

ADDRESS
By Prime Minister Dr the Honourable Keith Rowley
Lead CARICOM Head of Government Responsible for Energy

U.S.-CCA Energy Security Summit
Plenary Lunch Session

U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C.

4 May 2016
1.00 p.m

Protocols

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) recognises that, given the enormous scale of the resources of our respective countries, renewable energy can and should be contributing more to the regional energy mix thereby increasing the prospects for energy security.

For example within the Community, the aggregated contribution of renewable power to the electricity sector has almost doubled over the last decade – from around 5% in 2005 to 9.1% in 2015. We have now set a target for the aggregated contribution of renewable energy to power generation within the Region of 47% by 2027.

Every country within CARICOM has either updated or is in the process of updating energy policies and electricity regulations to promote greater use of renewable energy and increased efficiency in the way in which energy is produced, delivered and used.

My own country, Trinidad and Tobago, has been making steady progress. We are the only net energy producer within CARICOM, with as much as 45% of GDP and nearly 60% of government revenue derived from the oil and gas sector. Nonetheless, in October 2015, my administration set a target of 10% renewable power generation by 2021. This will require the development around 150 MW of renewable energy resources and we are looking to solar and wind to provide options for this. Legislation is being

developed as part of a comprehensive policy for Renewable Energy in Trinidad and Tobago.

On the efficiency side, blessed by a power sector in which natural gas accounts for 98% of generation, Trinidad and Tobago has achieved around 60% efficiency, almost twice the regional average. In transmission and distribution too, average losses of around 6% is in-keeping with global best practices.

We recognize however that much more needs to be accomplished and more critically, the important role of the private sector in supporting the energy ambitions of our government. Hence, tax credits and incentives have been developed to attract some of the investments necessary for meeting our objectives and targets.

The case of Montserrat, the smallest Member State, is symbolic of the commitment of the Community. With help from the technical team at the CARICOM Secretariat, Montserrat has developed a modern Sustainable Energy Policy and Implementation Plan. Through a combination of solar and geothermal energy, supported by energy efficiency measures, renewable energy power generation is expected to provide 100% of electricity supplies by 2020. Electrification of the transport sector is also part of the national plan to transform Montserrat into an economy that is completely dependent on indigenous low carbon sources of energy that are predictable in supply and cost, and equitably available to all.

Since the Energy Security Summit of January 2015, Jamaica updated its laws to provide a modern codified system of regulating the generation, transmission, supply, distribution and the dispatch of electricity. This allowed a project for 78 MW of utility scale renewable power generation using wind and solar energy, which was already in the works, to be fast tracked.

The story of these three countries of diverse geography, socioeconomic circumstances and energy potential, in a sense, tells the story of the Caribbean Community. That despite our differing situations, we have found commonality within the understanding

that the current “low” price of oil, which impacts our countries in different ways, ought not to compromise our pursuit for increased energy security, the desired outcome of which is **equality** in access to **quality** energy services for our citizens.

It is in that context we receive the recommendations of the Task Force for Energy Security. That Task Force was proposed during the visit of President Barack Obama to the Region in April 2015, a little over a year ago.

Earlier presentations indicated that the Task Force has identified, among other things, the need for the actions pursued under the Caribbean Energy Security Initiative (CESI) to support the improvement of the governance and investment climate for clean energy within the Region. This morning, the importance of the regional coordination framework for the Caribbean Sustainable Energy Roadmap and Strategy (“commonly referred to as the C-SERMS Platform”) and the Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (“CCREEE”) to the acceleration of regional markets for energy efficiency and clean energy investment were highlighted. This importance has also been highlighted within the Report of the Task Force.

Our countries, as demonstrated by the examples provided earlier, will continue to advance the governance reforms that are necessary for the energy transitions to which we have committed ourselves through national and regional targets. The targets in all cases are ambitious, though realistic, and requires above all else, partnerships.

The US has also put together a financing programme, the Clean Energy Finance Facility for the Caribbean and Central America, which is intended to provide “early-stage funding to catalyze greater private and public sector investment in clean energy projects.” Facilities such as these can support the preparation and de-risking of projects, which will bring them to a suitable stage of bankability and help the Region to transition at an accelerated rate. In this sense, I must mention and compliment the GEOSMART Facility of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and IDB, which is providing the Eastern Caribbean states with country-appropriate funding that targets the de-risking of

geothermal projects. We anticipate the additional support from the U.S. and other partner governments, as well as the multilaterals and IFIs.

Despite the progress made, the Caribbean Community is still fairly early in the process of growing the clean energy sector. Using a soccer analogy to describe clean technology investments within the Caribbean, there have been some shots on target, some misses, and some goals scored, but it is far too early to “call the game”.

Much of the progress that is to come will depend on partnership with the private sector. The last ten years of progress within the Region is beginning to mature. So to the private sector representatives here today, I say “Fortune favours the brave”.

In closing therefore, I thank our development partners for demonstrating action that shows an acceptance of energy security is a “shared” responsibility. In particular, I thank the Government of the United States for providing this opportunity for us to renew dialogue on this matter, which is of critical importance to our individual and collective sustainable development agenda.