil society to maintain broader coalitions for continued action. These coalitions require the support of the UN System and our governments. We declare the need for a SIDS interregional platform for civil society that is supported by member states and the UN systems which allows us to meet biannually, and not merely on the sidelines of conferences every (ten) 10 years.

We commit to being a partner in the monitoring and evaluation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS to ensure transparency and accountability in our actions, and the actions of our governments.

We commend our civil society partnerships and the reaffirmations made yesterday by donor partners such as the European Union, and the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund.

Civil Society declares that existing partnerships **must be fortified and new relationships forged** to support our work.

We must work together, **united**, to deliver the participatory and multisectoral approach needed to guarantee resilient prosperity for SIDS. The call has been made, and the time to answer is now.
Thank you.