



For Immediate Release

CANARI stands ready to support Caribbean governments in Escazú implementation

Port of Spain, September 22, 2020 – September 26, 2020 marks the end of the official period for signatures on the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (widely known as the [Escazú Agreement](#) because it was signed in Escazú, a suburb of San Jose in Costa Rica). Civil society and citizen movements from around the Latin America and Caribbean region have been calling on their Governments to urgently sign and ratify this Agreement to show their commitment to strong environmental governance, which is central to economic and social development. In light of this, the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is advising the governments of Caribbean nations that it stands poised and ready to provide technical support to them as they work to implement this groundbreaking treaty.

"CANARI stands ready to support Caribbean governments with implementation of the Escazú Agreement, leveraging our 30 years of experience working with Caribbean governments and other stakeholders to develop and facilitate institutional frameworks and processes for effective participatory environmental decision-making," said Nicole Leotaud, Executive Director of CANARI.

The Escazú Agreement aims to guarantee Caribbean and Latin American citizens the right to: access environmental information; participate in the environmental decision-making process in their countries; and, access justice or seek recourse in environmental matters within their communities/nations. As the first regional environmental treaty for Latin America and the Caribbean and the first treaty in the world with specific protection mechanisms for environmental defenders, it is designed to empower people.

This landmark treaty will come into force once 11 countries have ratified. So far, four Caribbean countries – Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda – have both signed and ratified. Grenada, Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Saint Lucia have taken the first step and signed but have yet to ratify. They join other countries in Latin America to make a total of 22 signatories and nine ratifications so far.

Once the treaty enters into force, this signals the start of a new phase for the countries that have signed and ratified, as they work to build or strengthen the required national policies, laws, regulations and mechanisms for implementation. CANARI is well-placed to assist the governments of Caribbean nations as they embark on this important work.

The Institute is well-recognised around the Caribbean for its expertise in facilitating participatory environmental governance processes and has a wealth of experience supporting governments' implementation of important environmental policy within the Caribbean region. Just over the past three years, the organisation has engaged and supported 11 Caribbean governments on eight policy

implementation projects ranging in focus from fisheries management and biodiversity to climate change and climate financing (see a list of its most recent projects complete with the countries supported attached).

CANARI sees the Escazú Agreement as providing a key framework and foundation for enhancing stewardship of natural resources, which are the basis for economic development, livelihoods and well-being of Caribbean people. It has been actively engaged in championing the signing, ratification and implementation of the Escazú Agreement for several years, both within a national context in Trinidad and Tobago where it is headquartered and as a leader among and partner to other environmental civil society organisations (CSOs) region-wide.

"The Escazú Agreement matters to the Caribbean because it affirms and strengthens the region's commitment to respecting the environmental access rights of its citizens and because it promotes the adherence by the Caribbean to sustainable development," said The Honourable Mr. Justice Warren Anderson, Chair of the Caribbean Academy for Law and Court Administration, which is the educational arm of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), during a public lecture on the Agreement hosted by CANARI in July 2019.

About CANARI: The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional technical non-profit institute which has been working across the islands of the Caribbean for 30 years. Our mission is to promote and facilitate stakeholder participation in the stewardship of natural resources in the Caribbean. Our work focuses on Equity, Ecosystems and Biodiversity, Resilience, and Participatory Governance. See here for more information on CANARI: <http://www.canari.org/>.

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