SMART VILLAGES
New thinking for off-grid communities worldwide

XX-XII-MCMLXXIV
ACADEMIA DE CIENCIAS
DE LA REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

PRESS RELEASE

16 November 2016

International Workshop highlights key role of sustainable energy in rural development and climatic resilience of off-grid communities in Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico

PUNTA CANA, NOVEMBER 16, 2016: At an international workshop organised by the Smart Villages Initiative and the Academy of Sciences of the Dominican Republic delegates will discuss how renewable energy can play a major role in both rural development and enhancing the climatic resilience of off-grid communities in Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico. Opened by Vice Minister Ernesto Villa of the Ministry of Energy and Mines, the event takes place from 16 to 18 November in Punta Cana, the Dominican Republic.

According to Dr. Bernie Jones, Co-Leader of the Smart Village Initiative: “Bringing sustainable energy to off grid villages, and more importantly helping communities to make innovative and productive use of that energy, are major opportunities for driving rural development worldwide. The combination of economic development and harnessing technology to provide key services, such as health, banking and education, helps break down the inequality between urban and rural populations. Importantly for this region, the ability of such decentralised rural infrastructure and provision of services to make communities much more resilient to natural disasters and other shocks, should make the concept an even higher priority for rural leadership, businesses, government and NGOs. This forum aims to investigate the experience and opportunities in the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico, by facilitating the analysis and exchange of knowledge between the public sector, non-governmental organisations and the private sector. The Smart Villages Initiative is also able to contribute the experience and best-practice from our engagement in other regions worldwide, while the Academy has added its extensive local knowledge and network contacts.”

Workshop topics include: renewable energy and energy efficiency for rural economic development and for improving social services (health and education); access to energy for risk management against natural disasters; renewable energy to increase local energy security; opportunities and challenges for the private sector in the rural electrification sector; and regulatory framework for rural electrification.

International organisations participating include the United Nations Development Programme; the World Bank; GIZ and the University of California, Berkeley. From the region the Latin American Energy Organisation (OLADE); the Inter-American Network of Academies of Sciences (INAS); the Energy Network Foundation; the Caribbean Association of Sustainable Energy Managers; the Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Efficiency (CCREEE), Barbados; the Hinterland Electrification Company, Guyana; Acciona Microenergia, Mexico; the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the Renewable Energy Producers, Guatemala.

Dominican Republic representatives include the National Energy Commission (CNE); the Ministry for Education, Focal Point Energy IANAS-ACRD; Program de Pequeños Subsidios; Universidad APEC UNAPEC); Electric Consortium; Diagnostic Centre for Advanced Medicine and Telemedicine (CEDMAT) and Latino Academia Latino Americana Superior.

A report and policy brief on the workshop will be published on the website www.e4sv.org.

Smart Villages Contact Information

Richard Hayhurst, Communications Director
e: richard@e4sv.org
t: +44 7711 821527

Notes to editors

Smart Villages (www.e4sv.org) is an initiative that aims to explore the opportunities and challenges for rural energy access for off-grid communities in developing countries. It is funded by the Cambridge Malaysian Education and Development Trust and the Templeton World Charity Foundation, with a team based at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford in the United Kingdom.

The Academy of Sciences of the Dominican Republic, ACRD, was founded on December 20, 1974, and incorporated by Executive Decree No. 1097 on June 8, 1975. It is a scientific, non-partisan, non-governmental and non-profit organization dedicated to promoting scientific research and advances, technological innovation and knowledge to promote sustainable social and economic development of the Dominican Republic. Its membership consists of scientists specialized in different branches of knowledge, with high human, moral and ethical standards.