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Energy leaders, partners gather in USVI for Caribbean clean energy technology symposium

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CHARLOTTE AMALIE, USVI -- Some 270 attendees at the first Caribbean Clean Energy Technology Symposium (CCETS) gathered from March 24-27, 2015, on St Thomas in the US Virgin Islands to learn and share knowledge about clean energy efficiency and security for the Caribbean.



The symposium, the first of three annual gatherings on clean energy technology in the Caribbean region, was co-hosted by the US Department of Energy, Caribbean-Central American Action (C-CAA), and the government of the USVI in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The CCETS brought together country and sector experts from various countries and the Caribbean region who shared best practices and worked together to identify common goals and create action plans with deliverables that will lead to increasing access to energy efficiency and clean and renewable energy technology in Caribbean nations.

This symposium included a pre-symposium on the USVI's energy landscape by the Virgin Islands Energy Office (VIEO), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat's presentation on the strategies for Caribbean sustainable energy and variable renewable energy (VRE) grid integration, and the IDB's stakeholder working group on natural gas.

Following these presentations were panel discussions led by energy leaders and other stakeholders. The discussion topics included assessing the current energy landscape, developing a workforce around green energy, financing clean energy technologies, and exploring how utilities in the Caribbean region and other areas are adapting to a cleaner energy economy as they maintain profitable and more sustainable operations.

The Clean Energy Solutions Center also highlighted its resources, webinars and training, and expert assistance services, as remarks on climate change were provided by representatives of the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Stakeholder working groups – guided by key stakeholders – assembled after the panel discussions to share thoughts and ideas on energy education, economic growth and clean energy, buildings and energy efficiency, electricity generation and delivery, energy assurance, base load electricity diversification and clean transportation.

The US Department of Energy also presented the "Energy Transition Initiative: Islands Playbook", an action-oriented guide with steps on how to organize for a transition towards an energy system to eliminate a dependence on one or two imported fuels by relying on local resources. The Islands Playbook also includes templates and worksheets as it highlights lessons learned from the symposium in the USVI and other areas.

On the symposium's final day, the Virgin Islands Economy Development Authority (VIDEA) hosted a breakfast presentation on St Thomas on the USVI's tax incentive program and led a site visit at the William D. Roebuck Industrial Park on St Croix. On St Thomas, the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (VI WAPA) led site visits of the Estate Donoe solar facility, the Randolph E. Harley substation, and the seawater reverse osmosis facility.

Strategic partners of the CCETS and for future Caribbean energy initiatives include CARICOM, the Caribbean Council, CARILEC, University of the Virgin Islands' Caribbean Green Technology Center, Institute of the Americas, New Energy Events, Organization of American States, Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority, Virgin Islands Energy Office, and the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority.

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