



Action by civil society to build resilience to climate change using community-based and ecosystem-based solutions

For Immediate Release

Port of Spain, April 6, 2018 - The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) has called for greater focus on community-based and ecosystem-based solutions to climate change in the Caribbean region and beyond. As part of the Talanoa Dialogue hosted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat, the Institute highlighted the importance of focusing on community-based and ecosystem-based adaptation to build local resilience to climate change and the need for capacity building and funding to enhance civil society's role.

CANARI submitted a joint statement as part of the Talanoa Dialogue process facilitated by PANOS Caribbean, with the support of Climate Analytics, to gain input from civil society, private sector and other non-state actors in the Caribbean on strengthening the global response to climate change and achieving the targets set in the Paris Agreement. Caribbean stakeholders noted the scientific evidence in support of efforts to limit global temperature increase to 1.5°C and the critical need to not only implement, but accelerate, actions to reduce emissions and build resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Ms. Nicole Leotaud, CANARI Executive Director, emphasised the value of "investing in the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of ecosystems as this provides multiple benefits in terms of building ecological, economic and social resilience as well as mitigation co-benefits through carbon sequestration by forests and mangroves" in issuing the statement.

Natural ecosystems help limit the impacts of climate change and disasters and serve as natural defences. In the Caribbean, the potentially grave impacts of climate change and related disasters have come to the forefront in the wake of the destruction from the two unprecedented Category 5 Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. Natural ecosystems are also critical to key economic sectors in the region, including tourism, agriculture and fisheries, and the livelihoods of the rural poor, who are particularly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters because of their socio-economic constraints.

However, Ms. Leotaud noted that the concept of ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change is fairly new and evolving and not fully understood or being adopted in the Caribbean. There is also a danger that ecosystem-based approaches are being implemented without engagement of stakeholders and consideration of livelihood needs. A narrow focus on applying nature-based solutions without engagement of civil society and local communities is unlikely to ensure an inclusive, bottom-up approach that responds to local needs, especially of the most vulnerable, and to achieve fair and equitable outcomes. Taking into account how stakeholders are engaged, use of local alongside scientific knowledge and how to ensure good governance and balance conservation and development goals for socio-economic benefits is critical.

There are practical examples of community-based and ecosystem-based adaptation in action, drawing on the work of civil society organisations, local resource users and community enterprises. For example, CANARI, PANOS Caribbean and The Nature Conservancy have piloted participatory research and communications using innovative tools, such as participatory three-dimensional modelling of watersheds and whole islands using a 'ridge to reef' approach, to support local communities and other stakeholders to identify vulnerabilities and adaptation actions across the English and French-speaking Caribbean. The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, International Union for Conservation of Nature and a mix of civil society, academic and local government organisations in Jamaica, Grenada, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have built local capacity and supported 14 local ecosystem-based adaptation initiatives to protect coastal and marine resources over 2014-2018. At the regional level, the Gender in Fisheries Team is actively promoting an ecosystem approach to fisheries and gender equality in small-scale fisheries as part of the adoption Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) and a Gender Mainstreaming Protocol for the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy. Members of the Gender in Fisheries Team are the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies of the University of the West Indies, CANARI, the Caribbean National Fisherfolk Organisation and the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism Secretariat.

To scale up this impact, CANARI is calling for strengthening of the organisational and technical capacity of civil society organisations, local resource users and community enterprises so they can play a more significant role, developing strategic partnerships to foster knowledge exchange on best practices and innovations, and funding to support civil society engagement in adaptation planning and implementation and enable strategic partnerships spanning local to global levels.

For the full joint statement of Caribbean civil society to input to the Talanoa Dialogue, see:

<http://www.canari.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/talanoa-caribbean-civil-society-input-02-04-2018-submitted.pdf>

For further information on the Talanoa Dialogue, see: <https://talanoadialogue.com/>

For further information on CANARI's work on community-based and ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change, see: <http://www.canari.org/programmes/issue-programmes/climate-change-and-disaster-risk-reduction>

About CANARI: The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional technical non-profit organisation which has been working in the islands of the Caribbean for more than 25 years. Our mission is to promote equitable participation and effective collaboration in managing natural resources critical to development. Our work focuses on capacity building, policy planning and development, research, sharing and dissemination of lessons, and fostering regional partnerships.

Connect with us:



For further information, please contact:

Nicole Leotaud, CANARI Executive Director at nicole@canari.org or Ainka Granderson, CANARI Senior Technical Officer at ainka@canari.org or call: +868 626 6062