

# INSPIRING LEADERSHIP THROUGH INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Islands are leaders of innovative partnerships that are charting a new course to build resilient and sustainable island communities. In January 2005, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan made an urgent call for high-level political commitment to the global challenges facing island states<sup>1</sup>. Two presidents, H.E. Tommy E. Remengesau Jr. of Palau and H.E. James A. Michel of Seychelles took leadership, mobilizing an international partnership for island conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

Since its launch in 2006<sup>2</sup>, the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) has engaged high-level political leadership through its Co-Chairs, the Presidents of Palau and Seychelles as well as the Prime Minister of Grenada to catalyze more than US\$130 million in commitments for action on island conservation and livelihoods. It has assisted more than 30 countries to launch or strengthen major island commitments focused on sustainable management of marine, coastal and/or terrestrial habitats, and facilitated collaboration between islands: island countries and countries with islands regardless of their size or political status. Participation is open and voluntary to any entity committed to taking significant action towards the mission.

# **ELEMENTS OF GLISPA'S SUCCESS**

GLISPA fills a unique niche for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods in a variety of ways:

#### ALL ISLANDS

GLISPA's focus includes all islands, regardless of size or political status, emphasizing commonalities amongst islands. This includes island countries as well as countries with islands. This apolitical and inclusive focus ensures wide participation and promotes collaboration.

# **SECOND SET OF S**

GLISPA's mission recognizes that for conservation to be successful, solutions must take into account the economic and social needs of island communities. GLISPA emerged in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity, specifically within the programme of work on island biodiversity. The Partnership has been able to connect discussions of biodiversity within broader discussions of sustainable development due significantly to its focus on promoting and demonstrating high-level political leadership on these issues. Prior to the inception of GLISPA there was no specific 'voice' for highlighting the links between biodiversity conservation (in particular ecosystem services) and sustainability issues.

# ENGAGING HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

GLISPA focuses on engaging high-level political leadership from presidents, ambassadors and government ministers to support significant commitments to action for conservation of island biodiversity sustainable livelihoods, showcasing island solutions as 'bright spots' that can be scaled and replicated, and strengthening innovative partnerships for implementation. GLISPA has created new connections between its three Co-Chairs - President of Palau³, President of Seychelles⁴ and the Prime Minister of Grenada⁵ - and the three major island regions in the world. With their leadership, GLISPA has supported commitments by more than 30 countries, and the commitment of US\$130 million to island conservation and livelihoods initiatives. These political leaders are able to engage other high-level leaders in addressing important island issues, such as when the former Prime Minister of Grenada, H.E. Tillman Thomas co-hosted "Leaders Valuing Nature" with the President of Indonesia at Rio+20

http://www.glispa.org/images/glispa/events/GLISPA\_EventSpotlight\_Rio20\_print.pdf

#### **1** LARGE SCALE VISIONARY COMMITMENTS

GLISPA promotes large-scale committments to island conservation and sustainability through ambitious targets and helps mobilize significant new funding commitments as a way to create genuine and measurable impacts and change. The Partnership achieves this by inspiring political leaders to act and by leveraging political motivations to improve implementation. To this end, GLISPA has assisted more than 30 countries to launch or strengthen major island commitments focused on island conservation and sustainable management of marine, coastal and/or terrestrial habitats. The partnership has also helped inspire, recognize and support leaders in Micronesia, the Caribbean, Indonesia and the Western Indian Ocean to work with their neighbors on visionary regional island initiatives.

# GLISPA'S EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP MODEL

GLISPA represents a strong model partnership for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods, and has made significant achievements due to the following characteristics:

## 6 INFLUENTIAL AND DEDICATED "CHAMPIONS" AS CO-CHAIRS OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The inspired leadership of the Co-Chairs has been instrumental in maintaining the momentum of the Partnership. These leaders have played a key role in garnering commitment from other leaders in public and private sectors, and encouraging engagement of others in the partnership.

#### SHARED PASSION, VALUES AND DEDICATION OF ITS PARTICIPANTS

A small yet highly passionate and dedicated group of individuals from governments, non-government organizations and multilateral institutions has been engaged with the Partnership since its inception. These individuals have provided continuity and strategic leadership for the Partnership, demonstrating a genuine spirit of collaboration and recruiting other organizations and leaders to support this shared mission.

#### A TRUE PARTNERSHIP BASED ON OPENNESS AND FLEXIBILITY IN PARTICIPATION

Since its inception, GLISPA has become a true partnership that emphasizes openness and flexibility in participation, a genuine willingness to engage, and an emphasis on open and collaborative communications. Members of GLISPA's governing Steering Committee are encouraged to share knowledge and experiences and to develop linkages amongst themselves, working together at the annual Strategy Meeting to determine how to build momentum around key priorities including ecosystem based adaptation, linking conservation and development, invasive species and supporting successful implementation of commitments.

# MUTUALLY-REINFORCING ACTIVITIES TOWARD ACHIEVEMENT OF LONG-TERM GOALS

GLISPA supports coordination of strategic events at major international meetings (e.g. CBD COP, Rio+20, UNSIDS 2014) to create attention, inspire new committments, and showcase island solutions and "bright spots" in implementation by island partners. To date it has held 9 high-level events and more than 30 strategic events at key global and regional meetings. These events provide the opportunity to catalyse new public and private finance and commitments to conservation and sustainable livelihoods. They are also an effective 'tool' that generates a sense of urgency for progress on specific commitments and targets, by providing a forum to ensure that these commitments are 'kept alive'.

# GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEDICATED COORDINATION

GLISPA has a strong and effective coordination team comprised of 1.5 staff focused on strategy implementation and advancement of the partnership. The Coordination Team engages a number of advisors and fellows who support the partnership. GLISPA has a clear and transparent governance framework, including a Steering Committee and Executive Committee, and strong leadership provided by the Co-Chairs and their representatives.

GLISPA has evolved into a successful partnership since its lauch in 2006. It has been able to bring together a group of dedicated political leaders and supporters to create a unique network that promotes action for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods for all islands. In 2014, one of the outcomes of the Global Ocean Action Summit organised by the Government of Netherlands, World Bank and FAO was the need to build on existing partnerships like the Global Partnership for Oceans, GLISPA and 50in10 to build global momentum and scale up successes.

## To learn more go to: www.glispa.org or email: kate.brown@glispa.org

GLISPA was first called for during the high-level event "Islands, Reefs and Communities: Committing to the Future" at the International Meeting for the 10-year Review of the Barbados Programme of Action hosted by the Governments of Seychelles and United Kingdom in Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January, 2005 <sup>2</sup> GLISPA was launched during the high level event "Islands, marine biodiversity and livelihoods: a Global Island Partnership" hosted by the Republic of Palau at the Eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity CBD COP 8 in Curitiba, Brazil, 20-31 March, 2005. <sup>3</sup>In 2005 - 2008 the Co-Chair from Palau was held by H.E. Tommy Remengesau Jras President of Palau. During 2008 - 2012 H.E. Johnson Toribiong was elected President of Palau and held the position of Co-Chair. <sup>3</sup>In 2013, H.E. Tommy Remengesau Jras vas re-elected as President of Palau and welcomed back as Co-Chair of GLISPA. <sup>4</sup>2005 to present H.E. James A. Michel, President of Seychelles, has been Co-Chair of GLISPA. <sup>5</sup>In 2012 - 2013, the Co-Chairs of GLISPA invited H.E. Tillman Thomas, then Prime Minister of Grenada to join them as Co-Chair of Co-Chair.