

GERMAN  
UNITY



# Tackling the Transition towards Renewable Energy

Advancing the transition to clean energy is regarded as one of the most pressing issues of our time - and each country has different approaches when it comes to establishing the new standards.

Germany, for example, is often praised for its efforts to support energy transition. The country has been among the first to take a stand for renewable energies and has supported advances in clean energy technologies over the last two decades.

As one of the first countries to embrace renewables, Germany overcame some major challenges along the way. In doing so, the country was able to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by about 27 percent since 1990, according to the German Environment Agency. Among industrial nations, Germany is regarded as a trendsetter when it comes to energy transition. In 2017, for example, wind, sun and other renewable energy sources already accounted for 36 percent of gross electricity consumption. The transition towards clean energy picked up speed in 2011, after the disaster at Japan's Fukushima nuclear power plant. Chancellor Angela Merkel announced at that time that Germany would shut down all 17 active nuclear reactors by 2022. Eight have already been closed, and

renewable energies have more than filled the gap.

Other countries and regions can benefit substantially from the advanced and matured technologies such as wind turbines and solar panels now. The early support of the German government for these technologies, as well as the investments of German companies in research and product development, not just produced technology leaders but were also strong backers of the global rise of renewable energy. The Caribbean, including Trinidad and Tobago, is in the position to generate power from clean energy sources such as wind or the sun at similar or even lower production costs than from conventional fuel-based power plants and can therefore create its very own energy transition.

## *Renewables in the Caribbean*

Unlike Germany which has set off on its journey towards renewables 20 years ago, the Caribbean is at a crossroads when it comes to energy transition - especially in terms of power generation and distribution. Even though the region has an enormous potential for clean energy solutions, the Caribbean islands are highly dependent on imported fossil fuels which makes them not only vulnerable to

provides a framework to spur renewable energy development.

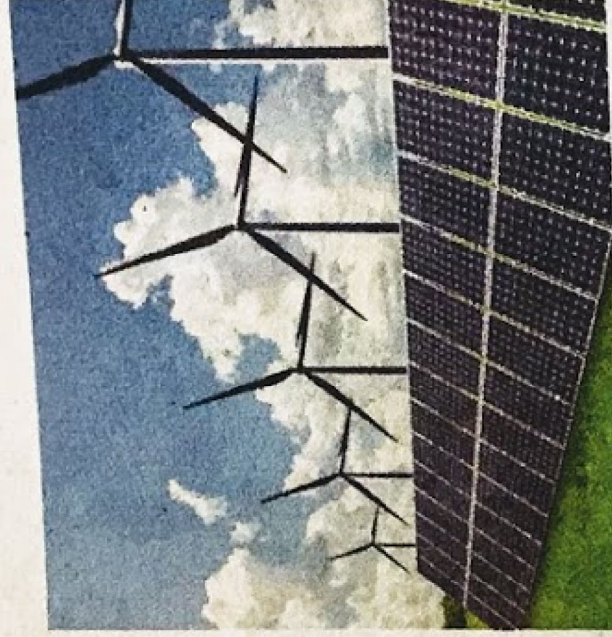
## *Pioneer Trinidad and Tobago*

Trinidad and Tobago, in particular, provides excellent starting conditions when it comes to renewable energies. Both the northeast trade winds and the year-round high solar radiation of about 2,000 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> are a fantastic resource for the use of wind energy and photovoltaics and materially better than resources available in Germany.

The country aims to reduce its dependence on natural gas, which makes up to 99.8 percent of the island's electricity production, according to the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries. The government has, therefore, issued calls for expressions of interest (EOI) for utility-scale renewable projects in 2018.

The move towards renewables will pay off for Trinidad and Tobago in the long term. As is the case in Germany, the economy will, ultimately, benefit from the transition towards green energy - be it in the form of new jobs, foreign direct investments or a higher independence from single power sources.

As an old Chinese proverb says: "When the wind of change blows, some people build walls, others build windmills."



volatile fuel prices but also restrains their economic development.

The CARICOM has already taken steps to advance the transition, for instance by adopting the Energy Policy in 2013. The policy aims at leveraging domestic alternative energy resources, which will lead to a higher level of energy independence, foreign direct investments and, ultimately, economic growth. In addition to that, the Caribbean Sustainable Energy Roadmap and Strategy (C-SERMS) considers already existing efforts in the member states and

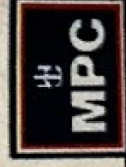




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