

**Remarks**

**by**

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**International Renewable Energy Agency**

at the

**8<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

**High-level Meeting on Scaling-up Renewable Energy Deployment in  
SIDS**

Abu Dhabi, UAE, 12 January 2018

Honorable Henry Puna, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands

Honorable Djaffar Ahmed Said Hassani, Vice President of Comoros

Your Excellencies, Ministers from Saint Lucia, the Maldives and Fiji

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is truly a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to this High-Level Meeting on Scaling up the Renewable Energy Deployment in Small Island Developing States. We have made somewhat of a tradition of this prior to many of our Assembly sessions, and I am glad to see that the scope of this meeting reflects the growth of the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative. I wish to start by expressing our deepest sympathies to our island friends in the Caribbean who are still dealing with the aftermath of devastatingly powerful storms of last year. These are yet another powerful reminder that we must continue strengthening global efforts to address climate change with the utmost vigor and determination. I also want to congratulate Fiji in this regard on their successful leadership as President of COP23 in Bonn, where we held IRENA's first SIDS Energy Day, in cooperation with Fiji and the Government of Germany. The meeting highlighted many of the pressing issues for

SIDS we will discuss today, and I wish to thank Germany for their generous support that made the event possible.

As you all know, we feel privileged to have a very special relationship with SIDS. Islands have been strong supporters and key partners in IRENA since our early days. I distinctly recall that at the Third International Conference on SIDS, hosted by the Government of Samoa, where we adopted the ‘Samoa Pathway’, energy was recognised as a major constraint to the sustainable economic growth and development of islands. Shortly after that, we launched the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative as a framework for the energy transition in SIDS. We moved away from developing projects in isolation to a holistic approach that considers all relevant elements, from policy and market frameworks, to technology options and capacity building. We inaugurated what we thought were very ambitious objectives for the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative when we launched it, but SIDS have already surpassed the initial Lighthouses target for solar PV and are steadily progressing toward reaching the wind power target. Furthermore, funds mobilized have exceeded the Lighthouses target of 500 million USD. And I here wish to pay tribute to the leadership and efforts of islands in light of this impressive progress.

As part of our efforts to accelerate energy transformation in SIDS, we have undertaken renewables resource assessments, Quicksans, renewable readiness assessments and national energy roadmaps in islands. At the same time, a growing focus has been to support the integration of variable renewable energy in electricity grids in SIDS. To enable this, we have worked closely with island stakeholders and have completed grid integration studies in Antigua and Barbuda, Palau, Samoa and Cook Islands, with others underway in the Dominican Republic, Fiji and Vanuatu.

Through the IRENA–Abu Dhabi Development Fund Facility, ten of the 21 projects selected for funding have been in SIDS from Asia-Pacific, Africa to the Caribbean, bringing nearly 78 MW of new renewable energy capacity online in the future. We have expanded our Project Navigator and Sustainable Energy Marketplace platforms to include a focus on SIDS. And on this note, I wish to highlight that we will hold an event focused on renewable energy project facilitation in SIDS this afternoon, which we hope many of you will be able to join.

Our efforts to facilitate knowledge sharing among SIDS underpins all of this work. In this context, we recently launched a dedicated website for the Lighthouses Initiative, which consolidates analysis from our past work with SIDS, and aims to include further information and publications from our partners.

SIDS, like many countries, recognise the opportunity of renewable energy for tackling climate change, and reference renewables in their NDCs, with 9 having targets of 100% renewables<sup>1</sup>. This was underscored during the recent COP meeting, as Fiji's leadership put an emphasis on NDC implementation. Yet, most of the NDCs do not capture the full potential of renewable energy deployment resulting from continued cost reductions and improvements in technology. For example, around twice as much new renewable power capacity came online globally in 2015 and 2016 compared to the amount foreseen in the NDCs. We estimate that almost USD 1.7 trillion will be required globally for the implementation of power sector renewable energy targets in the NDCs. Of this, SIDS make up roughly USD 16 billion of the total investment needed.

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<sup>1</sup> 100% renewable energy targets are in: Aruba, Cabo Verde, Cook Islands, Fiji, Grenada, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu

The current review process of NDCs provides an important opportunity for countries to revise these plans and raise their level of ambition. Reaching this will undoubtedly require strong international support and a massive scale-up of private capital. For these reasons, IRENA is establishing a new facility to provide strategic planning and technical support to countries to achieve this, and we look forward to working with SIDS and other SIDS initiatives like the NDC Regional Pacific Hub in this context. I want to also highlight here that on Sunday afternoon, we will be holding a strategic plenary ministerial discussion on advancing the renewable energy components of NDCs, and we hope that many of you will join us and take an active part in this discussion to help us chart a way forward on the way we support countries on renewable energy deployment within their implementations of NDCs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While progress has been made since the Lighthouses Initiative was launched, it is clear that we must do more to support energy transformation in SIDS. In this

context, we want to take the SIDS LHI to the next stage, and we believe several areas will be key in order to accelerate renewable deployment in islands.

Firstly, a complete energy transformation goes beyond electricity to include the end-use sectors. Our analysis shows that SIDS renewable energy targets in NDCs primarily cover the power sector, despite 90% of transport sectors in SIDS being reliant upon imported oil. For this reason, it is imperative to extend our focus on scaling-up renewables beyond the power sector to transport, industry and buildings.

Secondly, it is critical to continue supporting capacity building while fostering stronger engagement with private and public sectors, including financial institutions. I want to underscore the importance of accessing finance in SIDS, which will only grow in importance as SIDS look to implement their NDCs and leverage climate finance. Our Quickscan tool has often found an absence of adequate institutional frameworks for attracting foreign investment into renewables in islands, as well as a lack of plans to maintain public and donor-funded renewable projects. The issue of financing was also highlighted during the recent Initiative for Renewable Island Energy (IRIE) ministerial, as well as IRENA's SIDS Energy Day at COP23.

Thirdly, as we move forward, it is essential to gain a holistic understanding of the nexus between renewable energy and agriculture, food processing, health and water supply. In this context, we will continue to engage SIDS and partners to analyze the impact of renewables on multiple sectors, as well as the technical feasibility and economic viability of a wide range of renewable energy applications. For example, building on relevant knowledge products developed by IRENA, we are working with FAO to promote the use of renewable energy for sustainable food preservation and reduce post-harvest losses. We believe that this can dramatically contribute to food security, local development, and decarbonization.

Finally, as we look to build on the progress of the SIDS LHI, it is important to leverage synergies with development partners and other initiatives focusing on SIDS, including the IRIE and SIDS DOCK. As many of you know, IRENA has been closely involved with the IRIE, and I want to commend the Maldives for their leadership on the initiative as Chair of AOSIS.

Ladies and Gentlemen,



We have reached a critical juncture in the Lighthouses Initiative. Having exceeded most of our initial targets, we have an opportunity to refocus our efforts and advance the initiative to the next level. Your active participation today and the outcomes our discussion will help define how we seize this opportunity, serving as valuable inputs to guide our future work in SIDS. We wish to hear from you what the next stage of the SIDS LHI should aim to achieve, and the focus areas that can get us there.

I want to conclude by thanking you all for taking part in this pre-Assembly event. I also want to extend our sincere appreciation to our partners that have provided generous support to our work on SIDS, particularly France, Germany, Japan, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and the UAE. We are grateful for your continued support and trust in the organization to deliver the objectives of the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative.

I look forward to a very rich and engaging discussion. Thank you.