

Foundation for Development Planning, Inc.

Presented by Lloyd Gardner, Executive Director

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Civil society represents an untapped potential in the effort to achieve just and sustainable development in small island developing states. That potential is not reflected in the text of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS but can be realized through the actions taken in pursuit of the goal of Resilient Prosperity articulated in the Agenda.

We note the Agenda's conclusion that after three decades and three programmes of action, small island developing states remain vulnerable. We recall that Caribbean governments have stated that the model of development followed is not appropriate for the Caribbean, thereby exacerbating inherent vulnerabilities.

What would be a model of development suitable for the unique conditions of small, highly vulnerable, and somewhat isolated communities? Under these conditions, any consideration of resilience or sustainability must necessarily address the issues of the extractive nature of our economic strategies and the need for maintaining the integrity of communities.

We are reminded of the adoption of the resolution by the United Nations General Assembly to promote the Social and Solidarity Economy as a mechanism to achieve sustainable development. The social and solidarity economy framework suits the Caribbean, and small communities generally, not only because it is structured on mutualism, participatory governance, and inclusiveness, but also because small communities historically function as sharing economies.

Small island developing states cannot adequately address the increasingly disruptive threats, much less build resilient economies and safe societies without harnessing the talent, innovation, and size of the civil society sector.

Transition to a more prosperous, sustainable, and just society requires concerted action by all of society. Therefore, the governments of small island developing states and their development partners should embrace civil society as essential to the sustainability of these small states and mobilize civil society organizations as full partners in the development process.

The civil society sector looks forward to working with the public sector, private sector, and our citizens to create a just and sustainable future.

Thank you.