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**PRESENTATION OF REMARKS AT THE FIRST “CARIBBEAN SUSTAINABLE
ENERGY CONFERENCE HELD IN BARBADOS”**

NOVEMBER 10, 2016

LLOYD ERSKINE SANDIFORD CENTRE

CLYDE A. GRIFFITH

CHAIR, ORGANISING COMMITTEE

RT. HON. FREUNDEL STUART, PRIME MINISTER OF BARBADOS, OTHER
MINISTERS, EXCELLENCIES, INVITED PARTICIPANTS FROM ALL OVER THE
WORLD, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN;

TODAY, ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF THE BARBADOS RENEWABLE ENERGY
ASSOCIATION AND ITS MEMBERS, I TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN WELCOMING
YOU TO THIS FIRST CONFERENCE OF ITS KIND HELD UNDER ITS AUSPICES.

THE STAGING OF THIS CONFERENCE, A BOLD AND COURAGEOUS MOVE, IS
OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE RECOGNITION THAT 50 YEARS AGO THIS
MONTH, THE RT. EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW LED US INTO
INDEPENDENCE. IT WAS A BOLD AND COURAGEOUS MOVE, THE RESULTS OF
WHICH WE CELEBRATE IN THE FACE OF THE DAUNTING TASKS WE FACE AS A
COUNTRY. IT WAS A VISIONARY STEP TAKEN BY THIS GREAT MAN WHO
INSPIRED US TO WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD THIS COUNTRY INTO WHAT IT HAS
BECOME TODAY.

BREA DECIDED, AT ITS INCEPTION FIVE SHORT YEARS AGO, THAT WHATEVER
STRIDES WE MADE WE WOULD WANT TO SHARE OUR EFFORTS AND
EXPERIENTIAL BENEFITS WITH OUR CARIBBEAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

THUS THIS CONFERENCE.

The staging of this event is specifically designed to assess the approaches we in the Caribbean need to consider in sustaining and perhaps quickening the pace towards sustainable energy independence.

The words “Making It Happen” were chosen carefully to focus our efforts on understanding the regulatory, policy, legislative and investment measures essential to providing tangible opportunity for our citizens, regardless of income brackets, to benefit as investors in alternative energy.

And to lay the foundations for the next steps to be taken as we seek to partner with existing institutions such as the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and others to “make it happen”.

Within a matter of two years, and thanks to the sacrifice of our Vice President Jerry Franklyn and Dr Thomas Rogers of the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, the Barbados Renewable Energy Association has produced hard and online copies of both an Energy Efficiency Guide and a Consumer Guide for photo voltaic solar systems. One of our board members, Jim Reid, founder and chairman of Caribbean LED Lighting Inc based here in Barbados, has taken the lead to produce a Code of Conduct guide for BREA members to follow.

While self-sacrifice and self-financing have played an important role in a number of our initiatives, they would have fallen short without the robust support of the Central Bank of Barbados and its Governor Dr Delisle Worrell, who has been an indefatigable champion of promoting sustainable alternative energy and its absolute relativity to a healthier economy.

The Government of Barbados, with whom we have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), has been a major supporter of our efforts and like the Central Bank of Barbados is one of the three platinum sponsors, the other being the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). I should also recognise a fourth partner, the European Union (EU), which has also contributed towards making what we anticipate will be the most developmental energy conference for the Caribbean, in this Barbados’ 50th anniversary of independence.

As we seek to support Caribbean sustainable energy development and identify the next steps, we have already taken initiatives to seek closer working partnerships with regional institutions and organisations such as the CDB, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to identify how other countries in the Caribbean may execute some of the initiatives identified, how policy and regulation may be fast tracked so there is an avoidance of re-inventing the wheel.

Having thanked our major sponsors I would also wish to thank our exhibitors and invite you to take every effort to visit and network with them.

We in BREA are further indebted to the sacrifices of the planning committee Aidan Rogers our president, Mrs Pamela Arthur, our event planners headed by Faye Wharton-Parris, Ann Johnson, Vice President Jerry Franklyn, directors Kaie Warner, Meshia Clarke, Hallam Hope, Rohan Ford and office administrator Pat Moseley.

YOU WILL OBSERVE TODAY THE PRESENCE OF SCHOOL CHILDREN. THIS IS DUE TO THE INITIATIVE OF THE BARBADOS LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY AND THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. WE CAN BOAST OF THESE CHILDREN PARTICIPATING AS SPONSORED EXHIBITORS AND CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS.

I WISH TO HIGHLIGHT ANOTHER GOAL OF THIS CONFERENCE : TO SOW THE SEEDS FOR THE FORMATION OF A REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION, THE OBJECTIVE OF WHICH IS TO BUILD “CARIBBEAN SUSTAINABLE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE”

IN CLOSING, ALLOW ME TO REFLECT ON AN AMENDED ADMONITION OF THE LATE JOHN F. KENNEDY, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:

AND SO MY FELLOW CARIBBEAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS, ASK NOT WHAT THE CARIBBEAN CAN DO FOR YOU, BUT WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR OUR SEVERAL COUNTRIES

THIS IS THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME, WE CANNOT, WE MUST NOT SQUANDER IT!

