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can become a leader in geothermal drilling for the rest of the Caribbean”

Dr. Vince Henderson, Minister for Planning, Economic Development, Climate Resilience, Sustainable Development, and Renewable Energy, Dominica, while speaking at the Caribbean Sustainable Energy Conference, delivered a presentation that focussed on developing geothermal resources in Dominica.

During his contribution, Minister Henderson called for greater participation from Trinidad and Tobago in the area of developing geothermal resources in the region and capitalising on the country’s 100 years’ experience in drilling for oil and gas.

He said, “It is too expensive to mobilise drilling rigs from all parts of the world to come to the region, making geothermal more costly. We have the expertise right around the corner.”

He added, "We hope that this is an opportunity for us to develop the capacity within the region to get involved in geothermal drilling. I really hope that Trinidad and Tobago can become a leader in geothermal drilling for the rest of the Caribbean."

Dr. Thackwray Dax Driver, President and CEO of the Energy Chamber of Trinidad and Tobago, responded, "The Energy Chamber shares this vision, since there is a large cadre of drillers from Trinidad already working for international companies here and all around the world, and we need to find those transferable skills."

Dominica's ambition is to develop its geothermal resources and develop geothermal-based green industrialisation projects. At present, the Government is considering options to develop a hydrogen project.

A previous speaker in the session, Richard Sands, Business Manager, Moorhouse Drilling and Completions, compared drilling a conventional oil and gas well with drilling a geothermal well. Sands indicated that there was no material difference in well design and construction between the two types of wells. He said that equipment, technology and the skills already existed and were transferable to geothermal projects.

He also indicated that service providers would already be familiar with the types of alterations needed to drill a geothermal well based on experiences in the oil and gas sector.

Other speakers in the session included Dr. Ken Wisian, Associate Director, Environmental Division, Bureau of Economic Geology, Jackson School of Geosciences, The University of Texas at Austin; Christiaan Gischler, Lead Energy Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); Dr. Gregory Frébourg, Chief Geologist, Thermal Energy Partners; and Bruce Cutright, CEO, GeoFrame Energy.

Geothermal energy is a renewable energy technology that makes use of the heat and water systems below the earth's surface to generate electricity. Geothermal is an attractive renewable energy technology because it leads to decarbonisation, but it is not intermittent like solar and wind and can

be considered as baseload. Dr. Ken Wisian said that there was a renewed interest in geothermal that had been driven largely by start-up companies, with their own methods of mining the heat out of the ground. He added that it was largely driven by advancements in technology in the oil and gas industry on drilling, fracturing etc., which was way ahead of conventional geothermal industry. He indicated that there was a new paradigm in exploiting geothermal resources. Because of the advancements made, geothermal projects could now be done almost anywhere.

Dr. Wisian said that there was tremendous potential in the Caribbean for geothermal power. Conventional geothermal resources, he added, were already known, but have been under-developed. The new paradigm in geothermal would be opening up areas that hitherto would have been considered uneconomic.

He added that there were also opportunities to convert depleted oil and gas fields to produce power, which were in the early stages of testing but advancing quickly.

Christiaan Gischler, Lead Energy Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), also indicated that there were huge opportunities for geothermal in the region. He said that Latin America and the Caribbean had large untapped geothermal potential.

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