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Sustainable energy in
Small-Island Developing States

Aid for renewable energy
across Pacific Island Countries

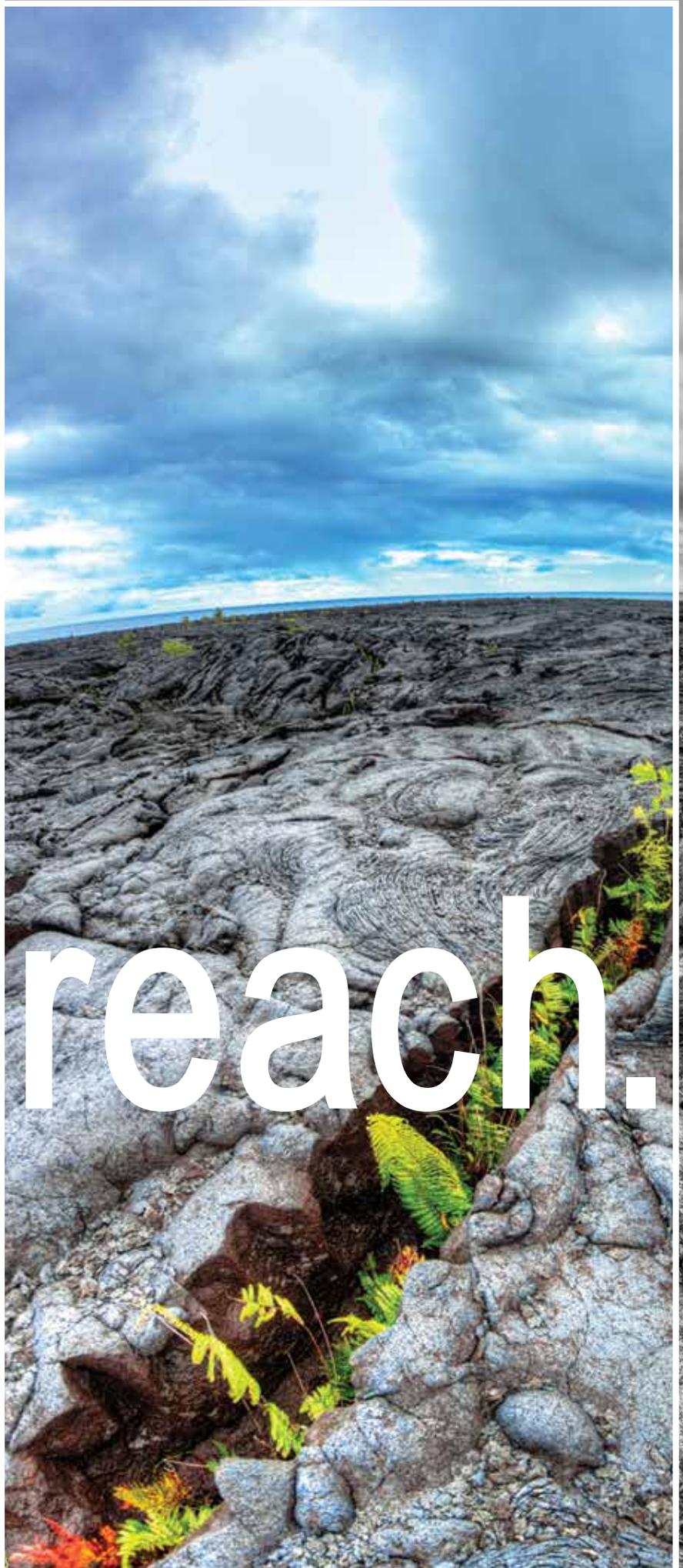
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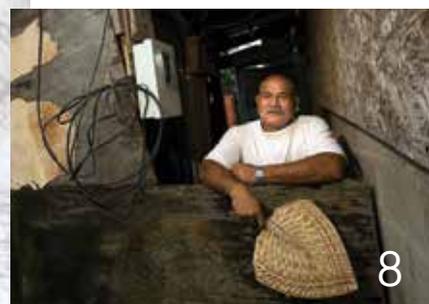
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Outreach is a multi-stakeholder publication on climate change and sustainable development. It is the longest continually produced stakeholder magazine in the sustainable development arena, published at various international meetings on the environment; including the UNCSO meetings (since 1997), UNEP Governing Council, UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) and World Water Week. Published as a daily edition, in both print and web form, Outreach provides a vehicle for critical analysis on key thematic topics in the sustainability arena, as well as a voice of regional and local governments, women, indigenous peoples, trade unions, industry, youth and NGOs. To fully ensure a multi-stakeholder perspective, we aim to engage a wide range of stakeholders for article contributions and project funding.

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Sustainable energy: Towards enhancing energy security and economic development

Norma Cherry-Fevrier

Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission, Saint Lucia

Investments in the energy sector to increase the use of indigenous energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal among others are critical to enhancing energy security and provide an opportunity to transform the economies of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) on a pathway towards growth and development. Improved energy security would mean reduced reliance on fossil fuels and increased diversity and resilience of SIDS energy sectors.

Economic shocks such as the global financial crisis and increases in oil prices highlight the need for seriously tackling and capitalising on the opportunities that such a transformation can provide. Policy makers therefore need to increase investments in sustainable forms of energy that can have ripple effects in SIDS economies mainly due to reduced costs.

Importance of enhancing energy security for economic development in SIDS

Given the many vulnerabilities of SIDS, particularly to climate change, that can erode development gains; policy makers must act now in making investments in the energy sector. Governments must understand the major role they must play in increasing access to sustainable energy and instituting policies that are aimed at transforming SIDS energy sectors through improved access to affordable electricity and greater use of renewable energy. Such efforts must take advantage of the co-benefits of capturing both development and sustainable energy benefits through joint policies.

In reality, the increased use of sustainable forms of energy in SIDS will translate to on the ground actions that stimulate economic activity. For example, by increasing access to affordable energy, which would cause the cost of doing business to decrease, enabling growth in existing businesses, as well as the establishment of new ones. In addition, SIDS economies would become more attractive for investment, meaning increased job creation and employment opportunities as renewable energy technologies will require more labour. This will translate to reduced unemployment rates, extra disposable income for households and increased profits for businesses. SIDS in the short to medium term should therefore seek to have majority of their energy mix from sustainable

sources and aim to make further improvements in the longer term.

Making the transition

Transitioning from fossil fuel dependence to using more sustainable forms of energy undoubtedly will not be easy. However, actions must be taken to achieve this goal. SIDS, in making the transition should examine their current energy conditions, set realistic goals that address the development of renewable energy and increase of energy efficiency, examine the risks and challenges associated with interventions, estimate the costs, and identify and prioritise the most feasible options. SIDS should also embark on joint policies that allow for co-benefits of energy security and economic development.

Challenges

The major challenge for SIDS in increasing access to sustainable energy for increased energy security and economic development will be the availability of financing. Currently, the majority of SIDS are facing problems such as low economic growth, the impacts of climate change and addressing poverty reduction. SIDS are therefore unable on their own to make meaningful investments that will transform their economies. Further, creating enabling environments through improved and new legislation and institutional frameworks will require time and political will.

Moving forward

In achieving sustainable energy and economic development goals, there must be political commitment and SIDS governments must understand their role. Although financing is a major challenge, SIDS must continue to form and engage in national, regional and international partnerships both with the private sector and foreign governments to benefit from initiatives that facilitate the development and use of sustainable forms of energy. SIDS must act by instituting policies and engaging in short, medium and long term actions that will produce co-benefits of increased use of sustainable energy and economic development. The Third International Conference on SIDS is therefore timely and critical in ensuring that key and strategic partnerships are formed and maintained to assist SIDS in achieving their sustainable energy goals aimed at enhancing energy security and economic development ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Norma Cherry-Fevrier is a Programme Officer employed with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Reducing Risks to Human and Natural Assets Resulting from Climate Change (RRACC) Project in Saint Lucia. She is trained in Natural Resource and Environmental Management, Economics and Project Management.

Sustainable energy in Small Island Developing States

Samantha Khan

Commonwealth Correspondent from Trinidad and Tobago

At first glance, sustainable energy may seem to be a very narrow and technical topic but, in fact, the energy sector has a great impact on many other aspects of life, including the environment, social and economic development, and international relations.

It only takes one look at the wars fought over oil, the prominence of the natural gas trade, and the current debates on renewable energy to bolster the idea that energy may well be the most valuable commodity of the 21st century. As such, it is crucial for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to treat the topic with careful thought, because these islands are in the unique position of being affected most gravely by the climate change caused by fossil fuel industry, and being without the economic luxury of investment in sustainable energy. I will attempt to outline the changing attitudes toward sustainable energy in SIDS by looking at its history, current initiatives in the field and a brief glimpse of what the future may hold.

The history of sustainable energy in SIDS is not exceptionally long, since the world's energy has traditionally come from oil and gas imports. It is only in the last decade with the advent of research into global warming and climate change that sustainable energy has become a consideration at all. The 1997 Kyoto Protocol outlines various goals with regard to renewable energy, for example the phasing out of all subsidies for fossil fuels and nuclear energy, the establishment of legally binding targets for renewable energy, and the increase of development budgets for renewable energy and energy efficiency. These may seem entirely feasible for developed nations who have the resources to implement such strategies, but for SIDS who depend on the convenience, abundance and lower cost of fossil fuel energy, it is a different matter. A leader of a small island developing nation may weigh the immediate needs of the people – such as poverty relief, education, and housing – as a better use of a country's revenue than investing in sustainable energy.

For another perspective on the debate, we may look specifically at my country, Trinidad and Tobago, which is the only net exporter of oil and natural gas in the Caribbean. With the second highest carbon dioxide emissions per capita, sustainable energy should be a crucial consideration for the country. That is, unfortunately, not the case for many officials, due to the convenience and abundance of fossil fuels for export. On the other hand, some academics in the energy sector believe that sustainable energy is the only way forward, as our oil and natural gas industry



pic: Bajan oil well, by Ben Murray

is far too harmful to the environment. While I certainly agree that diversification is necessary, given the current dependence of the Trinbagonian economy on fossil fuel exports, it is unfair to assume that the country can easily afford to move away from the industry, when doing so may have sudden and serious effects on the economy. While a developed nation may be able to withstand the pressure of these effects in the name of environmental protection and diversification, it is much more difficult for a developing nation to do so.

Despite the traditional dependence on non-renewable energy, many SIDS have begun to consider the development of sustainable energy sources. The 2013 Achieving Sustainable Energy for All in SIDS Conference held in Barbados concluded with the adoption of the Barbados Declaration. The declaration acknowledges the importance of sustainable energy to SIDS by discussing the dependence on imported oil and other fossil fuels for transport and electricity, as well as the resulting economic vulnerability. In addition, the declaration also considers the economic reality of SIDS by appealing for assistance from developed nations.

In conclusion, there has been considerable progress in the sustainable energy sector for SIDS, but we must not be lulled into false comfort. While the Barbados Declaration is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, the question remains whether the future will see its benefits. Perhaps there needs to be a strong incentive system in place to encourage the assistance of developed nations and NGOs. A plan has been drafted and set in motion and we must now ensure that the objectives are accomplished ■

MORE INFO

Commonwealth Correspondents is a network of youth writers supported by the Commonwealth Youth Programme. See: www.yourcommonwealth.org and www.thecommonwealth.org

Aid for renewable energy across Pacific Island Countries

Carola Betzold

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Access to energy services is a key driver of economic and social development and improves quality of life. In the Pacific Island Countries (PICs), energy comes mainly from fossil fuel imports. Imported fossil fuel is not only very expensive; it is also environmentally unsustainable and PICs' main contribution to climate change.

PICs have thus strong incentives to move towards renewable energy – and indeed have ample renewable energy potential. While many PICs have therefore formulated ambitious renewable energy goals, they are far from reaching these – with few exceptions like Tokelau, which recently went 100% renewable.

Why is progress toward renewable energy so slow in the Pacific? PICs depend on donor funding to finance their transition to renewable energy, not least because of the high upfront costs of renewable energy. Yet, this donor funding has three biases, which need to be addressed for a successful renewable energy transition in the Pacific: first, donors fund mainly solar and (large-scale) hydropower – at the expense of other renewable energy sources; second, donors focus on grid-extension programmes – at the expense of rural off-grid solutions; third, and most importantly, donors mainly finance 'hardware', that is, equipment – at the expense of 'software', that is, training, education and capacity building.

According to data from the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), bilateral donors committed a total of 292 million USD to renewable energy projects in the South Pacific since 1990. Most of this money was spent on solar energy and (large-scale) hydropower projects. Only a few smaller projects used other renewable energy sources, such as biofuel from coconut oil. Yet, in a specific context, such other renewable energy technologies may be more appropriate. Biofuel from coconut oil is for instance particularly attractive in remote rural areas, where coconut oil can not only power a diesel generator, but also provide additional cash income.

Such off-grid solutions also contribute to rural electrification – after all, 70 per cent of Pacific households lack access to basic electrification. Yet, donor funding goes mostly to grid-extension programmes. Where data was available, it showed a strong preference for grid-based solutions: donors committed about 120 million USD to grid-based solutions, but only about 20 million USD to off-grid



solutions. It should be noted, however, that most projects in the OECD CRS dataset contained no information on whether it focused on grid or off-grid solutions.

Finally, and most importantly, donor funding was mostly spent on 'hardware', that is, equipment. Projects worth 286 million USD in commitments focused on equipment and power infrastructure, while only few projects, worth 86 million USD in commitments, included a capacity building component. Again, these figures are not 100 percent accurate, since many project entries in the OECD CRS dataset provide only minimal information. But the data are a good indication, and confirm other studies that also found donors to neglect 'software'. And yet, it is this 'software' – training, education, capacity building – that is essential for the effectiveness and sustainability of renewable energy (and other) projects.

While the OECD CRS data admittedly lack a lot of information on project content, the data are indicative, and attest to three biases in renewable energy funding in the Pacific. Both, donors and recipients need to address these biases for a successful transition to renewable energy. If they manage to do that, and to implement the renewable energy system most appropriate for the specific social, economic, political and cultural context on site, the prospects for renewable energy are bright. Small Island States, in the Pacific and elsewhere, are well positioned to set an example and to become role models on renewable energy for other developing countries, islands and non-islands alike ■

Energy efficiency in the transport sector: Grenada, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Energy represents a fundamental input for modern economies and social life. The world today faces two main threats related to energy, namely inadequate and insecure supplies, and global warming due primarily to the over-consumption of fossil fuels.

Like many other Caribbean countries, Grenada, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are almost entirely dependent on imported petroleum as their primary source of energy. Transport and electricity generation are the largest energy consumption sectors, accounting for approximately 90 per cent of national energy consumption.

In general, governments continue to face challenges in the coordination of transportation and energy policy at all levels, from local to national. There are many barriers that exist in the coordination of energy and transport policy, namely:

- Coordinating transport and energy policy among agencies;
- Low levels of awareness among the general public on transport energy efficiency and the benefits of sustainable transport;
- Low levels of awareness among policymakers on the interrelated impacts and challenges of energy and transportation and possible solutions;
- Difficult economic climate resulting in limited long-term investments in sustainable transportation;
- Lack of reliable and consistent data on the transport sector.

In this regard, many countries in the subregion have taken a strategic approach to long-term planning in the energy sector towards creating higher levels of efficiency on both the demand and supply side, as well as promoting diversification in the energy mix. Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have developed national energy policies that seek to improve energy efficiency and conservation in all sectors, to promote the use of alternative sources to petroleum and to develop renewable energy technologies based on the countries' indigenous supplies.

The national energy policies of these three countries include a focus on the transport sector and outline actions for increased efficiency and fuel diversification.

However, comprehensive national transport policies that incorporate these energy goals do not exist. Fortunately, collaboration among the various sectors has begun in each country. Through the promulgation of the energy policies, multi-sectoral committees and working groups have been created, which could provide a model for the development of comprehensive transport policies that address issues related to energy as well as land use and finance.

These current efforts will result in increased energy security due to greater energy diversity, improved balance of payments due to a lower oil bill, and reduction in fuel costs for the consumer. Furthermore, less reliance on fossil fuels will result in better protection of the environment and a reduced carbon footprint. While the contribution by these countries to global climate change is small, reducing the countries' carbon footprints is a win-win situation since it occurs concurrently with other important economic and social benefits.

Although it is clear that no one measure will provide the solution and that action is needed simultaneously on a range of criteria, recommendations to promote energy efficiency and fuel diversification in the transport sector are considered in three categories:

- a. Policies to encourage transport system efficiency;
- b. Policies to encourage vehicle efficiency;
- c. Institutional arrangements linking transport and energy.

These recommendations include the development of national transport and spatial planning policies; improving efficiency in public and private passenger and freight vehicles through fuel quality standards, driver education programmes, and vehicle maintenance requirements; as well as financial and tax incentives and mandatory labelling programmes for the transport sector. To facilitate more accurate assessment of the transport sector, it is recommended that countries prioritise the collection and analysis of data relating to their transportation energy consumption; this will then lead to better planning and management of the sector.

Countries must begin to advance gains in energy efficiency by focusing more on transport efficiency. Globally, the transport sector is on the brink of a new era of smart mobility where infrastructure, transport means, travellers and goods will be increasingly interconnected to achieve higher levels of mobility, higher safety and fewer environmental and operational impacts. In the region, organisations such as ECLAC are committed to provide support and advise Member States to better drive and advance initiatives in energy efficiency in mobility ■

Solar power development in SIDS: The problem of scale

Alvin Leong

Pace Center for Environmental Legal Studies

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are generally well endowed with solar energy resources. Solar power has zero fuel costs, relatively low operational and maintenance costs, and does not emit air pollution or carbon dioxide. Despite the abundance and attractiveness of solar power, many SIDS rely heavily on imported oil for their energy needs, which is expensive and exposes their economies to global market fluctuations and supply disruptions.

Solar photovoltaic (PV) technology is particularly attractive for SIDS given its potential utility in mini- and micro-grid and off-grid or distributed energy systems. Installing solar panels on rooftops and other structures can be well suited to providing decentralised electricity to small and dispersed populations living on small land areas that may be remote and isolated. The key challenge here is not technological, but financial – the availability and cost of capital to finance the installation of many small projects, which raises the problem of scale.

SIDS energy projects will generally lack scale. Projects that lack scale will generally find it more difficult to access capital, which may result in the cost of capital being too expensive or debt terms being overly onerous. Thus, projects may not be ‘bankable’ even with public sector support (including from donor countries) and if projects are only ‘bankable’ with extraordinary public sector support, it raises the question of whether sustainable energy in SIDS can truly be financeable in a sustainable way in the long term.

One financing technique to consider is securitisation, which essentially involves the pooling or aggregation of assets, where bonds are issued backed by the pooled assets, i.e., the cash flow generated by the pooled assets will be used to make the bond payments and the pooled assets will serve as collateral in the event of default. Investors that buy the bonds provide the cash needed to finance (or refinance) the upfront or capital costs of the projects. This pooling or aggregation of assets could alleviate the problem of scale. Also, securitisations can attract a bigger pool of investors beyond banks, and provide greater diversification (for example, geographical diversification), which reduces risk.

As a cautionary note, given the reckless misuse of the securitisation structure in the United States that contributed to the recent financial crisis, stakeholders need to be careful to make sure similar abuses are avoided. While gross abuses took place in the mortgage-backed securities and ‘collateralised debt obligations’ markets, securitisation has been and continues to be a successful financing structure for many types of assets, including automobile loans and equipment leases. Successful securitisations can be accomplished through robust ‘due diligence’ (review of legal and financial documents) and rigorous credit standards.

Another possibility is to use covered bonds, which are a type of hybrid instrument that combines the pooling of assets as in a securitisation and the protection of the ‘balance sheet’ of a financial institution. In a covered bond transaction, a financial institution issues bonds backed by both a specific pool of assets and the ‘balance sheet’ or general assets of the institution. The pooling or aggregation of assets provides scale, and recourse to the ‘balance sheet’ of the issuing institution provides an additional layer of protection for investors. Other hybrid structures that could be considered include a securitisation with credit support provided by a multilateral development bank (MDB), a bilateral development finance institution (DFI) or an export credit agency (ECA).

Ultimately, the optimal structure that evolves in SIDS solar power development could turn out to not look like a classic securitisation or a classic covered bond transaction, but innovatively combine characteristics of different financing techniques. In this way, the special challenges of SIDS could prove to be a key to opening up new ways of financing renewable energy systems and new horizons for the global transition to a clean energy future ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Written by Alvin Leong (LLM, JD), an energy and environmental policy consultant and fellow at the Pace Center for Environmental Legal Studies. He can be contacted at aleong@law.pace.edu.



pic: Solar panels powering a remote village on Fiji, by Ben Beiske

Energy efficiency and renewable energy in the Caribbean

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Dependence on imported fossil fuels within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has created significant macroeconomic challenges for fuel importing countries. The value of energy imports compared to total imports in the importing Member States have progressively increased over the years. This scenario has a deleterious impact on macroeconomic stability. Petroleum derivative imports account for between 40 per cent and 60 per cent of total export earnings for countries such as Jamaica and Guyana which have a larger industrial base than the other countries. For the tourism/service oriented economies such as Belize, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Barbados, petroleum imports range from 13 per cent to 30 percent of export earnings.

This dependence has direct costs, as well as indirect economic, social and environmental costs, and impacts that are reflected in issues such as health, global warming, agriculture, property damage and insurance, tourism, poverty, and population displacement. Therefore, globally, the imperative to significantly improve efforts in energy conservation and energy efficiency remains a priority. The global economic crisis, rising debt among nations, energy security, emerging constraints in energy supply and climate change concerns contribute to the pace at which countries continue to promote energy conservation and efficiency programmes and develop associated policies.

In the last few years, renewable energy technologies have experienced substantial improvements in cost, performance and reliability, making them competitive in a range of applications. Led by wind and photovoltaic technologies, they represent the fastest growing of all energy industries. The momentum for renewable energy worldwide is strong, and the prospects for these technologies virtually untapped.

In the Caribbean, the drivers for active support for the implementation of renewable energy initiatives have remained fairly constant over time. Initially, it was the fluctuating price of oil which led to a policy priority for alternative energy sources for energy security. Today it also is increasing environmental awareness and concern about sustainability of conventional energy use, as well as climate change. In addition, renewable sources of energy provide benefits that are not reflected in energy policies and market conditions, including increased employment, reduced import dependence, and reduced burdens on foreign exchange.

However, the fact that the renewable energy potential of nations is far from maximised is due in large measure to a number of outstanding barriers which put renewable energy at an economic, regulatory, or institutional disadvantage relative to other forms of energy. Barriers include subsidies for conventional forms of energy, high initial capital costs, imperfect capital markets, lack of

skills and information, financing risks and uncertainties, and a variety of regulatory and institutional factors. Some of the barriers and the measures to overcome them are presented in the table below:

Barrier to Implementing Energy Conservation and Efficiency Strategies	Measures to Remove Barriers
Lack of information	Information centres and services; appliance labelling and consumer information
Lack of trained personnel or technical or managerial expertise	Development and delivery of training programmes
Below long-run marginal cost pricing and other price distortions	Instituting supportive legal, regulatory and policy changes
Regulatory biases or absence of regulations to support energy development	Development of relevant policies and standards
High transaction costs	Market development and commercialisation; development of demand-side management programmes, support for the introduction of energy service companies
High initial costs of energy efficiency technologies coupled with lack of access to credit	Develop innovative financing mechanisms
Higher perceived risks of the more efficient technology	Technology research, adaptation, and demonstration; and/ or performance contracting
High user discount rates	Support for the introduction of energy service companies

Renewable energy is indigenous, non-depleting, modular and environment-friendly and can meet a broad spectrum of energy demand. It can provide energy access and meet unmet demand; provide captive energy thus conserving fossil fuels and electricity; and augment grid power. With these benefits in mind, countries in the Caribbean subregion have undertaken different measures to overcome the aforementioned barriers. Additionally, the CARICOM energy policy calls for a fundamental transformation of the energy sectors of Member States through the provision of secure and sustainable supplies of energy to minimise energy waste, ensure that all citizens have access to modern, clean and reliable energy supplies at affordable and stable prices, and to facilitate the growth of internationally competitive regional industries towards achieving sustainable development ■

Exceptional energy for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Michael Kelly
The World LPG Association

The energy needs of SIDS are closely tied and crucial to the economic and sustainable development of these low-lying coastal, mountainous and archipelagic topographic countries.

A number of solutions have been proposed to meet these needs and in some cases Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), which is an exceptional form of clean burning, safe, portable, multi-purpose, extremely efficient, accessible, affordable energy and has a light infrastructure footprint, is the best solution.

A report commissioned by the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) with input provided by Dr. Graham Sem (Nobel Peace Prize laureate) on the vulnerability and adaptation to climate change in SIDS suggested that the unique geographical features of SIDS coupled with a set of social, economic and environmental challenges such as their small but growing populations, limited natural resources, remoteness, rising susceptibility to climate change caused natural disasters and their heavy dependence on international trade; makes these islands very exposed to external shocks. It is noteworthy that most SIDS import the bulk, if not all, of their energy. Taking these challenges into consideration, decision-makers are advised to focus on proven low-carbon fuels like LPG.

Data available from a study recently published by the World LP Gas Association titled "LPG: Exceptional Energy for SIDS" shows that majority of the people living on SIDS still rely primarily on traditional biomass – wood, charcoal, agricultural residues or animal waste – and high pollutants such kerosene for cooking on primitive stoves or open fires. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) cooking on these types of fuels cause the annual premature deaths of an estimated 4.3 million people worldwide. The majority of these people are women and children who spend large amounts of time indoors and are exposed to the effects of household air pollution which range from lung cancer, cardiovascular disease and pneumonia to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

To counter these health hazards and ensure the sustainable growth of SIDS, a concerted effort on the part of key stakeholders from industry, consumer groups

and NGOs, together with continuous policy support from government is needed to remove market entry and development barriers. LPG industry experts stress that appropriate laws and enforced regulations, are among the most critical factors in expanding the supply of LPG to SIDS in the early stages of market development.

Well-structured government programmes can also help in promoting a switch from dirty fuels to LPG. Indonesia, where more than 54 million households have switched from kerosene to LPG, is an example of how such a programme if well implemented can become a success story. Policies such as these once enacted can go a long way towards also cementing private-public partnerships focused on LPG-cylinder distribution, thereby ensuring the growth of a sustainable, safe and commercially viable industry.

There is a general consensus that in order to promote sustainable development and effectively counter climate change, all countries including SIDS, must move towards low carbon energy sources. However, this transition will take time and a lot of investment, not to mention the fact that many low carbon fuels currently are not as effective as conventional fuels for heating or cooking.

The LPG industry has an impressive track record in providing clean, reliable and affordable energy services for millions of people living in remote rural areas in the prosperous developed regions around the world. With the right government support, it can also play a central role in stimulating economic development, combatting climate change and making poverty history in SIDS.

A comprehensive report on the energy consumption of SIDS titled LPG: Exceptional Energy for SIDS, is available at www.worldlpgas.com/resources/publications/reports-studies ■

MORE INFO

The World LPG Association (WLPGA) is the authoritative voice of the global LPG industry representing all sectors of the industry. WLPGA's primary aim is to add value to the sector through driving premium demand for LPG, while promoting compliance to good business and safety practices. It brings together private and public companies involved in one, several, or all activities of the industry, develops partnerships with international organizations and implements projects on local and global scales. WLPGA was established in 1987 and granted Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1989.

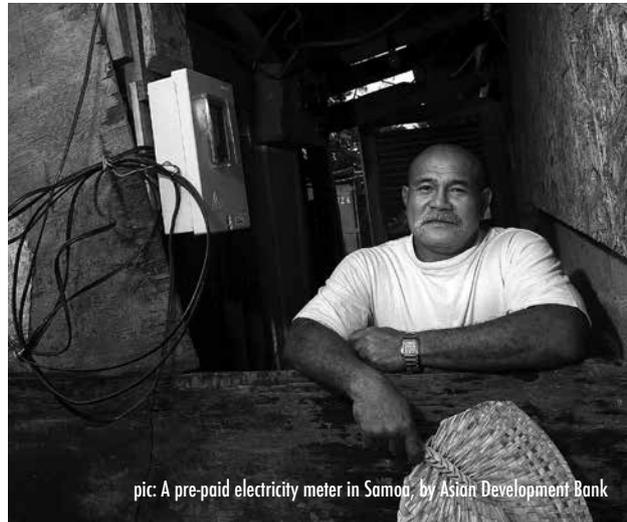
Promoting access to modern energy sources in Small Island Developing States

Dr Rafael Leal-Arcas
Queen Mary University of London

Energy engages almost every aspect of human endeavour in modern times. In the words of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon: “it is unimaginable that today’s economies could function without electricity and other modern energy services. From job creation to economic development, from security concerns to the status of women, energy lies at the heart of all countries’ core interests.” Moreover, according to the International Energy Agency, “energy alone is not sufficient for creating the conditions for economic growth, but it is certainly necessary. It is impossible to operate a factory, run a shop, grow crops or deliver goods to consumers without using some form of energy.”

Furthermore, energy is the mainstay of today’s economy in the developed world, in the rapidly industrialising developing world, and in other parts of the world. Such is its importance to the modern economy that energy security has been linked to national security. Yet one in five people in the world today has no access to electricity, and there are large inequalities in per capita electricity consumption across countries. Regions which are most affected by energy poverty are Small Island Developing States, sub-Saharan Africa, and developing Asia. Such inequalities often have their roots in history, but some crucial questions arise: Is the global energy economy being collectively managed in an effective way that is steering us towards greater energy security for all? Is the global governance framework for energy security comprehensive and inclusive?

Understandably, therefore, any inordinate disruption to energy supplies – the ‘oxygen’ of the economy – would make any State’s government particularly twitchy. Power cuts and fuel shortages are the sort of events that have repercussions for all fields of economic activity and that powerfully impress images of State failure on the public imagination. This – coupled with the fact that the current mainstay of the energy supply disproportionately relies on fossil fuels (i.e., petroleum, gas, and coal) that are finite, unevenly distributed, and highly polluting – necessarily



pic: A pre-paid electricity meter in Samoa, by Asian Development Bank

makes energy an ostensibly global issue given, amongst other things, energy’s climatic, transport, and economic development implications. In other words, it is a common concern for all of humanity, where Small Island Developing States are no exception.

Initial investigation has revealed that global energy governance today is a theoretical concept that does not exist in actuality; there is a marked absence of a global mechanism – or cohesive set of mechanisms – purposely set up by the international community to address its collective energy security needs. What we have instead is a mixed bag of incidental outcomes arising from an array of disjointed institutions and processes operating at various scales (bilateral, regional, et cetera), often each with its own selective membership. The various initiatives span a wide range of energy-related topics pertinent to various countries, such as trade, investment protection, and climate change, which are not necessarily functioning in coordination with each other. Overall, the global energy governance regime appears to be highly fragmented. Due to geographical constraints, Small Island Developing States face more challenges than the developed world when it comes to access to modern energy services.

The international community should aim at global and sustainable energy security, i.e., the satisfaction of humankind’s energy needs to maintain lifestyle levels in the developed world and to promote sustainable development and improve the quality of life across the world, including Small Island Developing States and least-developed countries, and not just a few chosen countries ■

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Pre-conference activities and parallel events calendar

DATE	TIME	VENUE	TITLE	ORGANISERS
SATURDAY 30th AUGUST	07:30 - 18:30	Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Conference Centre	Private Sector Forum (Day 1)	UN-OHRLLS, the Government of Samoa and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce
	09:00 - 18:00	To'oa Salamasina Hall	Renewable Energy Forum	New Zealand and IRENA
	09:30 - 14:00	Matafaa village field trip	Adapting to climate change through sustainable water resource and watershed management in Matafaa village	The GEF Small Grants Programme
	10:00 - 11:20	MNRE Conference room 1-3, TATTE Building Level 3	Electric Vehicles: Low Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the Land Transport Sector and can be used as electricity grid stability	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment - Samoa
	11:30 - 13:00	MNRE Conference room 1-3, TATTE Building Level 3	Biogas Digester Technology: A tool for sustainable development of SIDS	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment - Samoa
	15:00 - 17:00	SPREP Campus Vailima	Climate-Resilient Islands Partnership	Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC); Indian Ocean Commission (IOC); the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP); Commonwealth Secretariat
SUNDAY 31st AUGUST	12:00 - 16:00	Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Conference Centre	Private Sector Forum (Day 2)	UN-OHRLLS, the Government of Samoa and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce



Beijing +20 and beyond

As we approach the 20th anniversary of one of the most defining conferences on gender equality and women's empowerment, SIDS regions can play a vital role in ensuring gender and climate change issues are addressed in the post-2015 development agenda.

In September 1995, representatives of 189 countries, including many from SIDS regions, came together for the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.

The resulting Platform for Action was the most progressive blueprint for advancing women's rights and is still considered the defining framework for change. Almost twenty years later it remains a source of guidance and inspiration.

Since then, governments, civil society and the public have translated the promises from Beijing into concrete changes, which have ushered in enormous improvements for women around the world. More women and girls than ever before serve in political office, are protected by laws against gender-based violence and live under constitutions guaranteeing gender equality. There is still, however, a long road ahead if we are to realise the promises of Beijing.

Small Island Developing States face specific social, economic and environmental challenges, giving them a unique perspective with which to contribute to the global conversation around future sustainable development.

UN Women is co-hosting an official side event at the SIDS conference with the Women's Major Group and Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era (DAWN) that will look at the achievements and challenges in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in SIDS regions.

OFFICIAL SIDS 2014 SIDE EVENT:
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in SIDS
Looking beyond Beijing +20 and the post-2015 sustainable development agenda

When: Tuesday September 2, 2014

Time: 1pm-2.30pm

Venue: Savai'i Partnerships Hall, SIDS Campus

HIGH-LEVEL PANEL:

Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, *Under Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women*

H.E. Enele Sopoaga, *Prime Minister of Tuvalu*

Dr Colin Tukuitonga, *Director-General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community*

Hon. Camillo Gonsalves, *Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Consumer Affairs and Information Technology, St Vincent and the Grenadines*

www.unwomen.org

www.facebook.com/unwomenpacific

Reflections from the Pre-Conference Forums

Youth Forum

Kiara Worth
IISD

The Pre-Conference Forum on youth, hosted by the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) focused on identifying opportunities for young people from Small Island Developing States to engage proactively in opportunities relating to sustainable development.

The forum shared successful, innovative partnerships and initiatives to determine how these could be replicated to address development challenges. Interactive regional discussions took place to foster the development of partnerships within the Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas (AIMS), Caribbean and Pacific regions. Thematic sessions focused on climate change and biodiversity, water and sustainable energy, education, entrepreneurship and employment, and social development in SIDS, health and non-communicable diseases, and youth and women.

The session closed with the adoption of a youth oriented outcome statement that will be used during the main SIDS conference ■



Major Groups and Other Stakeholders Forum

Ian Fenn
Stakeholder Forum

It was great to be a part of yesterday's Major Groups and other Stakeholders Forum and to see so many SIDS' civil society and other representatives out in force. From optimism to frustration, a range of emotions were expressed in plenary and break-out sessions, no less in amazing impromptu indigenous songs to get everyone going after long conversations or brief pauses.

The key outcome of the day was due to be a collectively-agreed Forum Statement – no mean feat with well over a hundred people in the conference hall at any one time. As to be expected with many different issues and priorities to consider, the early drafts were lengthy, leaving the drafting committee with a tough task to develop a succinct final statement reflecting everyone's positions, ambitions and energy.

I had to leave before a final statement was adopted but it was interesting to note the parallels with the processes of intergovernmental negotiations on sustainable development policies, in which the Major Groups and other Stakeholders are inevitably the voices piling on the pressure from the sidelines. Maybe some of the stakeholders present yesterday will even develop some empathy for governments, or just gain some extra practice in influencing and interrogating them; or maybe it simply highlights – given the energy, enthusiasm and expertise on display – that stakeholders should be an integral part of such processes from the off. No doubt the Forum Statement will become a key text throughout next week's 'main' Conference, and well it should.

But once the Conference is wrapped up and – sadly – we have to leave Samoa, the challenge then comes in keeping up the momentum and the partnership working in what can and should become a truly powerful network of SIDS stakeholders.

A discussion on advocacy showed that many organisations are ahead of others in their campaigns or strategies, and that many feel that the time is no longer for advocacy but for implementation. However, no-one can really say they know all there is to know about advocacy. I hope that the SD2015 Programme's Advocacy Toolkit and Media Guide (www.SD2015.org) can provide some of these stakeholders, or the network as a whole, with some ideas and guidance to keep up the conversation, take it to an even wider audience, and direct its key messages to the decision-makers that will ultimately have a political say on the future of SIDS and their vital place in the post-2015 development agenda. What is surely for certain is that by working in partnership, sharing experience and expertise and using tools such as the Forum Statement to direct collaborative advocacy, such an impressive array of voices and agendas can keep up the pressure and make an impact for everyone's benefit ■

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United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women