

Chamber 'excited' by Grenada gas

Young: T&T already has MOU in place

■ Stories by Khamarie Rodriguez

THE Energy Chamber of Trinidad and Tobago says a potential natural gas deal between Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago is an 'exciting' opportunity. The chamber was responding yesterday to statements made by Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, who during the swearing-in of her Government's ministers on Saturday, announced that she intended to send Dr Roodal Moonilal, the country's new Minister of Energy, to Grenada to look into the potential exploration of its resources.

This was shortly before Persad-Bissessar declared the Dragon gas deal dead.

The cross-border deal brokered by the previous administration would have facilitated the importation of gas from Venezuela to T&T for processing from the Dragon field.

Speaking on Saturday the Prime Minister said, 'I have a surprise for you. I intend to send my Minister of Energy to Grenada because I am being told that Grenada offshore has more gas and oil than the Dragon deal. So shall we explore that... let us explore it so we will live and work together here in Caricom.' In its statement yesterday, the Energy Chamber acknowledged that gas had been discovered in the waters between Grenada and Trinidad in 2017 within the Nutmeg well.

However, it said there had been very limited information about the find since then. The chamber said that should the field be developed, it presents an excellent opportunity to the country.

'When the field was being explored, all of the support services for the programme were staged through Trinidad, with the active involvement of Energy Chamber member companies in the services sector. 'If this field can be economically developed there will be an excellent opportunity to export gas into the Trinidad gas network through existing infrastructure. The downstream petrochemical and (liquid natural gas) LNG industry in Trinidad could quickly monetise any gas resources in Grenada,' the chamber said. 'A partnership between Trinidad & Tobago and Grenada presents an exciting opportunity to develop these resources for the benefit of both economies,' it added.

Young: MOU exists

Following Persad-Bissessar's statements, former prime minister and minister of energy Stuart Young posted to his social media that Government had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the government of Grenada in 2018.

Attaching an article from Guyanese publication *Oil Now*, he said this was the 'truth and the reality'.

The article outlined the finalisation of a commercial agreement between the National Gas Company (NGC) and the Global Petroleum Group (GPG) operating in Grenada. The agreement, it said, marked 'a major development in the collaboration and energy co-operation among Caricom countries'. The relationship between the two companies was a result of an Energy Sector Development Framework Agreement signed between the governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, it stated.

It also quoted then-NGC chairman Gerry Brooks as saying that the company would utilise existing domestic infrastructure 'as well as leverage our four decades of experience and technical proficiency in pipeline construction and natural gas transportation'.

The *Express* asked Young last night to elaborate on the MOU and its current status, and how it relates to the deal between NGC and GPG. Young responded with an invitation to a media conference, which he plans to host at Balisier House, Port of Spain, at 10 a.m. today.

Dragon secrets

Speaking of his mandate to explore potential cross-border gas deals within Caricom, including Grenada, after the swearing-in ceremony at President's House, Port of Spain, on Saturday, Moonilal echoed Persad-Bissessar's sentiments, stating that the priority for the Government was to rebuild its energy sector.

He said of the Dragon gas deal, 'As you know it is off given the emergence of another administration in the United States. That was always a problem and doubtful. We warned the (previous) government about that.' In 2023, the US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) granted T&T a licence to extract gas from the Dragon field, located in Venezuelan waters.

A similar licence was granted by Venezuela last year to BP to develop a cross border field called Cocuina-Manakin. On April 8, then-prime minister Young announced that both of those licences had been revoked. Moonilal said he was not eager to pursue arrangements and commit the country to a situation where it does not have full or complete control. 'That was one case where there was a risk that we warned about. So we will have to review what they've done. At this point as you know all matters pertaining to the Dragon deal are secret and (this) morning we will unravel all secrets. The priority right now is to rebuild the energy sector and it means having discussions quickly with the government and relevant officials in Guyana and elsewhere,' he said.