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International Solar Alliance and Invest India hosted a Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing Workshop in Mauritius for the outreach of the SolarX Grand Challenge programme

17 March 2023 | Port Louis, Mauritius: The International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Invest India in collaboration with the Economic Development Board (EDB), Mauritius organised a Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing Workshop for startups and small business entrepreneurs at the High Commission of India, Mauritius to encourage entrepreneurship in solar and create awareness about ISA's SolarX Grand Challenge programme. The session highlighted important aspects of the solar energy ecosystem, key information on the criticality of entrepreneurship in solar and climate change, the 'problem statements' that are necessary to solve towards finding a sustainable pathway, and useful knowledge that local entrepreneurs may utilise.

Dr Ajay Mathur, Director General, International Solar Alliance, said, "The SolarX Grand Challenge is part of our two-pronged strategy to ease solar deployment in Africa. The first edition of SolarX will focus on the African region to attract investments in the solar energy sector, reduce the gap between energy demand and supply, and promote a robust start-up ecosystem in Africa. "With an estimated potential of 7,900 GW of solar in Africa, and only 4 African nations having a start-up ecosystem, there is a yawning gap between what is needed and what is available. African start-ups attracted less than 1% of global venture investments. With SolarX, we aim to change this scenario. This initiative will also help implement the roadmap to mobilise USD1 trillion for solar till 2030."

While congratulating Invest India, EDB and ISA for this very timely and pertinent event during his keynote address, **Mr Vimarsh Aryan, Deputy High Commissioner of India to Mauritius,** also highlighted key aspects of the strength and diversity of the bilateral relationship between India and Mauritius. He also emphasised the enormous opportunities and potential that exist in the renewable energy sector, especially solar and the pivotal role that India, Mauritius and African countries can jointly play in tapping this enormous potential for the benefit of mankind. He urged all participants to actively participate in the workshop and benefit from the SolarX Grand Challenge. He further added that "India remains committed to supporting partner countries, especially from the Global South, by sharing its experiences and expertise in line with the Indian ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam."

Dr, Drishtysingh Ramdenee, Director, Economic Development Board (EDB), thanked Invest India, the International Solar Alliance and Waipa for the organisation of this unique challenge and for their consideration of Mauritius for the capacity building workshop. Dr Ramdenee provided an overview of Mauritius' conducive ecosystem incepted by Government to achieve the 60% renewable energy in the electricity mix by 2030. This ecosystem caters for different categories of entrepreneurs ranging from facility scale R.E generation to start ups. He highlighted the Mauritius advantages for start-ups which encompasses the innovator's permit allowing for a foreign citizens developing an innovative project to work and live in Mauritius, the regulatory sandbox license, the Innovation Property Box Scheme providing an 8 years tax holiday for income derived from intellectual property assets which are developed in



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Mauritius, the national incubator scheme encouraging the creation of innovative businesses as well as fiscal incentives such as double deduction and accelerated depreciation applicable to start-ups.

Moreover, the unique example of Skysails, a German technology, using high altitude winds through a parachute system to produce base load electricity was portrayed. The promoter of this technology preferred Mauritius as a test base owing to its favourable business climate coupled with the unique opportunity of on grid testing of the technology. Upon conclusive testing, this technology would be deployed in Africa, insular island states and globally. Dr Ramdenee concluded his intervention by outlying the importance of public private partnership in the achievement of Government's R.E targets.

Mrs Z.Guness-Goolbar, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, Mauritius welcomed the initiative of Invest India and International Solar Alliance. She outlined the various efforts put forward by the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities during the past few years to meet Government's objective of attaining 60% of renewables in the electricity mix by 2030 as well as the phasing out of coal by the same time frame. Furthermore, Mrs Guness-Goolbar reiterated Government's commitment in encouraging the participation of different stakeholders in the green energy transition journey. To this effect, various schemes have been set up for commercial and industrial users, real estate developers and households. Moreover, these schemes are accompanied by preferential loans and attractive fiscal incentives.

On innovation in this sector, Mrs Guness-Goolbar pointed out that the Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency has launched the third round of application for the on grid testing of innovative R.E technologies under the National Scheme for Emerging Project Concepts Based on Renewable Energy Technologies (NSEPCRET). This scheme provides for innovative technologies to be tried on the national grid with a guaranteed price of purchase. The scheme is open for an initial installed capacity of 2MW with the possibility of ramping up to 10MW upon conclusive testing. The PS concluded her intervention by inviting Mauritius entrepreneurs to leverage on the various opportunities in the sector and maximize on the openings provided by initiative such as the Solar X grand challenge to expand their operations in the region."

About International Solar Alliance

The International Solar Alliance is an international organisation with 114 Member and Signatory countries. It works with governments to improve energy access and security worldwide and promote solar power as a sustainable transition to a carbon-neutral future. ISA's mission is to unlock US\$ 1 trillion of investments in solar by 2030 while reducing the cost of the technology and its financing. It promotes the use of solar energy in the Agriculture, Health, Transport and Power Generation sectors. ISA member countries are driving change by enacting policies and regulations, sharing best practices, agreeing on common standards, and mobilising investments. Through this work, ISA has identified and designed and tested new business models for solar projects; supported governments to make their energy legislation and policies solar-friendly through Ease of Doing Solar analytics and advisory; pooled demand for solar technology from different countries; and drove down costs; improved access to finance by reducing the risks and



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making the sector more attractive to private investment; increased access to solar training, data and insights for solar engineers and energy policymakers. With the signing and ratifying the ISA Framework Agreement by 15 countries on 6 December 2017, ISA became the first international intergovernmental organisation to be headquartered in India. ISA is partnering with multilateral development banks (MDBs), development financial institutions (DFIs), private and public sector organisations, civil society, and other international institutions to deploy cost-effective and transformational solutions through solar energy, especially in the least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). More information at <https://isolaralliance.org/> | Twitter | Facebook | Linked In

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