

ACS Secretary-General Noemí Espinoza Madrid Advocates for Inclusive Policies in Small Island Developing States at Caribbean Academic Forum



Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago - March 25, 2025 - The Secretary-General of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Noemí Espinoza Madrid, participated virtually in the Panel titled: "Care, Territories, and Environmental Sustainability in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)," during the Caribbean Academic Forum: "Contributions to the XVI Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: Advancing towards Care Societies."

During her intervention, Secretary-General Espinoza Madrid underscored the critical intersection between gender equality, climate resilience, and sustainable development in the Greater Caribbean. She highlighted that despite progress in women's participation in decision-making spaces, care responsibilities remain unequally distributed. Women in SIDS bear a disproportionate burden, particularly in times of crisis, as climate change exacerbates their workload through increased caregiving responsibilities, economic insecurity, and social vulnerabilities.

She emphasized the urgent need for policies that integrate care as a pillar of sustainable development. The ACS has identified local initiatives that link care work with climate resilience, including programs supporting care sector workers with sustainable infrastructure, water and sanitation projects with a gender perspective, and green job training for women in renewable energy and the circular economy. These efforts illustrate the potential of a multisectoral approach that aligns care policies with climate action.

Secretary-General Espinoza Madrid called for strengthened national and regional collaboration among SIDS and Greater Caribbean nations to share best practices, mobilize climate finance, and promote policies that ensure a fair redistribution of care responsibilities. At the international level, she urged for the inclusion of care work in climate finance mechanisms to address the differentiated impact of climate change on women and girls. Recognizing the economic value of care work is crucial for advancing gender equality and building resilient communities.

The ACS remains committed to advocating for gender-responsive policies to drive sustainable development in the region. Gender justice cannot be postponed, and the real cost of care in our societies cannot be ignored. Climate resilience and gender equality must go hand in hand. It is time to invest in care systems and ensure equality as the foundation of our future.