



For release on World Environment Day, June 5, 2021

Civil society campaign on the Escazú Agreement story map launched

Port of Spain, June 5, 2021 – The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) has launched an online interactive story map about a collective advocacy campaign conducted by civil society organisations. This campaign took place over 2020-2021 and called on Caribbean governments to join and implement the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (referred to as the Escazú Agreement).

This ground-breaking new regional treaty came into force on Earth Day, April 22, 2021. It recognises that the right to a healthy environment is a human right. It strengthens mechanisms for governance of the environment to support the lives and livelihoods of Caribbean people. Four Caribbean countries have already signed – Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis and Saint Lucia. Other Governments are yet to join.

“A case study on the Escazú Agreement: Amplifying Caribbean voices on regional environmental matters through collective civil society advocacy” tells the story of the collective regional campaign, led by CANARI, which included five national campaigns. The national campaigns took place in Jamaica led by the Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (C-CAM), in Antigua and Barbuda led by the Environmental Awareness Group (EAG), in Saint Kitts and Nevis led by the Newcastle Bay Foundation, in Saint Lucia led by the Saint Lucia National Trust, and in Trinidad and Tobago co-led by CANARI, the EquiGov Institute, Environment Tobago and The Cropper Foundation.

The campaigns raised public awareness about the importance of the Escazú Agreement and urged key government agencies and political leaders to take action. The campaigns were rolled out with newspaper articles, features on radio and TV, videos and animations shared on social media, via in-person events and online discussions. Petitions were sent and meetings held with key policymakers.



A few of the 60 civil society organisations calling on the Trinidad and Tobago Government to accede to the Escazú Agreement.

This work took place under the Powering Innovations in Civil Society and Enterprises for Sustainability in the Caribbean (PISCES) project, which aimed to enhance the role of civil society in marine and coastal biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic development in the Caribbean, funded by the European Union (ENV/2016/380-530).

The civil society organisations leading the campaigns found the experience challenging, but valuable, and identified lessons for how collective advocacy campaigns like this can be most effective. They will build on this experience to expand their advocacy work, including continuing to coordinate with others on advocacy efforts to address environmental issues that affect their communities and countries. Their experiences and lessons are documented in the story map and provide inspiration to others in civil society.

Nicole Leotaud, CANARI's Executive Director, applauded the work and noted, "Caribbean citizens need to have a stronger voice in decisions about how our valuable natural resources are used. Many voices together are louder than scattered individual voices." If this experience is any indication, Caribbean citizen's perspectives on environmental matters being shared and seriously considered in regional and international spaces could become a new norm.

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News peg: World Environment Day June 5, 2021

Access the GIS story map: A case study on the Escazú Agreement: Amplifying Caribbean voices on regional environmental matters through collective civil society advocacy

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3e30944979a14e49a833113326fa0c7a>

About the Escazú Agreement: <https://www.cepal.org/en/escazuagreement>

About the project: The Powering Innovations in Civil Society and Enterprises for Sustainability in the Caribbean (PISCES) project (2017-2021) was implemented by CANARI in partnership with the Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (C-CAM), the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO), the Environmental Awareness Group (EAG), the Fondation pour la Protection de la Biodiversité Marine (FoProBiM), Sustainable Grenadines Inc (SusGren), and the Saint Lucia National Trust (SLNT). It was funded by the European Union (ENV/2016/380-530). PISCES contributed to addressing priority issues and needs in the Caribbean by enhancing marine and coastal biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic development. See here for more information on the project: <https://canari.org/pisces/>

About CANARI: The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional technical non-profit organisation which has been working to promote and facilitate stakeholder participation in the stewardship of natural resources in the Caribbean for over 30 years. See <http://www.canari.org/>.

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