

Sirju-Ramnarine: Time to harness floating solar

TRINIDAD and Tobago should explore the potential of floating solar energy systems, president of NGC Green Company Ltd Toni Sirju-Ramnarine has suggested.

Sirju-Ramnarine made the comment yesterday during the Platinum Sponsor Panel at the Energy Chamber of Trinidad and Tobago's Caribbean Sustainable Energy Conference 2025, held at the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre.

'In a country like Trinidad and Tobago, our small islands where land is limited, the opportunity for floating solar, I think, should be explored. It is already being done in Jamaica at their Mona Reservoir,' Sirju-Ramnarine said.

Sirju-Ramnarine said that the floating solar panels at the Mona Reservoir have resulted in a 31% reduction in energy consumption.

The initial National Water Commission (NWC) Mona Reservoir Floating Solar of approximately 50KW has been installed since May 2022.

The NWC has since announced plans to install a solar system in St James, Jamaica, with a capacity of around one megawatt.

Looking beyond the region, Sirju-Ramnarine said countries in Asia are already deploying floating solar on both inland and coastal bodies of water.

'So it is something I would like to see in Trinidad and Tobago, especially if you couple it with bifacial solar panels where you are getting direct sunlight and also inflected sunlight from the water,' Sirju-Ramnarine said.

'It goes up to 30% efficiency. It is a little more expensive-but it is more efficiency. I think those... should be explored' she said.

Sirju-Ramnarine also underscored the untapped potential of biogas, saying it remains underdiscussed in regional energy conversations.

Sirju-Ramnarine said last year, NGC Green was proud to co-sponsor the launch of Barbados' Rum and Sargassum Company's first bio-compressed natural gas (bio-CNG) vehiclepowered by sargassum, blackbelly sheep manure and rum distillery wastewater.

The event, named 'Test Drive Zero', took place in Barbados on September 17, 2024.

During the event, bio-CNG powered a generator that charged an electric vehicle, showcasing its potential for sustainable transportation and electricity generation.

'We have signed an agreement with them to see if there

is an opportunity to commercialise this not only for transportation needs in Barbados, but in Trinidad and Tobago too,' Sirju-Ramnarine said.

'The sargassum seaweed is something that plagues all of our Caribbean countries, so we are solving a problem of marine habitat destruction, tourism, fishermen's livelihoods, the health hazards associated with it, and also putting it into productive and commercial use,' she said.

Chief executive officer of ANSA McAL Anthony N Sabga III also weighed in, stating that the country should seriously consider the potential of geothermal energy, which he described as 'a very powerful and possible energy source'.