Hon. Melford Nicholas, Minister of Information, Communication Technologies (ICTs), Utilities and Energy, Antigua and Barbuda

Mr. Gurbuz Gonul, Director, Country Engagement and Partnerships, IRENA

H.R.H. Prince Jaime de Bourbon de Parme, Climate Envoy of the Netherlands

Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all, on behalf of the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe and on my behalf, I greet and thank IRENA (International Renewable Energy Agency) for inviting me to this side event of the Fourth International Conference on Small Island States, which is another moment of reflection for all member countries.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Like some SIDS, Sao Tome and Principe has a heavy reliance on imported fossil fuels, despite sufficient renewable energy resources that can be fully developed to meet its energy needs. In fact, the energy sector is one of the fundamental pillars for growth and the promotion of sustainable development in STP.
However, these same challenges can be considered as justification for the increasing development of its potential to face the desired energy transition, given that electricity production capacity in recent decades has been predominated by diesel generation.

Although the country is limited to government funding to reach the level of implementation of renewable energy, some mechanisms and strategies have been developed by the Government together with partners with regard to the implementation of the necessary measures to accelerate the decarbonization of the energy sector and thus fulfill the expected energy and sustainable transition, with emphasis on IRENA, but that is still insufficient.

In addition, São Tomé and Príncipe intends to actively contribute to the recommendations of the Conferences of the Parties (COP), based on the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

However, Sao Tome and Principe was chosen as the demonstration site for the development and deployment of the world's first commercial floating Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) platform, a 1.5-megawatt power plant called "Dominique". But in order for us to achieve the objectives of this project, we have to work together on the next critical step to put the "Dominique" in the ocean, whether they are private financing or development partners who care to meet climate causes, taking into account SIDS as the most vulnerable.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is moment, as it serves as a platform to provide partnerships and facilitate support for decarbonization in island States and overcome human, technical and financial capacity limitations, and to seize existing opportunities to
promote innovative, integrated and inclusive solutions for a green and blue transition in a sustainable way.

I believe that these actions are necessary to facilitate fair, equitable and accessible financing mechanisms, in a gender-balanced approach, with a view to strengthening climate resilience.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

São Tomé and Príncipe always counts on the collaboration of IRENA and others, in various aspects, especially in applications of Renewable Energies and Technological Solutions, Financing, Training and Studies. We are confident that this is the right way to be aligned with the common gain for global environmental sustainability, particularly for the future of the energy transition at the level of SIDS.

I am also pleased to say that my presence here is precisely to demonstrate that my government, with less than 2 years of governance, is actively integrating projects related to renewable energies and energy efficiency. In the field of renewable energies, we are promoting investments in solar thermal, solar photovoltaic production at the level of distributed generation and ocean generation, but specifically in Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion. And in Energy Efficiency we are focusing on clean cooking and electric mobility. And regarding them, we already have the strategies and plans prepared for their implementation, but only the financing is missing to be materialized.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

While we are hopeful that finance institutions and development banks will join us in responding to our request for climate finance, we are moving forward with our loyal partners. We, the SIDS, know for sure that the ocean is our last and most abundant resource that can "chart the path to resilient
prosperity" and "revitalize the economies of SIDS for accelerated and sustainable growth", which is the theme of this Conference, in several aspects, but I highlight here the part that concerns renewable energies.

Before concluding, I would like to thank our good friends and leaders of the financial institutions and development banks responsible for supporting our sustainable development for a great deal of attention, in order to support the financing of the fight against climate change, of the SIDS.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the wishes of thanks and the commitment of IRENA and others present here to strengthen international cooperation in the field of energy and climate with Sao Tome and Principe.

"The transition to renewables is not just a choice, it's a necessity for a sustainable future."