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For Immediate Release.

**Hon. Melford Nicholas elected as Vice President of Latin America and the
Caribbean at the 16th IRENA Assembly as he Advances Energy Transition
Priorities**



Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates | 11 January 2026 — Hon. Melford Nicholas, Minister responsible for Energy, has been elected as Vice President representing

Latin America and the Caribbean at the 16th session of the IRENA Assembly Bureau in Abu Dhabi.

In this capacity, he met with Mr. Francesco La Camera, Director-General of IRENA, to discuss Antigua and Barbuda's priorities and practical pathways for accelerating implementation across Small Island Developing States (SIDS), including investment mobilization and partnership delivery.

At the opening of the Assembly, Minister Nicholas delivered Antigua and Barbuda's national statement, underscoring key priorities for a resilient and affordable renewable energy transition, which include:

- Reducing vulnerability to volatile fossil-fuel imports, noting that fuel and related costs account for an estimated 67% of utility earnings.
- Accelerating deployment of solar and wind, supported by phased and hybrid approaches that enable a just transition and manage system risks.
- Strengthening and climate-proofing the grid and energy infrastructure against hurricanes and other climate impacts.
- Expanding access to concessional finance and urging international partners to better reflect the special circumstances of SIDS and vulnerable middle-income states.
- Advancing risk-mitigation solutions, including insurance and reinsurance mechanisms for renewable energy facilities in SIDS.
- Recognizing partnerships that deliver results, including UAE support for a hybrid solar plant on Barbuda, alongside support from the United Kingdom, New Zealand and the CARICOM Development Fund.
- Reinforcing regional cooperation through institutions such as the Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (CCREEE) to support pooled procurement, training and financing.

Later during the Assembly, Minister Nicholas chaired a ministerial-level session, reinforcing Antigua and Barbuda's leadership role within IRENA and its commitment to building finance-ready pipelines that deliver resilient, affordable renewable energy outcomes.

The 16th Session of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) Assembly and related meetings is being held from 10th – 12th January 2026.



Hon. Nicholas is accompanied by members of Antigua and Barbuda's delegation, including H.E. Ruleta Camacho Thomas, Climate Change Ambassador; H.E. Theon Ali, Ambassador; H.E. Brian Challenger, Adviser to the Hon. Minister; and Ms. Karen Burton, Director of Operations & Energy, Ministry of Information, Communication Technologies, Public Utilities and Energy.

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