



**Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND ENERGY INDUSTRIES**

OPENING REMARKS

MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND ENERGY INDUSTRIES

Renewable Energy (RE) and Energy Efficiency (EE) Youth Forum

CARICOM Energy Month 2016

November 17th, 2016
UTT, Point Lisas

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Professor Clement Imbert

Professor Dyer Narinesingh

Members of Staff of UTT

Members of Staff of the Ministry of Education

Members of Staff of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries

Other invited guests

Members of the Media

Students

Teachers

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to join with you today here at UTT for this the **Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Youth Forum**, which is a vital element in **CARICOM Energy Month, November 2016**.

Formerly celebrated as CARICOM Energy **Week**, this event is now being staged over an extended period of one month to enable a more comprehensive approach so as to build awareness and enhance collaboration on energy issues and challenges.

CARICOM Energy Month is a partnership among the CARICOM Secretariat, Member States, Regional institutions and development partners within the Community. This Region-wide initiative highlights the importance of energy to our economic development, social stability, and environmental well-being, under the Regional Theme of “**Sustainable Energy for Sustainable Development (SE4SD)**”.

The National Theme adopted by Trinidad and Tobago is **weEnergy: Connecting OUR People**. This is clearly what we are about today and, in particular, I am very pleased to see so many youths with us as we have prepared a very interesting and engaging programme which I am sure you will all enjoy. In addition, many of you would be aware, that throughout this month of November, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries continues to host a Radio Competition at three of our popular stations, Red 96.7, Slam 100.5 and Hott 93, as well as a Social Media Photo and Video Competition, aimed at raising public awareness of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Trinidad and Tobago, as the only member country that is a net exporter of energy, is uniquely positioned in the CARICOM energy context. This is even more so, considering that this country relies on its indigenous natural gas supply for power generation. I am sure that most of our young audience is aware of the importance of the local energy sector to the national economy. Any contraction in this sector can therefore have

serious repercussions on our GDP, our revenues and our exports. Such contractions are all the more severe in their impact on account of our small size as a petroleum producer.. This reality, makes us a price taker and relatively more susceptible than our major competitors to the volatility associated with these markets.

It is for these reasons, that as we consider our energy future, we must all acknowledge the necessity of a diversified energy mix and the efficient use of energy resources to sustaining our development.

On April 22nd 2016, Trinidad and Tobago became a signatory to the **Paris Agreement** on climate change. We have voluntarily committed to reducing our overall emissions in our three major emitting sectors, i.e.: Power Generation, Transportation and Industrial, by 15% by 2030 from Business-As-Usual (BAU) levels. On November 4th 2016, the Paris Agreement entered into force, and therefore one can expect Governments

to take increasing action to meet with their legally binding and voluntary commitments to limit global temperature increases.

Trinidad and Tobago has also expressed commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through achievement of a national target of 10% renewable energy power generation by 2021. Realizing this ambitious goal requires the alignment of policies, technologies, business models and behavioral changes to adopt low-carbon technologies to reduce energy intensity and carbon emissions. The combination of renewable energy and energy efficiency offers us several benefits, including fuel cost savings, reduction of hazardous air emissions, as well as the creation of new industries.

It is incumbent on us, as global citizens, and as a Small Island Developing State, to do our part in shaping the future we want, a future with clean, affordable and reliable energy supply. As the region seeks to develop its

capacity for renewable energy and energy efficiency, we enlist the involvement of all stakeholders, especially our creative and talented youth, tomorrow's leaders, many of whom are present here today.

Consider the new and exciting career paths that will open up, as we accelerate the deployment of low-carbon technologies: opportunities for Engineers, Technicians, Financial Analysts, Energy Auditors and other careers in the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency field, for example Greenhouse Gas and Sustainability Analyst, Energy Efficiency Engineer, Green Finance Expert, green architects and Technology Suppliers.

To advance the deployment of renewable energy sources, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries continues to pursue a number of initiatives within a macro-economic framework for the sustainable development of the economy. Priority areas of focus include: renewable energy resource

assessments; renewable energy grid integration, energy efficiency audits and promotion of energy efficient devices.

Several initiatives geared towards creating an enabling environment, capacity building and awareness creation, are being pursued. For example: standards have been published for the design and installation of solar water heaters; standards are currently being finalized for solar photovoltaic systems and incentives can be accessed for persons and businesses interested in the purchase of these types of equipment. The T&TEC and RIC Acts are also currently being amended to take account of renewable energy, and this will enable renewable electricity generators to connect to the national grid. This will encourage individual homeowners to invest in renewable energy technologies and perhaps feed the excess power they produce into the grid.

The Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries continues to explore the potential for wind, solar and waste to energy projects to achieve this country's emission reduction targets, involving the electricity generation sector. Currently, the establishment of a Waste-to-Energy facility is being proposed to be located at the Beetham landfill site. The establishment of this facility can be seen as part of a strategy to promote efficiency and modernize this country's integrated Municipal Solid Waste Management System. An inter-Ministerial Committee has been established to oversee this development and very shortly, the Ministry will engage an International Consultant to assist with the procurement of the services of an international firm for this undertaking.

In addition, the development of a local solar photovoltaic (PV) manufacturing facility is being explored by the Government through the National Energy Corporation and InvesTT. The integrated facility as proposed will involve the construction of, a metallurgical grade silicon plant; a polysilicon plant; a float glass plant and an integrated solar PV

plant. The consultant is on board and is spearheading the investor engagement process. An investment engagement strategy can be expected to be launched shortly.

With regard to the transportation sector, the use of alternative fuel sources is being promoted through fiscal incentives to encourage the use of CNG, electric and hybrid vehicles. As you may be aware, the Government is currently rolling out a national CNG Programme that includes the public transportation system and I understand that the Nation's first electric bus will be launched at this said UTT campus tomorrow.

In the area of energy efficiency consideration is being given to the reconstitution of the Energy Services Company (ESCO) Certification Committee to certify and set criteria and standards for energy audits in the commercial and industrial sectors.

In these and other initiatives, the Government has been collaborating at various levels with key international organizations, foreign embassies and donor agencies and has been the fortunate to receive Technical Assistance in some cases. These institutions include the IDB, OAS, UNEP, UNDP, IRENA, and the Clean Energy Solutions Centre. I must take this opportunity to sincerely thank these institutions along with our local stakeholders, including both our universities, for their support. It is my hope that we will strengthen our existing relationships and that there will be opportunities for new collaborations in the future.

Gauging from the level of interest being shown, especially by the number of young people here today, there can be no doubt that as our local energy sector evolves, renewable energy and energy efficiency will play a significant role in our Nation's future sustainable development, providing us with clean, affordable and reliable energy supply.

In closing, I commend you all for participating in CARICOM Energy Month 2016. As you partake in today's activities, I invite you to commit to being change agents in your respective areas of influence, promoting the cause of renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy conservation. You can start with very simple energy conservation practices in your homes, schools and communities, setting the right example for others, as together we move Trinidad and Tobago towards a sustainable energy future.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you.