

Opening of the 4th CIEMADeS International Conference – Electrical Interconnection of the Caribbean: Technical, Environmental and Economic Aspects

Welcome to the 4th CIEMADeS International Conference!

As an organization born within the realm of the pursuit of knowledge, CIEMADeS is especially committed to promote research to markets and knowledge transfer.

We think that this exchange is particularly relevant for challenging issues like the one we are about to explore. Issues in which the scientific community can help bridge the gaps created by the socioeconomic push of our growing society and the demands for balance that nature will always claim.

We are excited to be able to contribute, along with our neighboring countries and fellow organizations gathered here today for this conference, to the discussion of this important project, that we all seem to agree will set the foundation for future prosperity within our Region.

This is not a small task, that's ahead of us... It requires technical expertise. It requires vision for the future, applied in every single decision, day by day... It requires patience, for not everything is going to move at 'warp speed' as we would prefer. It requires respect, not only for our cultures and specific conditions, but for our environment and the legacy of biodiversity that we will pass on to our children.

It requires organization, because we all know this is a very complex issue, with many angles to consider. And we want to get it right, preferably the first time, with the minimum amount of trials. We want to get it right the first time because there's a lot of money involved too, so 'trial and error', even though we know that it will inevitably try to show up, is not an option and certainly would not be a 'nice gesture' to our investment community...

But most of all it requires **will**. The will to overcome the obstacles, to consider an opposing view, to accept that **we do not know everything!** Even though we may have ten titles to show the world!

What CIEMADeS has tried to do with the sessions in which you are about to engage today and tomorrow, and also on Saturday, is to take you along in a sort of 'common ground' trip:

We begin by analyzing where we stand and creating a picture of what the issues are, for project developers, for utilities, for the Caribbean economic community and for the

environment and scientific community, and to discuss why interconnection is so important.

We will then move on to more specific considerations: the technical, environmental and economic aspects that this process asks to be considered.

Since other regions have gone this way before, we will present case studies in which all these technical, environmental and economic considerations have been reviewed and acted upon, and how they did it.

We will then move on to what's going on at the Caribbean level and focus on particular projects under development that may eventually interconnect.

And finally we will all come back to discuss the issues at hand and think! We will think of ways in which we can achieve this long range planning process and get an A grade, but not for academic achievement, not for beating the experts at their game, not for our technical or political know-how, but for doing the right thing for our communities. We must get an A+ grade for collaboration and perspective. There's too much at stake for our communities. There's too much at stake for our future.

Not a single time have I spelled the word energy... I prefer to focus on other E words, like enthusiasm and engagement.

May you find in this 4th CIEMADeS Conference the inspiration, the ideas and the will to move this challenging agenda forward: Together.

WELCOME!

Ada Torres-Ramírez welcome remarks at the Opening of the 4th CIEMADeS International Conference, Electrical Interconnection of the Caribbean: Technical, Environmental and Economic Aspects