



# SAINT LUCIA NATIONAL TRUST

TEL: (758) 452-5005/31495 P.O. BOX 595 CASTRIES, ST. LUCIA WEST INDIES  
FAX NO: (758) 453-2791 Email: natrust@slunatrust.org Website: www.slunatrust.org

*Patron: Dame Pearlette Louisy*

December 9, 2020

## **The SLNT Applauds the Government for Ratifying the Escazú Agreement Ahead of Important Virtual Environmental Meeting**

**By Karetta Crooks Charles  
SLNT Programme Officer- Communications and Advocacy**

Saint Lucia became the 10<sup>th</sup> country to ratify the historic [Escazú Agreement](#) on December 1, 2020. This momentous development preceded the hosting of the the Second Meeting of the Signatory Countries to the Escazú Agreement that will be held virtually, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, from December 9-10, 2020 under the auspices of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda. The meeting also coincides with International Day for Human Rights Defenders on December 9<sup>th</sup> and International Human Rights Day on December 10<sup>th</sup>. It was preceded by two sessions on December 8<sup>th</sup>: an in-person meeting in Antigua dubbed “The Escazú Agreement: Empowering Societies for Sustainable Development”, and the second under the theme ‘Youth for Escazú’. The Communications and Advocacy Officer of the Saint Lucia National Trust (SLNT) and Alternate Elected Representative of the Public (Escazú Agreement), Karetta Crooks Charles participated in both meetings, sharing the role of civil society in promoting the effective implementation of the Agreement as well as the important role youths can play in ensuring its success. Additionally, on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Trust participated in a preparatory workshop organized by the Elected Representatives of the Public and The Access Initiative.

**'Escazú Agreement Workshop to Prepare for Signatories Meeting' - Dec 3, 2020**

- ❖ The SLNT staged a meeting with WRI, government representatives and the project Legal consultant for a project to promote the Escazú Agreement and Climate Justice.
- ❖ The project takes places in Saint Lucia & Jamaica.

The Access Initiative Projects

The Agreement is not just an environmental agreement; it is also a human rights agreement because it is the only agreement in Latin America and the Caribbean with provisions to protect environmental defenders. It also acknowledges the right people have to live in a healthy environment.

The Agreement promotes access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters and this significant meeting will allow the 24 countries that have signed on to continue discussing the issues to be addressed at the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties, possibilities for cooperation and strategies for the Escazú Agreement's prompt entry into force and its effective implementation. The Agreement enters into force upon ratification by 11 countries.



Mrs Crooks Charles participating in important meeting

Mrs. Crooks Charles was elated at the news that Saint Lucia has ratified the Agreement and said, “It has been 8 years since the SLNT has been advocating for Saint Lucia to first sign then ratify this important people centered agreement. As the main environmental conservation non-governmental organisation on island, we continued to raise awareness about the agreement amongst our members, students and the wider public through jingles, animations, infographics, press releases, talk shows and consultations. The effective implementation of the Escazú Agreement is important to us because we believe in the long run it will allow us to access information and create a peaceful space for us to participate meaningfully in decisions that will affect our natural resources. Sadly, many times we have been misunderstood and labeled as contentious when we try to advocate on environmental issues, Escazú will hopefully nurture an atmosphere of greater understanding between the government and those who seek to sustainably safeguard our environment. So we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Government of Saint Lucia as we pledge to continue the collaboration to ensure that Escazú is a functional Agreement that will raise the standards of environmental governance on island.”

The two-day meeting of Signatories will entail a High-Level Event featuring - Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Epsy Campbell, Vice President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Mary Robinson, the first female President of Ireland and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's (UN ECLAC) Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena among others. The sessions will be live streamed via the ECLAC's website, [www.cepal.org](http://www.cepal.org) and on its social media accounts on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLJGo5t6HcI>), Twitter (@cepal\_onu) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/cepal.onu>).