



United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy For All (2014-2024)

PRESS RELEASE

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Grenada's Prime Minister Hands Over Presidency Of SIDS DOCK, Promising Continuity In The Push For Greater Focus On Ocean Energy

1st October 2021 – Grenada's Prime Minister, Dr. the Right Honourable Keith Mitchell is confident that despite the major disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the work of SIDS DOCK remains critical to the future of small island developing states like Grenada.

Dr. Mitchell has just completed an unprecedented second term as President of the fifth session of the SIDS DOCK Assembly, after being asked to extend his presidency due to the death of the President-designate in 2019, and the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020. Dr. Mitchell handed over to his colleague, the Honourable Rev. Dr. Pohiva Tu'i'onetoa, Prime Minister from the Kingdom of Tonga, who was elected as the President of the sixth session of the SIDS DOCK Assembly.

Delivering his report to the sixth session of the SIDS DOCK Assembly on Tuesday, 28th September 2021, Dr. Mitchell noted that the organisation has modified its work programme to focus more on ocean energy, given the new reality created by the impact of the pandemic.

He said, "Ocean energy development is critical to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). It is the foundation for the blue economy that will help make us more resilient, and increase our ability to build back better, but we need assistance from our development partners."

Dr. Mitchell said SIDS can and must pin their hopes for the future on the oceans and he indicated that the new SIDS DOCK President will inherit a portfolio of projects that are heavily focused on the oceans as a source of energy. He said continuity will be a key watchword as the organisation focuses on ocean energy as a primary source of renewable energy for SIDS.

The Prime Minister highlighted the US \$40 million Blue Guardians initiative which is intended to enable selected SIDS to increase climate resilience and achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). He said, "The selected countries will be able to access the necessary information to plan for, and implement, climate change adaptation within a defined coastal zone, onshore and nearshore."

(MORE)

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Updating colleague Heads of State and Government and other assembly attendees on the work of SIDS DOCK, Dr. Mitchell spoke of the imminent launch of a Global Ocean Energy Alliance, a concept derived from discussions at the Vienna Energy Forum in 2018, in Austria, in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). It is anticipated that the alliance will be launched at the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow, United Kingdom (UK) in November 2021.

Dr. Mitchell said, “The alliance will launch an Ocean Energy for Blue Economies Platform, which facilitates south-south and triangular cooperation between SIDS, coastal nations, academia, industry players and financiers. Ocean energy as the largest source of sustainable energy on the planet, will be the catalyst for sustainable development across SIDS. The alliance will be a Public-Private-Partnership, designed to facilitate more inclusion and greater efficiency in advocacy and supporting private sector ocean energy investments globally.”

The Grenadian Prime Minister invited development partners to join the Alliance and help with the protection and conservation of oceans which can be a principal source of energy to help many islands survive and thrive.

During his presidency, Dr. Mitchell started work on the establishment of the SIDS DOCK Foundation, the first legal foundation for SIDS sustainable energy and climate resilience, which is being registered as a not-for-profit, 501 (c) (3) in the United States. This is expected to be launched in 2022.

Among major achievements during Dr. Mitchell's presidency was approval of the first major projects for the SIDS DOCK Island Women Open Network (IWON), which focuses on vulnerable populations, gender mainstreaming and inclusion of youth in SIDS DOCK programming.

The projects include a US \$30 million Botanical/Herbal Project and a Sustainable Energy Financing Facility for Women, and will promote climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods and sustainable investments in clean energy. Additionally, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), an institutional partner for SIDS DOCK, has committed to allocate funding to enable further institutional development of the IWON.

The Prime Minister ended his remarks with an expression of thanks for the unprecedented honour and confidence placed in him to guide SIDS DOCK through one of the most challenging periods and he pledged continued support for the work of the organisation.

###END###

SIDS DOCK is a United Nations (UN)-recognised international organisation established in 2015, with all the rights and privileges for addressing climate change, resilience, and energy security in small islands. SIDS DOCK represents 32 small islands and low-lying developing states across the globe, and is so named because it is designed as a “DOCKing station,” to connect the energy sector in SIDS with the global markets for finance and sustainable energy technologies. The organisation's work is coordinated by the Secretariat, in Belmopan, Belize.

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