



4TH INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON  
**Small Island  
Developing States**  
27-30 MAY, 2024  
ST. JOHN'S, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

## **SIDS4 Conference Side Event**

### **Culture in the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS 2024-2034**

28 May 2024, 8 am – 9:30 am, Room 8

**Organized by: The Government of Cabo Verde in partnership with UNESCO**

#### **Background on the event**

Culture is a growing area of public policy investment for SIDS across all three sub-regions, notably to support economic diversification, enhance resilience in the face of climate change or reclaim historical memories. The safeguarding and promotion of cultural diversity has proven to be a common aspiration across SIDS' cultural policies, reflecting societies which have been shaped by mobility and intercultural exchanges, and marked by the multifaceted contribution of indigenous communities across the three sub-regions. Furthermore, the scope of national policies has gradually expanded, encompassing not only cultural heritage, but also to a growing extent museums, the creative economy and cultural tourism. The Outcome Document of SIDS4, the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) clearly recognized the impact of culture towards building resilient economies in SIDS by (i) enhancing entrepreneurship, education and training in cultural and heritage management and preservation, and in specific domains of the creative industries; and (ii) promoting and investing in the resilience of cultural heritage (Paragraph 21 iii, e, f). In the run up to the UN Summit of the Future, amplifying the voices of SIDS is vital to further build evidence towards anchoring culture within the Pact for the Future. Such call was particularly put forth at the side event organized by the Government of Cabo Verde and UNESCO.

#### **Key Issues discussed**

The side event sought to carve an inclusive conversation between ministerial-level representatives and youth advocates on the role of culture as a driver for sustainable development across the three SIDS sub-regions. Discussions highlighted the challenges and the critical areas of investment to strengthen the resilience of the culture sector, as well as underlining actions taken by SIDS so far to harness culture for sustainable development.

- While H.E. Ms Tapaeru Hermann, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Cook Islands emphasized the enabling power of culture to boost innovation in her country, H.E. Mr Abraão Aníbal Barbosa Vicente, Minister of Culture and Creative Industries of Cabo Verde highlighted the multi-faceted contribution of the sector to the implementation of the national development plan since 2016.
- Integrating culture and education was also brought to the forth as a means to stimulate resilient economies, provide avenues for employment, as well as foster a sense of belonging within communities.
- On a more alarmist perspective, Hon. Daryll S. Matthew, Minister of Education, Sports and the Creative Industries of Antigua and Barbuda underlined the need to integrate culture into curricula to preserve SIDS' values and histories in the face of climate change.
- The discussion highlighted not only the impact of climate change on the culture sector in SIDS, but also how culture could contribute to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. The invited youth advocates called for enhanced involvement of local communities and Indigenous Peoples in climate strategies.
- Other areas of investment included the potential of digital technologies to foster heritage safeguarding and to bridge the gap of the limited and small market in the SIDS through the creation of digital platforms to share and monetize cultural products and services.
- The side event also marked the launch of UNESCO's report [\*Mapping Cultural Policies in Small Islands Developing States\*](#), which presents an overview of priority areas for policy investment and related challenges and adaptation at national and regional levels for the future.

## **Key recommendations for action**

- Invest in structural projects and seek partnerships to develop initiatives in SIDS relating to (i) boosting the creative industries for economic diversification and job creation, (ii) strengthening the synergies between culture and education as well as (iii) harnessing cultural heritage and indigenous and local knowledge for climate action.
- Support efforts towards the professionalization of the cultural sector through capacity building, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET).
- Support the strengthening and adaptation of cultural policy and legal frameworks, as well as the development of monitoring systems on the impact of culture on national development to further support policy investment.
- Support SIDS in the effective implementation of the UNESCO's Culture Conventions for an enhanced protection and promotion of cultural heritage.
- Strengthen sub-regional dynamics and facilitate the effective involvement of SIDS in global policy forums to raise their voices, shedding light on their multi-fold contribution to sustainable development.
- Support the protection and exercise of cultural rights, including in the digital environment, while also enabling community engagement in policymaking.