

Energy Integration in The Americas: A Perspective from The Caribbean

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Abstract

This paper reviews the prospects, opportunities, challenges and limitations which affect the countries of the Caribbean as integration in energy matters is effected. The impact of this aspect of modernisation is seen as differing in that the importers and the exporters of the region will be affected in significantly different ways. The paper notes that Venezuela, which is the largest exporter of petroleum in the Americas, is the focus of the hemispheric efforts at energy integration. Many of the opportunities for the development of both the human and institutional resources existing in the countries around the Caribbean sea are outlined. Energy Security as well as the efficiency of the use of both capital and energy are three of the critical issues highlighted in the paper. In recognition of the need to have stronger and more viable regional structures, the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), with headquarters in Port of Spain, Trinidad has been formally launched so as to include not only the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) with its base of mainly islands inhabited by English-speaking peoples, but the larger islands of the northern West Indies, Cuba and Hispaniola, as well as Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela. For the purpose of this paper, some adjustment to those two categories will be made, recognising as do all energy people worldwide that it is more common to group countries into the basic categories of either Importers and Exporters, or Consumers and Producers. The paper concludes that the further development of the region will probably be best enhanced if the ACS can effect the integration and coordination of policies and strategies which recognise the importance of energy, and particularly energy security, to all the countries of the Western Hemisphere.