21st meeting of the Conference of Parties to the
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate
Change

Lima-Paris Action Agenda
Energy Day: “Toward 100% Renewables in light of
Mauritius efforts to lead the way towards 100%
renewables”

Statement by
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Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development
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7DECEMBER 2015
• Her Excellency Mrs. Ségolène Royal, Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, France,

• Mrs. Rachel Kyte, Vice-President and Special Envoy for Climate Change for the World Bank Group,

• Mr. Adnan Amin, Director-General, International Renewable Energy Agency,

• Mr. Victor Kgomoeswana, the Moderator of this session

• Dear Colleagues

• Ladies and gentlemen

The world is at a critical juncture in its efforts to combat climate change. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded that, in the absence of fully committed and urgent actions, climate change will have severe and irreversible impacts across the planet. Unfortunately, Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries and countries of the African continent despite their negligible contribution towards global warming are suffering from accentuating adverse impacts of climate change. The costs for sustaining hard won development are escalating.
Our world is warmer than ever before, and people and wildlife are already suffering the consequences. But that’s nothing compared to what we’re leaving to the future generations if these trends continue. It’s time to stop the damage. It’s time for an energy revolution. Fossil fuels namely coal, oil and natural gas are major contributors to climate change, accounting for the vast majority of greenhouse gas emissions. It is undeniable that energy is the engine of development. However, our traditional means of generating energy, which are so heavily dependent on the burning of fossil fuels, is driving us to the brink of a global catastrophe. Therefore, we need to shift away from non-renewable sources of energy and rethink of new, safer ways to power our societies.

**Chair,**

Most small island developing states (SIDS) are dependent on imported fossil fuels for the majority of our energy needs, especially transport and electricity generation. Energy infrastructure costs are generally high, especially for reasons of scale and isolation, and the impact of oil price fluctuations and supply volatility and future uncertainty can be increasingly severe. SIDS are also highly exposed to the negative environmental impacts associated with fossil fuel consumption. On the other hand, renewable energy has the potential to play a key role in
enhancing energy security in SIDS and assisting us to achieve our sustainable development goals.

Transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy resources can help address these economic and environmental challenges, while also creating opportunities for local industry. Many SIDS have taken great strides towards energy independence through new partnerships and innovative technical approaches, significant new investments and the roll out of national energy plans and bold targets.

Mauritius is also playing its role fully both in terms of adaptation and mitigation. In fact, according to the 2014 edition of the Renewables Global Status Report for the 21st Century Mauritius ranks second globally among countries for share of 2012 GDP invested in new renewable power.

Chair,

The main pillars of the economy of Mauritius are the services sector, which comprises principally tourism, ICT, and the ocean economy, including the sea food hub and the development of smart cities, which are based on the concept of ‘live, work and play’. In the context of the vision 2030 of our Hon. Prime Minister Sir Anerood Jugnauth, these
sectors are called upon to develop at a fast pace to allow the country to move to the upper middle income category. This will require both a highly reliable and a good quality of electricity supply.

Mauritius has unfortunately no indigenous resources such as oil, gas or coal, but is endowed with renewable energy resources, particularly, hydro, wind, solar and biomass in the form of bagasse, a by-product of sugarcane. While access to modern energy services for the socio-economic development is not an issue in Mauritius, the challenge is to diversify away from fossil fuel dependency.

We can proudly state that no stones were left unturned and a series of measures are being taken to reduce our dependency on fossil fuel. The Government of Mauritius is fully committed to ensuring that sources of energy used for electricity generation are available at least cost and causes the least possible harm to the environment. Some of the key measures taken are as follows:

- With a view to ensuring the security of energy supplies for electricity generation, Government would diversify as much as possible the electricity mix with a progressive increase in the share of renewables to more than 35% by 2025.
• A Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency (MARENA) has been set up. The main thrust of this agency is to create a conducive environment for the renewable energy sector and its future growth. The Agency will be a body corporate which will promote the adoption and use of renewable energy with a view to achieving sustainable development goals. It will also be called upon to create an enabling environment for the development of renewable energy as well as increase the share of renewable energy in the national energy mix.

• The land conversion tax exemption to which only land owners implementing renewable energy projects were entitled, has now been extended to all renewable energy project promoters and include long term land leases.

• In addition, to encourage households to produce their own renewable energy, which will directly impact on their monthly electricity bill and contribute to the national target for renewable energies, investment made on solar equipment will be deductible from chargeable income.

• The Smart City concept will bring about a radical revolution in the way we live. The smart cities will be designed to:
  
  o Be environment friendly;
- Generate their own resources in terms of energy and water;
- Provide smart modern transportation; and
- Reduce traffic congestion across the island.

- Offshore wind farms which demonstrate the potential for large scale developments in the waters of both Mauritius and Rodrigues are being promoted.

- As regards ocean energy, opportunities and development pathways for commercial wave energy plants capable of providing a sustainable source of electrical power and desalinated water are also being investigated. It may be noted that a study under Australian assistance for the setting up of a 1 MW wave energy plant in our outer island of Rodrigues is ongoing and will be completed by December 2016.

These landmark measures will lead to the creation of a larger renewable energy sector in Mauritius. Small and medium enterprises and cooperatives specialized in green energy generation will flourish leading to substantial green jobs creation and incorporation of specialized support services companies.
Chair,

Mauritius has also developed close partnership with regional blocks such as Southern African Development Community (SADC), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to take forward the renewable and energy efficiency agenda.

Furthermore, Mauritius is a signatory of the SIDS Dock programme under the AOSIS. While the support of Global Environment Facility (GEF) was vital in setting up the energy efficiency framework in the country with focus on the building sector, the SIDS Dock is now providing further support for actions in other key economic sectors. In addition, the AgenceFrançaise de Developpement (AFD) is also providing technical support to the Government to reinforce capacity in renewable energy and energy efficiency and is also providing concessionary loan facilities through commercial banks to private enterprises for implementing such projects. All these partnerships are crucial for making the desired paradigm shift in the energy sector.

Chair,
Achieving 100 % Renewable Energy in Mauritius with a population of 1.3 billion over any reasonable time horizon is a great challenge, which may not be realistically achieved under the current status of technology availability and maturity in the marketplace.

The vulnerability of the Mauritian economy to oil prices cannot be overstated. The challenge is to increase the share of renewable energy and explore other sources of energy in the national energy mix to mitigate this vulnerability and ensure long-term security of supply. The assistance of international cooperation partners is required to promote wider dissemination and application of appropriate technologies. There is great hope on the smart grid technology for enhanced penetration of renewables.

However, technologies must be made accessible, affordable and adaptable to the needs and particular circumstances of SIDS communities. In this regard, we strongly urge the international community, particularly developed countries, to ensure the provision of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building to SIDS.

The development of a SIDS carbon fund through a back to back support from an international climate fund such as the Green Climate Fund is vital to allow SIDS to de-carbonize their energy sectors quickly and sustainably.
Chair,

To conclude, we are grateful for the Paris conference which gives us the opportunity to voice out our constraints and share our experiences on such a key climate change relevant sector. We have to bear in mind that an investment in clean energy is an investment in the economy of the future, and those who move quickly will have the advantage.

I thank you for your attention.