

Navigating International Energy Law Obligations:

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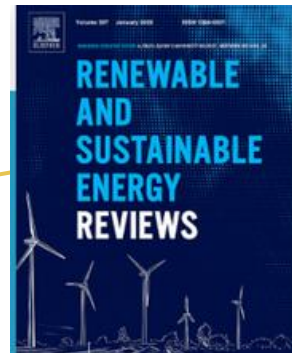


Hello!



Originally from the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago, the West Indies, where I qualified as a lawyer

Currently a PhD Researcher at the Universite de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour (UPPA), & CNRS, France



One of the Associate Editors for the Journal, Renewable & Sustainable Energy Reviews & Member of the Climate Research Platform Just Transition Working Group at the University of Oxford Sustainable Law Programme



KÁROLI GÁSPÁR UNIVERSITY
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IN HUNGARY

Visiting lecturer at the Károli Gáspár Reformed University in Hungary

Annually co-organise a series of International Early Career Conferences geared towards networking & improving interdisciplinary research amongst the Early Career Community

First was held in Tilburg in 2024 in collaboration with Tilburg University, Erasmus University and the Universite de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour (UPPA), & CNRS & a first edited collection from International Early Career Researchers was the result with SpringerNature, Palgrave Macmillan

Second was held in Brugge Belgium in 2025, in collaboration with the United Nations University, Erasmus University, the Universite de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour (UPPA), & CNRS with speakers from Springer Nature, Nature Sustainability and the ERC – We are also doing a second edited collection with SpringerNature, Palgrave Macmillan for publication December 2025



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Regional Integration Studies



Structure of Presentation

01 Aim of the research

02 Situating the research & why

03 Focus on the specific International Energy Law obligations & why

04 *What is the dilemma in CSIDS*
(infographic)

05 Navigating the energy landscape in CSIDS
(The scorecards for the case studies)

06 *Solving the dilemma*
(what can the CSIDS do as a region...
from an energy perspective)

07 What is needed from IEL

08 Conclusion & Future outlook
pathways



01 - Aims of the research *(to show how)*

1. The perspective of CSIDS should shape or influence the re-conceptualisation of IEL & its future development
2. The realities in CSIDS inform us about how IEL needs to evolve to accommodate the CSIDS perspective
3. To illustrate how CSIDS IEL obligations of permanent sovereignty over natural resources, energy security, state responsibility & accountability, sustainable development are being balanced

02 - Situating the Research & why the focus

Where?



Why? Vulnerabilities

- CSIDS are highly vulnerable based on geography (low-lying); economically (narrow resource & export bases, high import dependency; and undiversified economies)
- High debt (based on reliance on tourism, limited economic diversification etc.)

How these vulnerabilities interplay with their IEL obligations

Makes for an interesting case study:

- Tackling CCLD
- Disappearance of states (threatened due to rising sea levels and loss of coastlines) forced migration & new policies to deal with the realities
- Some rely heavily (umbilical dependence on fossil fuels for economy) T&T; Guyana
- Permanent sovereignty over natural resources; state accountability & responsibility; treaty obligations (Global responsibilities & soft law) ; sustainable development



03 - Focus on specific International Energy Law obligations & why



Treaties

Key International obligations that shape national policy

Paris Agreement; UNSDGs; Regional frameworks (CARICOM energy policy); International investment & trade law considerations (matters that affect procurement & foreign investment in energy projects)



Customary International Law

Shared beliefs & consistent state practice

Permanent sovereignty over natural resources (explore, exploit & how); Do so in interest of the people and national development



Permanent Sovereignty over natural resources

Authority of Nations

Each state controls its energy resources independently.



State Accountability & Responsibility

States are the principal bearers of international obligations

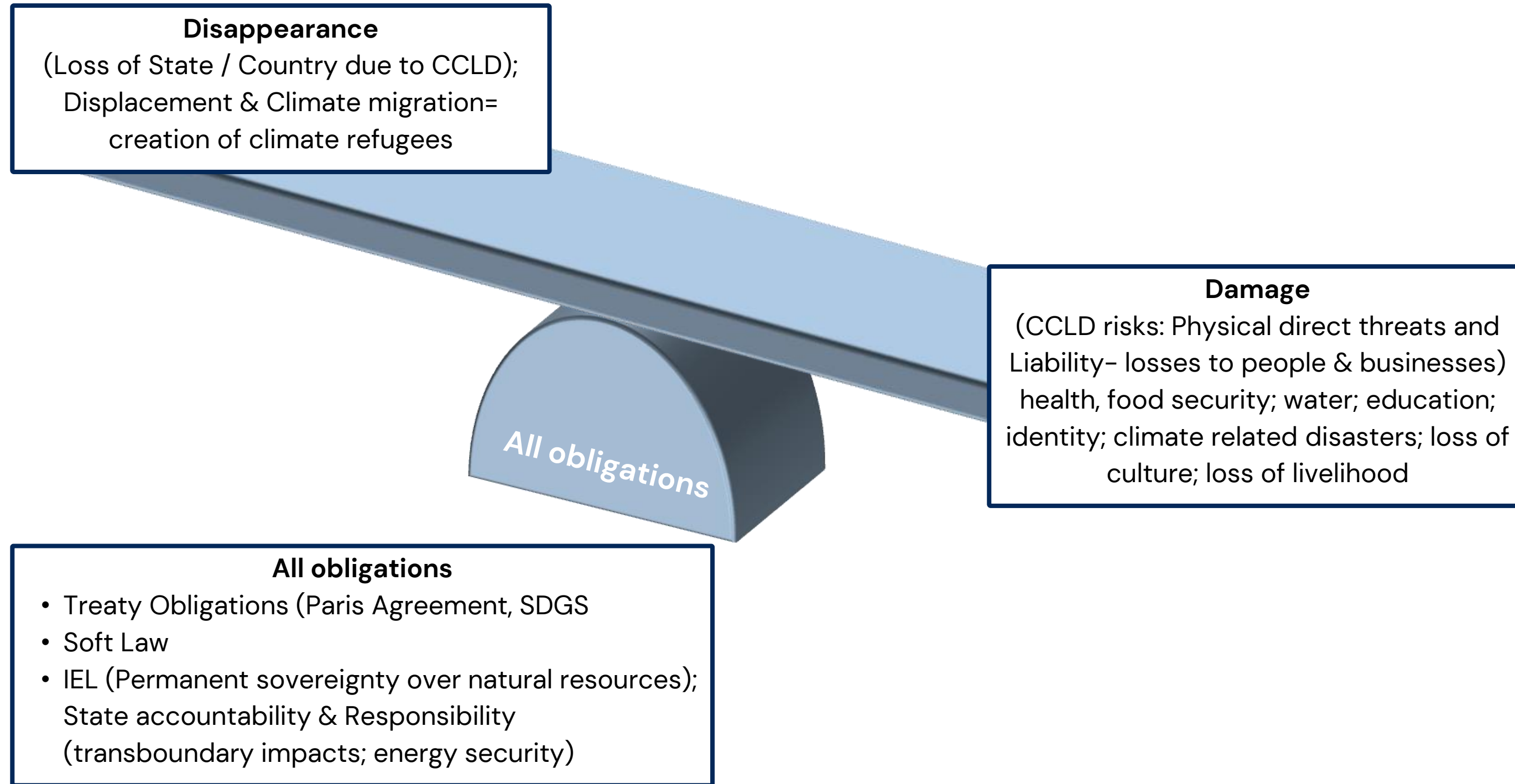


Sustainable development

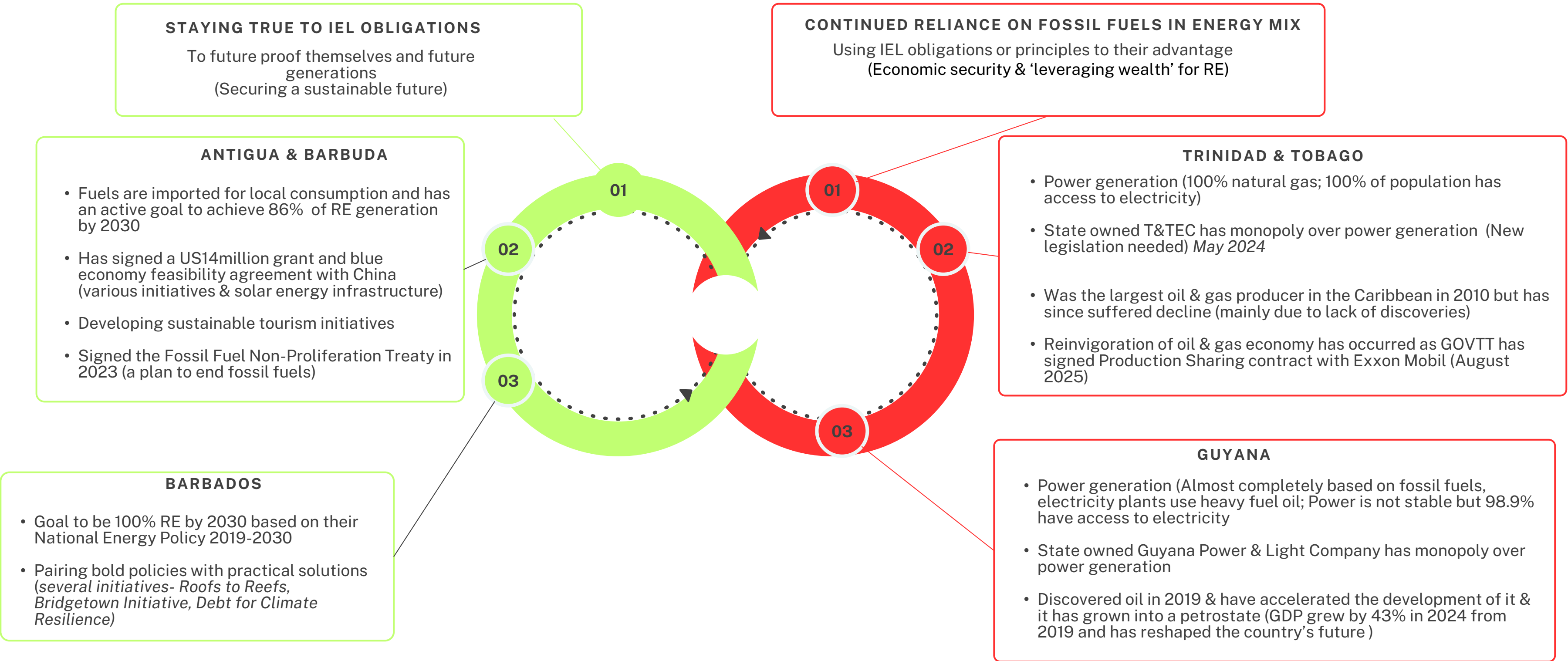
Balancing consideration

Consider environmental consequences of energy activities, conduct EIA, consult neighbouring States in relations to certain hazardous activities

04- What is the dilemma in CSIDS



05 - Navigating the energy landscape in CSIDS *(The case study scorecards)*



****Security is at the heart of their efforts but it means different things****

Climate change as an energy security risk was also a major theme of the recent summit. Bharrat said that he raised the issue of the transition not moving as fast as it could at meetings during the event.

"What about the poorer countries? The political will is there to transition, but the resources are not there to transition. ... It costs a lot," he said.

For the oil-and forest-rich nation, carbon credits are set to play a big role in its energy transition plans.

Bharrat said that Guyana is open to signing more carbon credit deals after reaching a \$750 million deal for 30% of the country's carbon credits with Hess. Of the revenue generated by the agreement, 15% is going to community projects and 85% to deal with adaptation and mitigation, he added.

"We are open to engagement with any company. We are the first country to be certified to sell credits to the airline industry. ... Hopefully we'll get some deals from that soon," he said.

Guyana is home to almost 20 million hectares of rainforests, with the potential to store around 20 billion mt of CO₂, according to government estimates.

Trinidad &
Tobago
Upstream
13 August, 2025

Guyana: Minister of Natural Resources, Hon. Vickram Bharrat:
S&P Global
30-April, 2025

The initial exploration plan will require a \$42 million investment, Trinidad's officials said. The first well could be drilled after completing seismic that is slated to start in six months, Ardill said.

The licence acreage includes seven deepwater blocks that are located northwest of ExxonMobil's prolific Stabroek block offshore Guyana.

"What we are awarding today is larger than the surface area of the country," Reuters reported Trinidad & Tobago Energy Minister Roodal Moonilal as saying.

Exploration will take place off Trinidad's east coast, in a region that spans more than 7000 square kilometers and at depths more than 2000 metres deep, AP reported, citing government officials.

At the signing ceremony, Trinidad's Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar hinted that her country may review fiscal terms to facilitate investment for its energy sector.

"Trinidad will not wait for the end of any energy era," she said. "Our principle is simple - investment goes where it is welcomed and stays where it is well treated."

However, Persad-Bissessar also added that necessary oversight and measures will be in place to ensure that safety and environmental standards are upheld.

06 - Solving the dilemma (What can CSIDS do as a region)

from an energy perspective

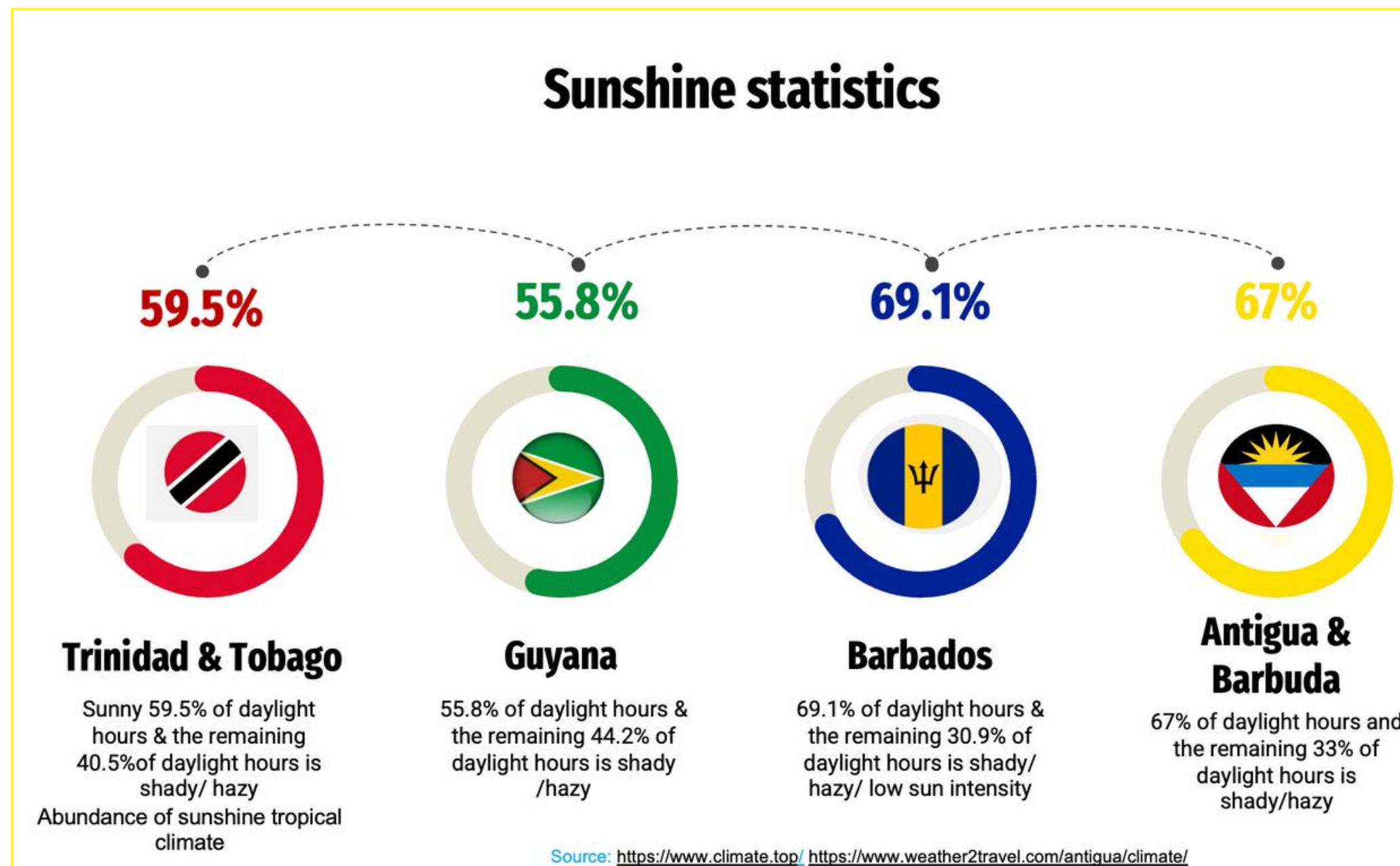
1) Make the switch to RE (Abundance of RE sources) in policy and law with international support (required)

Trinidad & Tobago

- Intention by 2030: 30% of electricity from RE sources
- Focus is on solar PV & wind (offshore & onshore energy electricity generation)
- Largest solar project in the Caribbean launched in April 2025

Guyana

- Intention is 80% by 2040 as part of low-carbon development strategy
- Solar, hydropower, biomass



2) Attract Investors through IEL

Creating this revenue stream will help build the funds needed to aid in the shift away from reliance on fossil fuels, aid in building mitigation and adaptation strategies

- Citizenship By Investment - building climate finance for governments by converting citizenship rights into direct capital for national economies

Nauru (2025) - Officially announced at COP29

- Nauru's Economic and Climate Resilience Citizenship Program finances sustainability. Leverages private capital to fund immediate, tangible climate adaptation efforts
- Contributions are allocated to key priority areas, reinforcing coastlines against erosion, transitioning to RE, scaling sustainable food production, modernizing water management and preserving ecosystems.



- Focus on Sustainability (RE projects and water management)
- Infrastructure development (Ports, housing, public services)
- Climate change adaptation: programs addressing rising sea levels

- Tourism development (Hotels & resorts)
- Infrastructure (Public facilities and transportation)
- Disaster recovery (reconstruction after hurricanes)



Dominica (1993)

- Has built more than 2,000 hurricane resistant homes funded by CBI contributions (shelter & helping countries survive natural disasters)

Grenada (2013)

- Revenue from the programme has helped to upgrade hospitals & schools

3) Interconnectivity by pooling their RE capacities



- **As a region, the Caribbean through CARICOM (The Caribbean Community)** : which is a regional intergovernmental organisation that promotes economic integration and cooperation among its 15 Member States established in 1973: **they can pool their RE capacities to forge a coordinated approach to RE development**
- Already the Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (CCREEE) which is an institution of CARICOM is tasked with the implementation hub for sustainable energy (started in 2018)
- Floating solar (could become a global centre for offshore floating solar PV generation) - Only exist in Colombia & Jamaica so far
- Wind farms (Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Bonaire & Curacao)

07- What is needed from IEL

1. There needs to be a revision of the IEL obligations which these countries are taking advantage of

- In light of climate change and new global emissions targets, it needs to reflect the diverse experiences and realities of States

2. Should be an international legal obligation to leave no country behind - CSIDS are disappearing (!)

- As it stands, various UN initiatives regarding the JT are implied and should be formally enshrined

3. Cosmopolitan justice principle of duties going beyond national borders needs to be enshrined in Treaty provisions

- While it exists with EIAs and under International Environmental Law the precautionary principle, these need to be enshrined as IEL obligations (*at present it informs energy related policy and disputes*)

4. CARICOM needs the support of IEL to be effective

- There is no real enforcer of IEL obligations, CARICOM could be the enforcer here (restorative justice- correct & prevent it from happening in the future)



Conclusion & Future outlook pathways



1) Energy Law is a dynamic force

- The view on the EU as a regional bloc to manage a complex transition, I also share that opinion as I indicated with the use of CARICOM or the regional to interconnect RE capacities

2) The need for Justice & Equity

- The focus here was on the need for IEL to recognise (applying the recognition justice principle) of acknowledging diverse experiences especially in decision-making processes
- At a cosmopolitan justice level (our responsibilities do not stop at our borders) & I believe that despite the loopholes some CSIDS have found (Carbon accounting to offset fossil fuel use) there is the need for a binding obligation of this principle. Though movement has been made via the ICJ Advisory opinion (relevant to climate action & state obligations) & the Inter-American Court Advisory Opinion 32/2025 (rights of nature & to prevent irreversible environmental damage) it is non binding and guidance.

3) There is the need for more networked participatory models at Government levels

- The need for interconnectivity via CARICOM

4) The need to redefine core concepts

- The shift to RE relative to climate change provokes a need to re-examine, redefine, reconceptualise concepts of energy sovereignty, state accountability & responsibility as well as sustainable development.

Thanks for listening

Get in touch!

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