

Baliraj: Sustainable energy progress still trails behind

CHAIRPERSON of the Energy Chamber of Trinidad and Tobago Mala Baliraj says that while the region has made clear progress and holds tremendous potential in sustainable energy, implementation continues to lag behind ambition.

Baliraj made the statement yesterday as he delivered the opening address at the Energy Chamber's Caribbean Sustainable Energy Conference 2025, held at the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre. 'Since we met here one year ago, there have been major shifts in the global landscape for sustainable energy. We have seen some major economies cancelling or restructuring previous policies, to encourage investments into lower carbon energy sources-the United States being the most obvious case-but they are not alone, as many other countries have also either scaled back subsidies or pushed back regulatory deadlines that were driving the energy transition,' Baliraj said.

Baliraj said as a result, major global energy companies have adjusted their ambitions for the energy transition.

'In several democracies there has also been pushback against 'net zero' ambitions by political parties,' she said, 'Nevertheless, it is important to note that overall global investments into low carbon energy have continued to grow, with the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimating that total clean energy investment worldwide exceeded US\$2 trillion in 2024; this includes renewables, electric vehicles, nuclear power, grids, storage, low-emissions fuels, efficiency improvements and heat pumps. This is double the estimated US\$1 trillion going to coal, gas and oil developments,' Baliraj said.

Baliraj said in the Caribbean, there has been continued strong interest in the development of clean energy:

▣ Barbados has set ambitious targets for re - newables, outlined in the Barbados National Energy Policy (BNEP) document: to achieve 100% renewable energy and carbon neutral island-state transformational goals by 2030. ▣ Guyana is maintaining its seven central themes in its Green State Development Strategy, even as it ramps up oil production. ▣ Grenada's National Sustainable Develop - ment Plan (NSDP) is the anchor for its devel - opment agenda and priorities. ▣ Dominica is taking a lead in geothermal. ▣ Jamaica is a forerunner with wind, solar and the shift to natural gas for power generation. ▣ At home in Trinidad and Tobago, we have our first grid-scale solar project-the big - gest in the region-due to come online later this year. Along with the significant ongoing efforts for the introduction of low-carbon hy - drogen, carbon capture, low-carbon marine fuels and methane reduction activities.

'While there is clearly progress across the region and tremendous opportunities exist, the reality is that actual implementation lags behind ambition. Given the global shifts already identified, it is important that we take a hard and honest look at where we are and what we need to do to close that gap,' she said.