

For Immediate Release

## NEWS RELEASE

### OECS partners with Island Innovation to host 1st Virtual Island Summit

**3 October 2019, Islands, Worldwide** — The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is proud to partner with Island Innovation as the lead sponsor of the first ever [Virtual Island Summit](#) from October 6-11th 2019. The online event will bring together experts from around the world to share information on sustainable practices and some of the most pressing issues for island communities worldwide.

Topics for the conference are wide ranging, with a view to facilitate information sharing and find commonalities across diverse island communities. Panels will address sustainable development, geopolitics, cultural preservation, journalism, communications and other topics pertinent to all island communities.

The Virtual Island Summit also prides itself on being ‘zero carbon’, meaning all sessions will be hosted online from the comfort of your own home or office, marking the first time that an island summit has been done remotely.

Through this partnership, the OECS seeks to strengthen its global network and contribute to the wider discussion of resilience amongst island states. The summit also provides an opportunity to learn from other activities worldwide that can potentially be implemented in OECS Member States.

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Director General of the OECS, **H.E. Dr. Didacus Jules**, fully embraced the Virtual Island initiative, stating:

“The time for collective action as island states, and especially small island developing states, is now.”

“For many of us, the devastating effects of climate change and extreme weather events, such as “turbocharged” hurricanes and sea level rise, are already a reality that is imposing socio-economic challenges for our people and communities.”

“This virtual summit reminds us that we are not facing these challenges alone. The diversity in participating island nations and speakers from around the world also provides a unique opportunity to create a global digital alliance of island communities geared towards innovative solutions for our shared vulnerabilities.”

Former Prime Minister of Aruba, **the Rt. Hon. Mike Eman**, who is also speaking at the summit, greeted the launch with enthusiasm saying:

"The Virtual Island Summit is bringing together island communities from around the world with a shared purpose of making their islands more sustainable, more prosperous and securing well-being for all of their citizens."

"This is a fantastic opportunity to exchange information between islands facing similar challenges and opportunities, and I am looking forward to sharing my own experiences and learning from all attending."

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Antigua and Barbuda, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Saint Martin

Confirmed speakers include former Australian Senator **Christine Milne** from Tasmania, who was the second woman to lead an Australian political party; **Godfrey Baldacchino**, a world-renowned academic in Island Studies at the University of Malta; **James Stockan**, leader of the Orkney Islands Council; **Laura Watts**, author of “Energy at the End of the World: an Orkney Islands Saga”; **Queen Quet**, Chiefess of the Gullah/Geechee Nation; and from the OECS Commission **Judith Ephraim**, OECS Sustainable Energy Coordinator and **Crispin D’Auvergne**, OECS Climate Change Coordinator.

Other speakers hail from island nations as diverse as Fiji, Jamaica, Greenland, Madagascar, the Isle of Man, Mauritius, Taiwan, Martinique, Tierra del Fuego, Cape Verde and Japan.

Founder of the Island Innovation, **James Ellsmoor**, said:

“The Virtual Island Summit will recreate an in-person conference experience to the extent possible, maximising opportunities to exchange information between attendees. Not only that, but we are avoiding greenhouse gas emissions by moving to an online platform – demonstrating how technology can now be used to eliminate the need for much business travel.”

The summit is completely free to the public and organisers already expect over 5,000 registered guests.

#### **About the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States:**

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is an international organisation dedicated to economic harmonisation and integration, protection of human and legal rights, and the encouragement of good governance among independent and non-independent countries in the Eastern Caribbean comprising Antigua and Barbuda, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Martinique and Guadeloupe.

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**About Island Innovation:**

Island Innovation is an organisation that works with diverse rural and island communities around the world to develop solutions for sustainable development and prosperity. Island Innovation uses its global network to find innovative answers through modern technology and sharing good practice, building digital bridges between far-flung islands.

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**For further information, images or to set up an interview with any of the speakers or organisers please contact James Ellsmoor at:**

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**More information and registration:** [www.islandinnovation.co/summit](http://www.islandinnovation.co/summit)

**Conference video:** <https://youtu.be/jvetlQopfBs>

**More photos and information:** [www.bit.ly/islandpresskit](http://www.bit.ly/islandpresskit)



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