



ADDRESS BY

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MINISTER OF ENERGY AND ENERGY AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

AT THE FORMAL LAUNCH OF

MAINSTREAMING RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS IN
SCHOOLS (PROJECT OF THE UNATT)

HOTEL NORMANDIE, ST ANN'S, PORT OF SPAIN

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SALUTATIONS

Ladies and Gentlemen I really am delighted to be with you this morning, and to address you in my capacity as Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs.

To me, this is quite a ground-breaking event for our nation, as we officially launch a programme that will see, for the first time ever, the installation of solar stills and solar energy generation devices either in the form of grid-tied or stand-alone energy devices in nine secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago.

This pilot project which is being led by the United Nations Association of Trinidad and Tobago (UNATT), entitled *“Mainstreaming Renewable Energy Projects in Schools”* will serve to create an awareness and practical knowledge of alternative energy and will also help to create a deeper

sense of environmental responsibility among the students, and through them the wider population.

And ladies and gentlemen, this is not a statement to be taken lightly – through our students we will reach the wider population.

This is perhaps the most noteworthy part of this programme and something that is worthy of commendation and support. Whereas many approaches have involved pilot projects in random locations where the economics and efficiencies were put to the test, this programme involves engaging the support of bright, young and eager minds who will become the champions for Renewable Energy.

As champions, let me assure students, and parents alike, that they will receive the full support of the Ministry as we believe you can emerge as the strongest advocates of this form of energy.

Ladies and Gentlemen to put this all into context, Trinidad and Tobago has a long history in the exploration and production of crude oil and natural gas. We have been in the oil business for more than a hundred years and we are one of the world's leaders in the production and monetisation of our natural gas as well as in petrochemicals.

Conventional energy remains the lifeblood of our economy and between June 2010 and today, we have taken several successful strategic approaches to revitalising exploration. Now that the signals are clear that this revitalisation

programme has taken off, we expect to have more finds and greater production.

Many experts agree that there is a lot more oil and gas to be found in our deep waters particularly, and while we aggressively pursue these new resources, let me assure you that we also appreciate that oil and gas are finite resources. One day, it would either run out or would lose its value.

This is why the Government of the People's Partnership has placed a high level of priority and importance on renewable energy, whether that is from the wind, sun or even geothermal energy.

In fact, I can share with you all that it was with this understanding that the Honourable Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar changed the Ministry of Energy's name to

the Ministry of Energy and Energy *Affairs*, recognising that we were no longer dealing with traditional energy but all affairs of energy, including renewable and alternative.

And ladies and gentlemen, this is why I have said on a few occasions in the past that our Government's thrust into Renewable Energy and Alternative Energy represents the change process whereby we enter into a new age of Energy.

With so much history under our belts on the non-renewable Energy side of the industry, we realised that our nation's continuity, energy security and survival hinged on our ability to create the environment where a transition from non-renewable, to renewable could take place.

So we spent our first few months in Government laying a very solid, but adaptive foundation for this transition to take place. And today, this is why the UNATT's initiative is able to link so harmoniously into the Government's medium and long term energy strategies. And this is how we on the Government side approached it.

Renewable energy and energy efficiency are key elements of our drive for long term energy security that can potentially result in significant national benefits including a reduction in Green House Gas Emission; economic diversification; institutionalised energy efficient practices and lifestyles; and overall national development including new business and employment opportunities.

Ladies and gentlemen, as a ratified signatory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Kyoto Protocol, Trinidad and Tobago will

continue to act on its collective responsibility to reduce Green House Gas emissions.

We recognized very early that it is the developing island states like us in the Caribbean that will be most affected if there are not considerable reductions in Green House Gas emissions. As you will know, we in the Caribbean face particularly high risks in the context of greenhouse gas emissions and its impact, because of our limited size, geographical location, high exposure of infrastructure and limited adaptive capacity.

The Government of the People's Partnership is therefore committed to reducing green-house gas emissions and we are committed to the most efficient use of our natural resources.

Let me take this opportunity to highlight some of the important renewable energy and energy efficiency capacity building programmes and initiatives undertaken by my Ministry in collaboration with other stakeholders.

The main initiatives include:

1. Training and education in renewable energy and energy efficiency systems,
2. Inclusion of renewable energy and energy efficiency in the school curriculum,
3. Community Based initiatives,
4. Advertising campaigns,
5. Legislative and Regulatory amendments,
6. Standards and accreditation procedures,
7. Collaboration with international agencies to promote Research and Development

We are also engaged with the Ministry of Education with a view to having the renewable energy and energy efficiency integrated into the education curriculum, over the long term.

We see this as vital because it will ensure that our young people, our Renewable Energy Champions, are aware of the challenges and opportunities presented by renewable energy.

More important, ladies and gentlemen, is that just as I am standing here today, as a professional steeped in the non-renewable side of Energy and as Minister with that responsibility, through the Government of the People's Partnership, we have created a shift to a period of transition.

In the years to come, the very Renewable Energy Champions – the students of today - by virtue of the Government's foundation of today, will become steeped in the Renewable side of energy. You therefore are the ones who will see our nation through this transition and take Trinidad and Tobago comfortably into a new age of energy.

I say this to make clear, exactly how much importance our Government places on creating an environment for students to become true leaders of tomorrow ... in Energy and in other sectors as well.

In another notable initiative, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs is collaborating with the Global Environmental Facility, the Ministry of Community Development and other stakeholders to develop a pilot project involving the design and construction of two

community centers utilizing green design and renewable energy technologies.

These centers have been marked as the ideal locations for demonstrating the practical use and benefits of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies to the national community while facilitating the growth of a knowledge base.

These technologies would also serve to support the increased role being anticipated of these centers in our communities, including their use as natural disaster relief shelters.

The Global Environmental Facility has developed a project document which is currently under review by the local stakeholders. It proposes to finance that aspect of the

construction of the building that involves green design and technologies and will also provide technical expertise.

In addition, the Ministry of Housing and the Environment has been collaborating with the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs and other stakeholders in examining the potential for adopting renewable energy and energy efficient technologies in a new housing development being planned in east Trinidad.

The housing programme will also utilize solar thermal and solar photovoltaic technologies as well as efficient design. A power supply using wind turbines is also being explored.

It is worth mentioning here that one of the industries being considered for the Union Industrial Estate is a world scale integrated complex for the manufacture of glass and

photovoltaic cells which would be another leap forward in not only developing and implementing, but also institutionalising Renewable Energy into our nation's future growth. How! We have put in place incentives for the manufacture of solar water heaters but why not ensure that the components can be manufactured right here in T&T including the production of solar panels.

Key to developing an enabling environment, in which these developments could take place, is the creation of the appropriate legal and regulatory environment. In this regard, my Ministry has commenced discussions with the Ministry of Public Utilities, T&TEC and the RIC on the matter of revising the existing legislative framework to include a number of legal instruments (e.g. feed-in tariffs and net metering) to enable incorporation of renewable energy into the national power grid.

The following incentives are in train –

- Open access to the network
- Feed in tariffs
- Net metering
- Renewable portfolio standards

These incentives will facilitate the development of the Home Efficiency Self Sufficiency (HESS) programme in which individuals households will be allowed to invest in small scale wind turbines and PV systems. Thus generating their own electricity to store on the grid in times of surplus power.

Another aspect of the enabling environment which I would like to briefly highlight is the development of product standards. A Specification Committee organized by the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards, chaired by the UWI and including the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs and other stakeholders, is currently developing

product standards for solar water heaters and this work is due for completion by September 30, 2011.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Utilities and RIC, the MEEA will launch a few pilot projects in this fiscal year.

In the interim a public advisory has been prepared by a joint team comprising the MEEA and the Consumer Affairs Division of the Ministry of Legal Affairs to guide consumers into making the right choices when purchasing solar water heaters. This Advisory will soon be released to the public via the print media.

In addition, the work of an Electrical Wiring Code Committee chaired by the Board of Engineering is drawing to a close. This Committee has been addressing the compatibility and safety issues in relation to the interconnection of renewable energy systems with the national electricity grid.

Ladies and gentlemen, as our country continues to take steps to reduce its carbon emissions, we will also continue to explore opportunities in carbon trading as exists under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

The MEEA has initiated capacity building in this important area through the recent hosting of our first CDM workshop. We are in the process of building on this experience through collaboration with key local and international stakeholders in identifying a pipeline of projects based on a quantification of the country's renewable energy potential and a determination of the most eligible projects.

It is envisaged that based on our heavy industrial base, we would one day attract CDM investment to Trinidad and Tobago and be a commercial driver of the regional renewable energy sector through manufacturing and/or

distribution of renewable energy infrastructure and technology.

Recognising the need to create an environment to facilitate the involvement of the private sector in research and development, we propose to expand local R&D on renewable energy systems and their implementation.

Grant and scholarship schemes must be an integral part of the process, together with monitoring and evaluation, to establish effectiveness of programmes.

Collaboration with international agencies in R&D is also actively being explored. Currently, the Government is collaborating with the United States Department of Energy to establish a Renewable Energy Research Center.

A Memorandum of Understanding to effect this development has been finalized and signing of this document is expected to take place within the next two months.

Ladies and Gentlemen I hope that this gives you a clear picture of the dedication, commitment and work that the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs has invested in Renewable Energy in less than one year since a change of Government.

I also hope this sends a strong signal to the schools, the Teachers, and indeed our Renewable Energy Champions – the students - that the Government of the People's Partnership has set out to do everything it can to provide the tools for the construction of the Renewable Energy sector!

We know that, as with every pioneering undertaking, there may be some stumbling and setbacks and rather than becoming discouraged, let me urge you to use these as valuable experiences through which we can grow.

And as I conclude, I want to make a commitment to you, and to our Champions in particular. In the past, much has been said in the context of Renewable Energy and its development.

The talk has always been conceptual and nebulous without any demonstrated commitment by the Government, with timeframes, deliverables and signposts for development. That is the past and we in the Government of the People's Partnership will not only talk the talk; we are prepared to walk the talk! As I have said previously, there can be no

better way to develop and implement Renewable Energy,
than to let our remaining oil and gas foot the bill!

Let us not be bound by the legacies of the past. Today
marks the beginning of new legacies!!!

I therefore congratulate the UNATT for the work and
leadership it has shown and assure you that as we move
forward and develop Renewable Energy, our Government
will continue its work to support, build and implement
Renewable Energy into the mainstream.

Let us therefore work and deliver, together!

I thank you.