

Tenth session of the IRENA Assembly

High-Level Meeting on Accelerating the Energy Transformation in Small Island Developing States through Renewable Energy

10 January 2020, 10:30 – 12:30, Room A1
St. Regis Hotel, Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi

Background

For Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which are already among the most vulnerable countries to climate change, access to clean and affordable energy represents a key factor in their pathway towards sustainable development. Most SIDS are heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels. Owing to their small market size and geographic isolation, their energy costs are high and particularly susceptible to the impacts of oil price and supply volatility.

Renewable energy technologies, combined with energy efficiency, can enable transformational socio-economic impacts for SIDS. Renewable sources including solar, wind, geothermal, ocean energy, hydropower and biomass can ensure energy security and create local employment.

Despite the large untapped potential, the uptake of renewable energy is often hindered by limited financial, technical and institutional capacity as well as lack of enabling policy and regulatory frameworks. Notwithstanding these constraints, SIDS continue to forge ahead with strong political commitment, visionary leadership and durable partnerships aiming to support the achievement of their respective Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) targets and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SIDS Lighthouses Initiative 2.0 (LHI), co-ordinated by IRENA, has been developed under the *S.A.M.O.A. Pathway*. The initiative, which currently includes 36 countries and 24 development partners, supports SIDS by addressing all elements of the energy transition, including through tailored policy, regulatory and technical advisory services, project facilitation and capacity building, and provides an open platform to share information, knowledge, lessons learned and best practices on renewable energy.

IRENA and partners work in a coordinated collaborative manner to implement the new LHI priority areas which were endorsed in September 2018 at the UN General Assembly. In particular, the new phase of the initiative aims to support SIDS in reviewing and implementing NDCs, extending technical support and capacity building where needed; expanding from assessment and planning to implementing effective, innovative solutions; promoting all renewable sources, including in transportation and other end-use sectors; supporting the development of bankable projects, fostering access to finance and closer co-operation with the private sector; strengthening institutional and human capacity; leveraging synergies between renewables and energy efficiency and reinforcing links between renewables and non-energy sectors – including agriculture, food,



health and water. It also aims to foster broad socio-economic development; link renewable energy uptake to climate resilience and more effective disaster recovery; enhance collection and dissemination of data and statistics; support informed decision-making and effective monitoring; reinforce and expand partner engagement, and leverage synergies with existing SIDS initiatives and other IRENA co-ordinated platforms. Efforts undertaken in the framework of the new phase are expected to support SIDS in achieving a total target of five gigawatts of installed capacity by 2023.

In the context of the UN Climate Action Summit and the UN General Assembly held in September 2019, Heads of State and Government, Ministers and High Representatives gathered to undertake the [Mid-Term Review of the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway](#). In the context of this review, they stressed the importance of access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy. They reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen co-operation and supporting towards SIDS achieving sustainable development in line with their national development strategies and priorities. In this framework, IRENA supported the *Ambitious SIDS Climate Action Summit Package* initiative put forward by SIDS and partners with the objective of accelerating sustainable energy in SIDS in order to achieve enhanced and ambitious energy transition targets by 2030, where the LHI will provide a solid framework for its implementation.

Objectives

The main objectives of the meeting are:

- Discuss the progress in key areas of the energy transformation in SIDS at the national, sub-regional and regional levels in the Atlantic-Indian Ocean-South China Seas (AIMS), Caribbean and Pacific regions.
- Share insights on the outstanding barriers and possible actions that can be implemented in cooperation with SIDS LHI partners.

Guiding Questions

- Within the framework of the LHI priority areas, what areas are the most challenging and require new or enhanced action to build reliable and sustainable energy systems in SIDS?
- How can the international community support the implementation of the LHI priority areas?

Associated Publications

- [SIDS Lighthouses Initiative: Progress and the Way Forward](#) (2019)

For more information please contact:

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