



# Making the case for sustainable development in T&T

## Part 2



Building a better  
working world

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In this consecutive three-part series, we will give you some insights to hopefully generate some 'food for thought' as we explore and discuss (1) the science and trends of climate change, (2) the traditional definition of 'development' in our societies and (3) gaining perspective on solutions for the Caribbean.

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**I**ndustrialization in the 1970s drove the greatest growth for developed countries that had the liberty of exploitation of fossils to fuel their development. After causing most of the ills affecting our climate today, these same countries have the privilege and capability to invest in alternative sources of energy and mechanisms to facilitate their decarbonization. But now as climate change accelerates, with centuries of disadvantage, how can the developing world be expected to do the same so quickly?

There is a fear that sustainability opposes development. However, sustainability doesn't provide a risk to our economy; it presents an opportunity to secure our ability to continue to develop and to do so more profitably.

The traditional definition simplifies development by perceiving it as global modernization exhibited by industrialized, developed countries.

Sustainable development can be defined as meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their needs. At the core are 3 pillars: environment, society, economy. By connecting social, economic, and ecological benefits, sustainable development encourages a more holistic perspective of development.

Development has become almost synonymous with consumption and extraction, which has been driven by overuse of nonrenewable resources and as a result, our "development" is directly

correlated to the destruction of our planet.

Our natural resources provide more than enough to serve our needs, but the

management of our resources is short sighted and unsustainable.

Due to size, economic status and geography small island developing states (SIDS) like T&T are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

In ratifying the world's most recent climate agreement – The Paris Agreement – T&T has committed to reducing our emissions by 15% by 2030 from business as usual. As an oil and gas nation, T&T faces many challenges in its role of climate action.

With approximately 50 years left of oil and gas, in global reserves – what does this mean for our oil and gas economy? Hydrocarbons are a major area of our continued development, but a low carbon economy doesn't have to be one without hydrocarbons, but one that can diversify its energy sources to ensure long term energy security for our country.

Sustainability is about finding an equilibrium where we can continue to enjoy these pleasures for longer and use earth resources more efficiently. We must find a way to balance economic productivity and climate mitigation ambition to facilitate a just transition to a low carbon economy.







**B**y re-thinking development, we give ourselves a chance to reduce global emissions, adapt to the damages already occurring and transition to a low carbon economy. We are forced to consider the bigger picture, the way we live our lives, and the quality of life we hope to continue living.

We often look to the “developed” world for solutions and strive for their level of modernization and excess. In trying to mirror what others have done, we overlook the opportunities present for us right here on our soils. From our people to culture and resources, the Caribbean is a unique hub bursting with potential. Development with people, planet and profit at the core is not only an opportunity for us, but an imperative to our progress and economic security. What can T&T look like if we reimagined what development means for us?

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