Our Oceans, Our Islands, Our Future

Demonstrating the leadership of islands united in strong partnerships implementing SDG 14
at the UN Oceans Conference, New York, 5 to 9 June 2017

“The voyage to a resilient and sustainable future is not one that is taken alone, but by a movement of cities, states, islands and countries working together to shape the future we want.” —H.E. TOMMY E. REMENGESAU JR., PRESIDENT OF PALAU

With the leadership of H.E. Tommy E. Remengesau Jr., President of Palau, H.E. Vincent Meriton, Vice-President of Seychelles, The Hon. Kedrick Pickering, Deputy Premier of the British Virgin Islands, Ambassador Spencer Thomas of Grenada alongside Global Island Partnership members and friends the Partnership coordinated a series of events that demonstrated the leadership of islands united in strong partnerships to implement Sustainable Development Goal 14 and support strong outcomes for the UN Oceans Conference held in New York at the United Nations.

OUTCOMES

Accelerating Implementation

- The impact of sustainable island commitments contribution to implementation of SDG 14 and global goals were showcased including Palau National Marine Sanctuary, Micronesia Challenge, Caribbean Challenge Initiative, Seychelles Blue Economy Vision, Aloha+ Challenge and the BEST Challenge

- Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Fiji shared their commitment as large ocean states to building resilience through the GLISPA Island Resilience Initiative which aims to strengthen implementation of existing island and ocean commitments through helping to build and strengthen public-private partnerships with the support of GEF Small Grants Programme implemented by UNDP, Hawai’i Green Growth and Pacific Island Development Forum working together through the Global Island Partnership

- Small scale fisheries working group was launched by President Remengesau at the Rare event “The Forgotten Fisheries” and the Fiji Minister of Fisheries committed to join

New Membership

- Island leaders and ocean champions were inspired to join our movement of people willing to take action to build island and ocean resilience globally by joining the Global Island Partnership. Responding to the call, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) has become a GLISPA Member and others islands and island oriented organisations have expressed interest at high political levels in being more engaged. This includes Fiji’s Environment Minister committing to join the Partnership’s small scale fisheries working group

- New members of the Global Island Partnership were recognized including: H.E. Hilda Heine, President of the Republic of Marshall Islands represented by The Hon. John Silk Minister for Foreign Affairs, The Hon. Perla Cecilia Tun Pech the Mayor of Cozumel, Mr. Ted Waitt of the Waitt Foundation & Waitt Institute and Mr. Dieter Paulmann Founder & Chairman of Okeanos - Foundation for the Sea as well as Conservation International, PACIFICO Foundation and Seasteading Institute

Refer to the GLISPA Impact Dashboard for more information about the impact of the Partnership in building island resilience. https://impact.glispa.org/
Island leaders and ocean champions working together through strong, interconnected partnerships to implement SDG 14 came together during this high level reception to showcase partnerships, commitments and capacity building efforts supporting the sustainable development of oceans and seas, and to help build a movement of people willing to take action for ocean resilience globally.

Speaking on behalf of the Leaders of the Global Island Partnership, President Remengesau of Palau highlighted how island leaders are launching and implementing commitments through the Partnership with “each commitment mobilizing the momentum, locally and globally, needed to define our own path to a sustainable future.”

He further highlighted how the diverse membership of the Partnership helps to “develop and share
"Our Oceans, Our Islands, Our Future" High Level Side Event continued

solutions” to support implementation and then invited guests as “island and ocean champions to unite and join our Global Island Partnership to build island and ocean resilience globally.”

President Remengesau was joined by Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High-Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and Mr. Yōhei Sasakawa, Chairman of the Nippon Foundation. Guests included Nippon Fellowship Alumni alongside high level delegates of the UN Oceans Conference including the Prime Minister of Fiji, President of Nauru and President of the General Assembly.

The reception was co-hosted by the Leaders of the Global Island Partnership with the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Nippon Foundation, Waitt Foundation, Waitt Institute, National Geographic Pristine Seas, UN-OHRLLS, and Okeanos - Foundation for the Sea.

Please see IISD Coverage of the “Our Oceans, Our Islands, Our Future” Reception coverage here: http://enb.iisd.org/oceans/sdg14conference/glispa/
The Leaders of the Global Island Partnership came together in a rare opportunity to share concrete examples of what is working in implementation of SDG 14 and to demonstrate the leadership of islands united in strong partnerships in mobilizing action toward SDGs: the resilience sail plan for the planet.

Connected through the Global Island Partnership these leaders have been at the forefront of demonstrating the value of collaboration, by reaching across ocean regions to form effective partnerships around climate change, sustainability, and conservation. The interconnectedness of marine and island problems—and solutions—only underscores the importance of these partnerships.
H.E. Tommy E. Remengesau Jr., President of Palau highlighted that “We are seven leaders from remote parts of the world, but we stand here today united by one Ocean and one partnership.” He highlighted Palau’s contribution to SDG implementation through the Palau National Marine Sanctuary that will encompass 80% of Palau’s EEZ with 20% reserved for traditional fishing & a reformed domestic fishing fleet to serve Palau’s domestic and tourism needs to be established by 2020 as well as the Micronesia Challenge and Palau Shark Sanctuary. “We cannot be heard if we are just one, we can be heard if we are in Partnership.”

H.E. Vincent Meriton, Vice-President of Seychelles, shared the progress Seychelles has made in moving forward it’s Blue Economy Vision from leveraging US$20 million through the world’s first debt-for-adaptation-swap that contributed to capitalising an endowment of US$6.6 million to establishing the Seychelles Conservation & Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT) that will competitively grant at least US$750,000 per annum to support the blue economy among other initiatives. “We have been inspired by our fellow Global Island Partnership Leaders and the solutions they have put in place.”

The Hon. John M. Silk, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of the Marshall Islands, shared a range of initiatives from an innovative “Blue Fee that sets aside 3% of foreign fishing license fees” alongside efforts to ban the use of styrofoam and plastic bags, strengthening waste and sewage infrastructure, pursuit of the Micronesia Challenge and “Reimaanlok” a step by step process of engaging atoll communities in conservation. He highlighted that “we are particularly pleased to create stronger and more effective partnerships through the Global Island Partnership and the Island Resilience Initiative.”

Dr. The Hon. Kedrick Pickering, Deputy Premier of the British Virgin Islands, spoke about the diversity of leaders and members in the Partnership highlighted that “our uniquenesses allow us to have results for all our leaders.” He also shared how initiatives such as the Caribbean Challenge Initiative are contributing to SDG 14. He emphasized that “when we (islands) sing with one voice, we are much more effective.”

Dr. Spencer Thomas, Ambassador - Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Grenada, further highlighted progress of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative as well as the need for a focus on technology for islands.

The Hon. Perla Cecilia Tun Pech, Mayor of Cozumel, one of the newest members of Global Island Partnership and a champion of resilience, shared “We are not here to complain. We are working. We are making an effort. We can double this effort if we can join our voices together and help other islands to have a much more stable future.” She also stressed that “local government needs to be a leader in implementing the SDGs.”
Former President of Iceland, Olafur Ragnar Grimsson during Q&A session commented on the huge ocean space islands have and how the narrative about the size and strength of islands is changing. “We need to represent visually the enormous sovereign control that large ocean states have in the future of the planet.”

‘Aulani Wilhelm of Conservation International - one of GLISPA’s newest members, highlighted issues they see as important for islands.

Mayor Tun Pech shares how Cozumel is driving forward island resilience.

“"Our Oceans, Our Islands, Our Future” High Level Side Event, continued

“"Our Oceans, Our Islands, Our Future” Exhibition, 5 to 9 June UN Headquarters, Curated by Tonya A. Meyrick

Demonstrating the power of island leaders united in strong partnerships to implement SDG 14 and global goals.
This event presented how three Pacific islands - Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Fiji - are building capacity for public-private partnerships to implement the SDGs through the **GLISPA Island Resilience Initiative**. In opening the event, President Remengesau of Palau highlighted the fortitude of islanders and the opportunity for greater collaboration through the Initiative in strengthening partnerships. Speakers then provided a variety of viewpoints on their own island resilience efforts:

- **The Hon. Mike Halfety, Minister of Transportation for the Republic of the Marshall Islands**, shared that in order to transform the island’s GDP and move its economy away from dependence on foreign assistance, the Marshall Islands would be “working with innovators on intersecting cutting edge technology with local practices,” and aspired to explore more sustainable fisheries and maritime transport policies.

- **The Hon. Semi Korollavesau, Minister for Fisheries for Fiji**, affirmed Fiji’s commitment to improving coastal fisheries management by 2020 stating, “It is paramount that we share practices and experiences so that we might pave the way for the management, development, and sustainable use of our oceans and its resources.” Fiji will pursue improved data collection and enforcement measures of their fisheries sector and engage in high level integrated work to fulfill its ocean commitments which can be assisted through the Island Resilience Initiative.

- **Celeste Connors, Executive Director of Hawai’i Green Growth**, reinforced the commitment of Hawai’i Green Growth to work together with Palau, RMI and Fiji through the Island Resilience Initiative to share lessons and enhance public-private partnerships that support implementation of local and global goals, “We are proud to be partners and working with other island leaders to have truly transformational solutions.” Hawai’i Green Growth is a public private partnership that supports implementation of Hawai’i’s statewide commitment to sustainability, the Aloha+ Challenge. Through working with its partners to scale solutions and projects, Hawai’i Green Growth has valuable lessons accumulated from its experience in formalizing their framework to effectively link political leadership to community action on the ground.
Large Ocean States Building Resilience for SDGs and Beyond, continued

- Yoko Watanabe, Global Manager, GEF Small Grants Programme implemented by UNDP, an early supporter of the Island Resilience Initiative, commented on the importance of partnerships in the Pacific region to make things happen and how communities and community-based adaptation approaches are vital in spearheading efforts to build island resilience. “The Small Grants Programme is looking forward in particular to bringing in the community angle and building that into the database so that it can be amplified at the national scale,” said Mrs. Watanabe. The Small Grants Programme is also interested in exploring how enhancing measures processes, particularly through online impact dashboards, can improve understanding of what the gaps are to help prioritize needs and actions of different island communities.

- Francois Martel, Secretary General of the Pacific Island Development Forum, highlighted the need for urgent action given the devastating impact of natural disasters across the region and how enhancing interconnected partnerships through the Island Resilience Initiative, the Global Island Partnership and Pacific Island Development Forum will contribute to strengthened implementation of SDG 14 and all global goals.

The event was organized in partnership with the Government of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Fiji, Hawai‘i Green Growth, GEF Small Grants Programme implemented by UNDP, PRECOVERY Labs and the Global Island Partnership. For more information on the Island Resilience Initiative, click here.

“Large Ocean States Building Resilience for SDGs and Beyond”
Side Event, 6 June, Conference Room 12, UN Headquarters

Approximately fifty members and friends of the Partnership came together prior to the start of the Conference as an opportunity to share their priorities at the UN Oceans Conference and beyond. The President of Palau arrived to close the meeting, thanking each of the diverse members and friends of the partnership for their continued support and contribution, he emphasized, “I appreciate the contribution from everyone and I’m more energized by seeing all the partners today because the growing part of this movement means that there can only be more accomplishments.”

Thank you
Thank you to Tonya A. Meyrick for curating the “Our Oceans, Our Islands, Our Future” Exhibition, to the Wildlife Conservation Society for hosting our Members Meeting, Görkem Hayta, Miriama Patterson and our Global Island Partnership Fellows: Kristin Qui, Stephanie Ratte, Mai Ichihara, Cait Salerno, David McCarthy and Anama Solofa (See Fellow Bios here).

A huge thank you to all of our GLISPA Members and Friends for their continued support.
Led by the Presidents of Palau and Seychelles, Prime Minister of Grenada and Premier of the British Virgin Islands, the Global Island Partnership promotes action to build resilient and sustainable island communities for all islands. We are a partnership of 50+ members that have assisted 35 leaders to launch visionary commitments and leverage more than $150m to support implementation:

www.glispa.org.