

“SMALL ISLAND STATES – TAKING THE LEAD”

Global Sustainable Energy Islands Initiative – Press Conference at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg, South Africa, September 2, 2002

This press briefing will highlight the leadership taken by some of the smallest of the island nations to transform their energy systems from a fossil fuel base to renewables and energy efficiency applications. Sustainable energy will be a major component of the overall sustainable development thrust of WSSD. This event should stand out by focusing attention on how some countries that have done the least to cause the climate change that threatens the survival of some island nations are stepping forward to transform their energy systems and show the world that this can be done while pursuing development objectives.

The Prime Minister of Dominica, Mr. Pierre Charles, Foreign Minister of St. Lucia, Mr. Julian Hunte and the Minister for Environment and Health of Grenada, Ms. Clarice Modeste-Curwen will speak at the occasion and announce the commitments and progress made by their countries in developing and implementing sustainable energy plans.

The island nation of St. Lucia became the first country to announce its intention to transform its energy systems to a fossil-fuel-free base to the extent possible, thereby becoming the world's first Sustainable Energy Demonstration Country. This was followed by the Governments of Grenada and Dominica in the Caribbean region, while the Maldives in the Indian Ocean and several island states in the Pacific have also expressed interest in joining this initiative. This event will serve as an opportunity to all the members of the Alliance of Small Island States to support and join this leadership initiative of aggressively pursuing a clean energy future.

This event will showcase national efforts to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For example, the Government of St. Lucia is working on reducing its emissions from the power sector by 35% in the next ten years. Progress made by St. Lucia and other small island states that are members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) will be presented.

The Global Sustainable Energy Islands Initiative (GSEII), a consortium of five international NGOs, has been organized to support the interest of all small island states and potential donors by bringing renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, models, and concepts together in a sustainable plan for small island nations. The GSEII is jointly administered by Climate Institute, Organization of American States, Winrock International, Counterpart International, Energy and Security Group and the International Network for Sustainable Energy in Denmark.

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