



*For Immediate Release*

## Let's Advocate for the SDGs!

### Building civil society capacity to advance sustainable development in Trinidad & Tobago

**Port of Spain, May 11, 2018** – Civil society is #StrongerTogether! The *SDGs Catalysts Network*<sup>1</sup> and members of wider civil society in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) agreed that sustainable development in T&T must address *inequality/access* for all through a focus on *human rights* and *environmental sustainability*.

These common priorities were identified by the leading CSOs working to address poverty, environmental sustainability, transparency and good governance, gender and youth, differently abled and LGBTIQ rights, literacy, and other critical issues across T&T. The CSOs have individually and collectively advocated for better policies and actions on these issues and they are now coming together to take a holistic and integrated approach to sustainable development.



*Civil society discussing priorities and ideas for collective advocacy on the SDGs at the national advocacy workshop*

The 29 CSOs came together at a two-day national advocacy workshop ‘**Let’s Advocate Together! Building civil society capacity to advance the sustainable development agenda in Trinidad & Tobago (T&T)**’ to collectively advance advocacy and partnerships around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which T&T and governments around the world adopted to guide their efforts towards sustainable development.

One participant noted that “*SDGs are the framework for wholistic, integrated development for people, planet and prosperity...CSOs must collaborate for integrated development and involve others...*”. The CSOs worked together to begin to distil a collective civil society position and advocacy strategy on the SDGs, including the optimal role of CSOs and the priorities for the national SDGs agenda in T&T.

The workshop was held on March 22-23, 2018 under the project [CSOs for Good Governance: Enhancing civil society’s contribution to governance and development processes in Trinidad and Tobago \(CSOsForGoodGov\)](#), which is supported by the European Union. The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) facilitated the workshop in collaboration with Veni Apwann (VA) and United Way TT (UWTT).

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.canari.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/members-of-sdgs-catalysts-network\\_january2018.pdf](http://www.canari.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/members-of-sdgs-catalysts-network_january2018.pdf)



European Union

The CSOs For Good Governance: Enhancing civil society’s contribution to governance and development processes in Trinidad and Tobago project is being supported by the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the project implementers and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

Capacity building elements of the workshop focused on familiarising CSOs on what is advocacy, sharing of effective advocacy examples and delving into some steps for developing an effective advocacy strategy including identifying key messages and target audiences.



Next major steps include further capacity building of the CSOs and fleshing out a collective CSO advocacy strategy. This will guide development of advocacy action projects that can be supported under the small grants component of the *CSOsForGoodGov* project.

Participating CSOs are excited to be working together over the next few years to ensure civil society can make a meaningful contribution and has a greater voice in achieving sustainable development in T&T.

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**About the project:** The [CSOsForGoodGov](#) project is spearheaded by a consortium of seven<sup>2</sup> leading civil society organisations (CSOs) in Trinidad and Tobago. The main objective of the project is enhancing civil society's contribution to governance and development processes in T&T and specifically, to support the effective involvement of CSOs in national implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the heart of the effort to do this, the project consortium convened and officially launched the SDGs Catalysts Network in September 2017. CANARI is serving as convener and coordinating activities of the Network under the *CSOsForGoodGov* project.

**About CANARI:** The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute is a regional, technical, non-profit organisation which has been working in the islands of the Caribbean for more than 20 years. Our mission is to promote equitable participation and effective collaboration in managing natural resources critical to development. Our programmes focus on research, sharing and dissemination of lessons learned, capacity building and fostering regional partnerships. For more info on CANARI see [www.canari.org](http://www.canari.org).

**Connect with us:**



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<sup>2</sup> Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), Environment Tobago (ET), Network of NGOs for the Advancement of Women, United Way Trinidad and Tobago (UWTT) (which is project lead), University of the West Indies-Institute for Gender and Development Studies (UWI-IGDS), Veni Apwann (VA) and Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD).