

## TRANSFORMING NATIONAL ENERGY SYSTEMS AND ECONOMIES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GLOBAL RENEWABLE ENERGY CHAMPIONS

REN21 launched the **Renewable Energy Champions Initiative** at the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the Caribbean Renewable Energy Forum (CREF) organised in Miami, USA 7-9 May 2025.

**REN21's Renewable Energy Champions Initiative** connects national level decision makers with a distinguished network of former ministers and senior officials from the Global South who have already revolutionised the energy system in their own countries. These changemakers have experienced what it takes to shift to renewables, they have overcome challenges and achieved remarkable results in their countries. They are a strategic partner to accelerate the energy transition.

### WHAT DO THE RENEWABLE ENERGY CHAMPIONS BRING?

The Renewable Energy Champions provide peer-to-peer guidance to help national energy, economy, and finance decision makers navigate complex energy transitions with confidence. They build strategic connections that foster political will and partnership necessary for the energy transition by leveraging energy diplomacy and key political moments to engage governments in bilateral meetings, closed-door sessions and dialogues. Their goal is to support countries in accelerating renewable energy pathways that benefit society and strengthen economies. To do so, the Renewable Energy Champions bring:

- **Compelling narratives** about the **socio-economic case for renewables** to inspire, convince and address misconceptions
- **Proven track records** of leaders who have already transformed their national energy systems
- **Strategic connections** with an extensive network of international organisations, industry leaders, and financial institutions, experts and civil society
- **Confidence in renewables** necessary to develop political will and strategic partnerships essential for success
- **Access to resources** like technical expertise, financing solutions, and capacity-building opportunities

### THE CHAMPIONS

# RENEWABLE ENERGY CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE

**James Fletcher | Former Minister for Public Service, Information, Broadcasting, Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology, Saint Lucia**

Modernised Saint Lucia's entire energy sector by implementing groundbreaking legislation and regulatory policies, establishing international partnerships, attracting major investment, developing renewable energy projects and fostering inclusive stakeholder engagement.

**Ramón Méndez Galain | Former Energy Secretary, Uruguay**

Transformed Uruguay's power sector to **98% renewables** - of which 50% is a mix of wind, solar PV and biomass, **halved** generation costs while building resilience against market volatility, created **50,000 jobs** (3% of workforce), and secured electricity access for nearly 100% of Uruguayan households.

**Seleshi Bekele Awulachew | Former Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Ethiopia**

Provided transformational leadership in Ethiopia's energy sector, overseeing the delivery of **7,270 MW of hydropower capacity**, including the **Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)**—the largest hydropower project in Africa. Expanded **renewable-based grid access by an average of 120,000 households per year over five years**, while also advancing **off-grid renewable solutions** that brought electricity to **12 rural towns**. Strengthened **regional power interconnections across three East African countries**, enabling the substitution of expensive, carbon-intensive generation with renewable electricity and supporting regional energy security and economic integration.

Currently featuring renewable energy champions from Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa, the initiative is rapidly expanding to include select visionary leaders representing diverse regions across the Global South.

## GET IN TOUCH

Contact REN21 today to connect with the Renewable Energy Champions: [secretariat@ren21.net](mailto:secretariat@ren21.net)

## ABOUT REN21

REN21 is the global multi-stakeholder network of governments, industry, NGOs, science and academia that enables the necessary changes to build the renewable-based economy for prosperous lives and societies.

Our vision is a world where renewable energy is the foundation for strong, equitable and resilient economies. Renewables are the undeniable choice for people, nature and prosperity.

# RENEWABLE ENERGY CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE

Founded in 2004, we've built a powerful and diverse network of 119 institutions and a community of more than 4,000 players, from the energy ecosystem and other key sectors. Our inclusive governance structure and collaborative culture enable us to build on the insights and intelligence of our global community to drive the solutions needed for economic prosperity and societal well-being.