



## Press Release

October 9, 2008

### **THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION LAUNCH CARIBBEAN REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PROGRAM DURING WORKSHOP IN ST. LUCIA**

The Organization of American States (OAS) announced today at a workshop held at the Rex St. Lucian in St. Lucia, that it is launching a three-year program to support the development and use of renewable energy and energy efficiency in seven countries of the Caribbean. The European Union, through its Energy Facility, is providing €1.4 million for the Caribbean Sustainable Energy Program (CSEP). The countries participating in this program include St. Lucia, St. Kitts & Nevis, Antigua & Barbuda, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Dominica, Grenada, and the Bahamas. The program will be implemented by the OAS in partnership with the CARICOM Secretariat, CARILEC, and the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP).

Representatives from the participating countries and implementing partners met to outline the program's expectations and the opportunities for engagement throughout the region. OAS Energy Division Chief Mark Lambrides explained that the CSEP will work with each of the participating countries to help establish national sustainable energy plans that outline a pathway for expanded use of renewables and greater energy efficiency. "Most countries of the Caribbean depend on imported petroleum products for virtually all of their energy supply, yet there are considerable untapped opportunities to generate power from local renewable natural resources such as geothermal, wind, solar, and biomass," Lambrides said.

In some cases, sustainable energy plans (SEPs) already exist —such as in St. Lucia— yet the goals of the SEPs have not been realized. The CSEP program will not be limited to the preparation of documents; rather it will work with partner governments, utilities, investors, and consumers to ensure the implementation of real projects that achieve the goals of the plans. Paul Mondesir from the Barbados Delegation of the European Commission expressed that "the EC is firmly committed to helping the Caribbean countries prepare and implement sustainable energy plans as a means to address the high cost of energy while reducing the impact of the sector on the local and global environment." Achieving such results will involve the implementation of a wide range of energy market activities such as policy and regulatory reforms, training seminars, renewable energy resource assessments, and project financing design.

Further, significant increases in the use of renewables and efficiency throughout the region is a considerable challenge that will be addressed in partnership with other key sustainable energy initiatives. It is for this reason that the CSEP launch was held in conjunction with the Operations Planning Workshop of the Caribbean Renewable Energy Programme (CREDP). The second phase of the CREDP initiative is being funded and implemented by the German aid agency GTZ, in cooperation with the CARICOM Secretariat. Representatives of the several sustainable energy programs agreed that the moment is right for countries and donors alike to work together, ensuring a coordinated approach to helping build a more sustainable, secure, and cost-effective energy sector in the Caribbean.

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