

GSEII Side Event – UN CSD-15th Session
Island-to-Island Partnership on Sustainable Energy

Tuesday, May 8th 2007

1.15 - 2.45pm

Conference Room 2

UN Headquarters, New York, NY

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1- Background

- UN CSD 15

Originally established by the UN General Assembly to review implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and the progress in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Commission on Sustainable Development's (CSD) mission was reaffirmed and reformed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)

In April - May 2003, it was decided (CSD 11) that it would function on the basis of two-year "Implementation Cycles", each cycle focusing on a key thematic cluster of issues.

The first year of each cycle – the Review year – would evaluate progress made in implementing sustainable development commitments and identifying obstacles and constraints. The second year – the Policy year – would decide on measures to speed up implementation and mobilize action to overcome these obstacles and constraints.

The theme for the "Second Implementation Cycle" (2006 and 2007 which correspond, respectively, to CSD 14 and CSD 15) was "*energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, and climate change*"

- Background of GSEII – UN Foundation Side Event

In recent years, the government of Iceland has undergone an outstanding transformation of its traditional fossil-fuel based economy to an economy based on renewable energy, notably in forms of geothermal and hydroelectric power. The Climate Institute (on behalf of the Global Sustainable Energy Islands Initiative (GSEII) and the UN Foundation (UNF) have established a joint partnership with Iceland to foster Island-to-Island (I2I) cooperation.

GSEII was launched in November 2000, with support from the United Nations Foundation, to assist the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) nations in their efforts to achieve energy independence and to transform their energy systems from fossil fuel dependence using renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The GSEII-UN Foundation efforts were aimed at bringing together industrialized island nations (such as Iceland) with small island developing nations represented by Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS) to stimulate both North-South and South-South collaboration on scaling up sustainable energy investments. The May 8th GSEII-UN Foundation Side Event has highlighted their work in the Caribbean and Latin America (focusing on biofuels, geothermal, and energy efficiency) to accelerate investment in these technologies and reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. After carrying out studies of feasibility, national level sustainable energy plans have been developed in several SIDS in the Caribbean, and these are progressing through

implementation. All these islands have abundant natural energy resources—biomass, geothermal, hydro, solar, and wind—which can be exploited on a competitive basis.

The following outcomes are expected to result from this event:

- Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Iceland and the UNF to mobilize industrialized country islands to collaborate with SIDS on clean energy development. This will include support for technical assistance and training, technology transfer, policy support, and financing facilitation and fundraising.
- Commitment by the SIDS and OAS to pursue the Geo-Caribes Initiative to develop the large scale, 100 MW+ geothermal potential in the region.
- Establishment of a regional bioenergy initiative by the UNF, UNDP, and SIDS, to support the development of bioenergy for power, heat, and transport for both domestic and export applications in the Caribbean.
- Public-private sector commitment to mobilize and leverage funding support for sustainable energy projects in the Caribbean.

2-Description of the event

The event, entitled *Island-to-Island Partnership on Sustainable Energy*, focused on sustainable energy projects conducted in four Caribbean islands: Grenada, Dominica, St Kitts and Nevis, and St Lucia, and one developed Island nation; Iceland.

The presentation highlighted the recent UN Foundation and OAS work in the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) to transform their energy system from fossil fuel energy based to renewable. The speakers managed to provide a broad vision of the situation in the four aforementioned islands while giving concrete examples and recent statistics as supporting material.

With abundant resources, and the proven potential for development in biofuel, geothermal and energy efficiency technologies, the SIDS will benefit from their increasing use of sustainable energy techniques and by participating in the global climate stabilization effort, their experiments are paving the way for way for future plans for energy independence.

3- Agenda

- **Ms. Melinda Kimble**
Sr. Vice president, UNF and Event Moderator
- **Mr. Mark Lambrides**
Organization of American States (OAS) - Division Chief – Climate Change and Energy
- **H.E. Ambassador Crispin Gregoire**
Dominica's Permanent Representative to the UN
- **Thorir Ibsen**
Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs
- **H.E. Dr. Angus Friday**
Permanent representative of Grenada to the UN, Chairman of the Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS)

4-Proceedings

1- *Ms. Melinda Kimble, Sr. Vice president, UNF and Event Moderator*

Ms. Kimble opened the GSEII Side Event by welcoming the distinguished member of the panel. She emphasized the importance of cooperation among islands and the impact of a “North-South” and “South-South” collaboration. Small Islands' sustainable development initiatives can set an example for the bigger and more polluting countries by cutting their greenhouse gas emissions. With the assistance of various donors and regional organizations, some cutting-edge programs are being implemented within the Caribbean Islands.

2- *Mr. Mark Lambrides, Organization of American States (OAS) - Division Chief – Climate Change and Energy*

Mr. Lambrides began by presenting the Renewable Energy in the Americas Initiative (REIA), a program directed by the Department of Sustainable Development inside the OAS whose mission is to assist LAC [Define?] in overcoming key barriers to sustainable energy development by providing technical and financial aid.

Among the current countries receiving support from OAS, Mark Lambrides cited Grenada, Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Kitts and Nevis, and mentioned future SEP programs with the Bahamas, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and Antigua and Barbuda.

The Eastern Caribbean Geothermal project (Geo-Caraibes) was hailed as one of the most promising projects for Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Kitts and Nevis, which all possess geothermal resources that may be exploitable for commercial power generation.

Perspectives for geothermal development and its commercialization represent a promising opportunity for development. The projected electricity production costs for St. Kitts according to the OAS study are US\$0.085 to US\$0.17 per kWh, which is lower than the estimated current production costs of electricity. However, despite the country's large resource potential and the strengthening of regional cooperation to adapt the legal framework, some challenges lie ahead due to technical barriers and procedural hindrances. One of them is related to the Resource Allocation Framework, a nation-based system that lacks flexibility.

3- H.E. Ambassador Crispin Gregoire, Dominica's Permanent Representative to the UN

Ambassador Gregoire's speech focused on the geothermal perspective in Dominica. He underlined that the country has embraced a "real impetus" in 2001-2002, with the Government of Dominica's Prime Minister Pierre Charles' aggressive commitment to a clean energy path.

Ambassador Gregoire emphasized Dominica's potential expansion of hydro through micro-hydro projects and, since it has large wind resources, the potential installation of wind turbines to provide a significant portion of its power.

He also made a few remarks about Dominica's proximity to Guadeloupe and Martinique, and the possibility of an energy deal with the French government that plans on building a power cable on the sea floor.

Dominica's coconut industry (Dominica Coconut Products), purchased by Colgate Palmolive in 2000, is expected to be completely shut down by September 2007. The government has decided to transform convert the coconut industry into a biodiesel industry.

4- Thorir Ibsen, Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Mr. Ibsen recalled that the transformation of Iceland into a carbon-free economy helped the country recover from an economic slowdown and accompanied a period of development and growth.

Although this transition was perceived as costly, the exploitation of the country's geo-thermal water reserves and natural resources were, in the long run, substantial assets for Iceland, which is the only Western country that has a full renewable energy electricity generation system (83% produced by hydro power stations and the other 17% by geothermal power stations).

He also pointed out the capacity of geothermal, a "low cost" and environmentally-friendly source of energy that relies on a proven technology and is easily transferrable to developing countries.

According to Ibsen, the use of geothermal power can be extended worldwide and has been used in 73 countries.

Ibsen acknowledged the importance of international investment and well-trained geothermal experts to safely carry out such projects. Iceland has reiterated its commitment to assist SIDS to transform their resources into clean energy.

Iceland has been able to secure private capital and investment to further its partnerships with countries in Asia, Europe and Latin America.

*5- H.E. Dr. Angus Friday, Permanent representative of Grenada to the UN,
Chairman of the Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS)*

H.E Dr. Angus Friday reiterated the SIDS's current dependence on sources of expensive fossil fuels and their extreme vulnerability to oil price shocks. SIDS should be supported in their efforts to gain economies of scale to facilitate access to more affordable and clean energy.

Two important points were underlined:

- ✓ Securing extended partnership with other islands and attracting private investor
- ✓ Ensuring that the program is safely carried out

Grenada, a nation of just under 100,000 inhabitants is comprised of 3 islands. One of them, Carriacou, is a prime site for wind energy. Grenada has decided to launch a comprehensive assessment of potential renewable resources including wind, biomass, geothermal, hydro and solar energy.

6- Hon. Tom Roper, Climate institute, Board Member

Tom Roper presented the GSEII mission to help the SIDS in the Caribbean and the Pacific reach energy independence through the implementation of sustainable development projects, with the help of a network of partners and organizations.

Several projects are underway in partnership with the SIDS; such as renewable energy projects – involving wind, biomass, biofuels, geothermal, solar energy – and capacity building and training. Roper alluded to some barriers encountered in developing Island nations that lack qualified technicians / installers / trained professionals and product distribution networks.

In St Lucia, studies have shown that lighting replacements and major solar panel installations cost could be paid back in only a couple of years (approximately 3) and would entail substantial annual savings.

The large-scale replacement of traditional incandescent light bulbs by energy saving bulbs carried out in Cuba has led to impressive and encouraging results. Guadeloupe's utility, EDF, has also subsidized 358,000 lamps in 44,000 households, saving 7 MW of peak demand.

In addition, Barbados has installed 32,000 Solar Hot Water Heaters in roughly 40% of households, which allowed the economy to save US\$6.5m in imported fuel and boosted local industry. Important campaigns have strived to create a new energy saving culture in Cuban society, and in other Caribbean Islands. The underlying message is that *"sustainable energy is not only an environmental necessity; it also makes economic and social sense."*

5- Attendees

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