



*For Immediate Release*

## **CANARI launches Caribbean Civil Society SDGs Knowledge Platform**

**Port of Spain, August 05, 2019** – The [Caribbean Civil Society Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\) Knowledge Platform](#) was officially unveiled on Tuesday, July 30, 2019, at a formal launch event held by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) in partnership with the European Union in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T), with the support of the Ministry of Planning and Development. The platform is a dynamic virtual space designed to provide easy online access to information relevant to the United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) and its implementation at the national and regional level, with particular focus on the transformative role that civil society organisations (CSOs) are playing in the process.



*Photo 1:- CANARI Executive Director Ms. Nicole Leotaud, (second from right) and Technical Officer Ms. Candice Ramkissoon (third from left), stand with Ms. Joanne Deoraj, Permanent Secretary in Ministry of Planning & Development (sixth from right), EU Ambassador Aad Biesebroek (fourth from right), Mr. Reuben Robertson, Acting Resident Coordinator of UN Trinidad and Tobago (first from right), Mr. Davin Jagessar, Asst. Programme Coordinator from the Ministry of Planning & Development (fifth from right) and other key civil society representatives at the launch event.*

CANARI is part of a T&T consortium of seven leading CSOs that is implementing the [CSOs For Good Governance: Enhancing civil society's contribution to governance and development processes in Trinidad and Tobago](#) (CSOs4GoodGov) project being implemented from 2017-2020. The project, which is supported by the EU, is designed to enhance and catalyse effective CSO participation in implementing the SDGs and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in T&T. The Caribbean Civil Society SDGs Knowledge Platform is a key tool towards achieving this project goal.

On the Knowledge Platform, CSOs are able to: showcase stories relating to their role in and experience of implementing or advocating around the SDGs; network to discuss experiences, exchange ideas and share lessons learned; and collaborate in order to enhance the capacity, voice and visibility of CSOs in national and regional SDGs policy and actions. CANARI Technical Officer, Candice Ramkissoon emphasised the significance of the Platform developed by CSOs for CSOs, noting that “We believe that CSOs will be able to participate more effectively in SDG advocacy and implementation if they are well informed about the SDGs and inspired by what other Caribbean CSOs are doing.” The platform was also highlighted as being especially relevant now, given that T&T is one of the countries that has been granted approval to present its Voluntary National Review (VNR) report to the United Nations on how the country is performing in terms of achieving the SDGs, at the 2020 UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, New York.

Also speaking at the event were Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Planning & Development Joanne Deoraj, EU Ambassador Aad Biesebroek, and Acting Resident Coordinator of the United Nations T&T Mr. Reuben Robertson, who all emphasised the critical role of CSOs in national development and the significance of the Platform in facilitating civil society inputs.

In his feature address, EU Ambassador His Excellency Aad Biesebroek stated, “We believe that civil society organisations have a critical role to play in the achievement of the SDGs, especially in advocating to government and in helping to translate Government policies into concrete measures that everyday people can embrace.” He challenged that there needs to be continual reflection and assessment regarding implementation, financing and promotion of the SDGs, and alignment of political priorities and national development policies in Trinidad & Tobago to support achieving the Goals.

Mrs. Joanne Deoraj, Permanent Secretary in Ministry of Planning & Development, said “While governments invariably establish the broad policy, planning, regulatory and institutional frameworks in which the SDGs are to be achieved, the SDGs do not belong to the Government, they belong to the whole of society”. It was further noted the creation of this Knowledge Platform would “enhance partnership and dialogue between civil society and government.

Mr. Reuben Robertson, Acting Resident Coordinator of United Nations Trinidad and Tobago highlighted the importance that CSOs played in achieving the SDGs and commended the emphasis that has been placed on supporting local civil society.

The utility and practical significance of the Platform was demonstrated by key CSO representatives from Habitat for Humanity, IAMovement, Caribbean Youth Environment Network - Trinidad and Tobago Chapter (CYEN-TT), and Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Project. They highlighted contributions made by their organisations, which are featured on the platform and drew out key issues faced in T&T, examples of how their work contributes to delivery of the SDGs and how the Knowledge Platform will enhance their SDG advocacy, monitoring and implementation efforts.

CANARI hopes that CSOs across T&T and the Caribbean will continue to share on their work and help populate the Platform. CANARI currently has an [open call](#) for content submissions for members of civil society to submit their work.

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**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 30 years. Our mission is to

promote equitable participation and effective collaboration in managing natural resources critical to development. Our programmes focus on capacity building, policy planning and development, research, sharing and dissemination of lessons learned, and fostering regional partnerships. See here for more information on CANARI: <http://www.canari.org/>.

**Connect with us:**



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