



PRESS RELEASE

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)
The Cropper Foundation
Environment Tobago

Civil society calls on the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to signal its commitment to good environmental governance by signing and ratifying the Escazú Agreement

Port of Spain, August 2, 2019 – On Tuesday 23 July 2019, at the Lloyd Best Institute of the Caribbean, 30 civil society organisations working on environmental management across Trinidad and Tobago participated in the *People Protecting our Planet: National civil society workshop on the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean*. This is also known as the Escazú Agreement, which was adopted on March 4, 2018 in Escazú, Costa Rica.

The [Escazú Agreement](#), the first environmental treaty for Latin American and the Caribbean, aims to guarantee the full and effective implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the rights of access to environmental information, public participation in the environmental decision-making process and access to justice in environmental matters. This will be achieved through the creation and strengthening of capacities and cooperation, contributing to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in a healthy environment and to sustainable development.

The national workshop *People Protecting Our Planet* was supported through grants from the European Union to CANARI and The Cropper Foundation. Participants shared their achievements and challenges with accessing environmental information and using mechanisms under the Environmental Commission. The need for more effective approaches to public participation in environmental issues was also discussed. Coming out of the workshop, the civil society organisations committed to work together to collectively advocate for good environmental governance. A collective advocacy campaign will be launched in August 2019 calling on the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to urgently sign and ratify the Escazú Agreement.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago played a leading role in the negotiations of the Escazú Agreement and was widely commended for having strong legal, regulatory and policy mechanisms in place to support implementation of this internationally ground-breaking treaty. Unfortunately, the Government has not yet signed or ratified this Agreement which can help support civil society's role in environmental management as a fundamental part of sustainable development of the country.

The Government will be provided with such an opportunity at the upcoming United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2019. For the UNGA, the UN Secretary-General has highlighted the Escazú Agreement as one of the four environmental treaties to be signed/ratified during the UNGA and several countries within Latin America and the Caribbean have signalled their intention to sign/ratify the Agreement on September 26, 2019.

The 30 civil society organisations who participated in the recent national workshop are now calling on the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to join its fellow Caribbean and Latin American nations and sign and ratify the Escazú Agreement at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019 and will launch a national campaign to promote this.

The Escazú Agreement was opened for the signature of the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on 27 September 2018 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, coinciding with the General Annual Debate of the

United Nations General Assembly. So far, there are 17 signatories and only one country (Guyana) has ratified. It needs to be ratified by 11 States to enter into force.

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For more information on the Escazú Agreement, visit <https://www.cepal.org/en/escazuagreement>.

To learn more about the upcoming Advocacy Campaign, contact:

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