United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)
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Statement by
Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
on the occasion of The Climate Institute and Carbon War Room event
"Vision 20/30 – Independence of Small Islands from Fossil Fuels"

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear friends,

We are here today due to one fundamental truth: the dependency that islands have had on fossil fuels over the past 20 to 50 years is no longer necessary. In fact, it has become one of the most blatant anachronisms of our time that the cost of importing fossil fuels has been steadily rising as a percentage of GNI since 2005, the exact period during which the market price of wind and solar has been decreasing. The current island dependency on fossil fuel is nothing less than anti-historical.

I congratulate the islands for the Barbados Declaration with clear targets on energy access, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. I also congratulate the islands for the SIDS Dock, which seeks to be an effective funding mechanism for transformation of the islands. Today's announcement of the Carbon War Room must be seen in the context of the Barbados Declaration and the SIDS Dock and is a first very concrete step in the right direction.

I am sure that the Carbon War Room's interest in the islands has nothing to do with Richard Branson's love of travel to the most gorgeous places on Earth, nor with Jose Maria's SCUBA diving. And I am also sure that they have taken this on as a challenge they will meet. But just to make sure that they don't get bored, I would like to up the ante on their plans for transforming the islands. So here is my challenge: The SIDS will be celebrating their third global conference on sustainable development in 2014. I challenge the Carbon War Room to attend that global conference and to report by then how ten islands are already generating electricity from renewables instead of fossil fuel.

Thank you.

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