

Sustainable Energy: Placing Renewable Energy / Energy Efficiency at the Centre of the Sustainable Development of SIDS

Hilton Barbados Resort, 26 August 2013

The importance of energy for human development is well recognized. Without access to sustainable energy services other development goals including those on health, economic growth, security, and education cannot be achieved. For small island developing States (SIDS), high reliance on imported fossil fuel increases their vulnerability to global energy price shocks, depletes SIDS hard-earned foreign currency reserves, and contributes to unsustainable national debt levels. Reliance on fossil fuels represents a major impediment to the achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication in SIDS as limited financial resources are diverted from other investments in social, human, and economic development and environmental protection. While several SIDS have nearly 100% energy access, in others, such as São Tomé and Príncipe, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands, access to reliable and affordable modern energy services is limited, particularly in rural and remote communities.

In recognition of these realities and the benefits associated with sustainable energy, SIDS have demonstrated leadership in making strong commitments, particularly in the area of renewable energy, such as the 100% renewable energy target of Tuvalu by 2020, the carbon neutrality goal of Maldives, and the carbon negative target of Dominica through the use of geothermal. Tokelau's achievement of 100% electricity generation from renewables and Cape Verde's wind power installations are proof of concept for the power of partnerships with the international community, both public and private, to implement projects on the ground that translate into significant development benefits. International organizations such as the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) are providing support for SIDS to transition to sustainable energy and SIDS themselves have also developed home-grown mechanisms such as the Tonga Energy Roadmap and 'SIDS DOCK' to mobilize resources for renewable energy and energy efficiency interventions. Efforts such as these, including 22 voluntary commitments by SIDS aimed at promoting transformational activities in the areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy access and low carbon development in the context of sustainable development have been captured in the 2012 *Barbados Declaration on Achieving Sustainable Energy for All in SIDS*. The efforts of the international community in the UN Secretary-General's *Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All)* initiative to identify and mobilize global action by stakeholders from across government, business, civil society, academia and the development community are being further developed with opportunities for SIDS to benefit.

This event provides an opportunity to highlight the relevance of sustainable energy to the sustainable development efforts of SIDS.

Objectives of the event:

- 1. To establish awareness and understanding of the need to include sustainable energy as a pillar of the sustainable development agenda of SIDS and the global post-2015 development agenda**
- 2. To build on SIDS demonstrated leadership in sustainable energy to identify opportunities for positioning SIDS to collectively take advantage of international sustainable energy initiatives and further support their own national efforts**