

H.E. Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
**Speech from “Our Oceans, Our Islands, Our Future” High Level
Reception, 7 June 2017**

- Tonight, I speak to you as President of Palau and also as a Leader of the Global Island Partnership on behalf of my fellow co-Leaders and co-hosts: the Vice-President of Seychelles, Prime Minister of Grenada, the Deputy Premier of the British Virgin Islands and the 50 plus members and friends working together to help achieve our common vision to build a resilient and sustainable future for our islands, our oceans and our blue planet.
- We are a diverse group of island leaders and ocean champions from remote parts of the world but we stand here today united by one Ocean.
- For more than 10 years, we have come together through our Global Island Partnership to launch commitments, each commitment inspiring others.
- We started in 2006, when we joined forces across the Micronesia region to launch the Micronesia Challenge, a commitment to effectively conserve 30% of near-shore marine and 20% of the terrestrial resources across the region by 2020. I am pleased to report that across Palau, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam and Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas we have protected six thousand four hundred and fifty eight square kilometers of near shore marine areas through establishing more than 150 protected areas and have secured over USD 18 million toward a USD55 million target.
- In 2015, I was pleased to launch the Palau National Marine Sanctuary. The Sanctuary encompasses 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.
- I have been humbled to see other leaders around the world join us through our Global Island Partnership to launch their own commitments and share their own solutions.
- Like stars to a navigator, these island commitments from the Palau National Marine Sanctuary and Micronesia Challenge to Seychelles Blue Economy Vision, the Caribbean Challenge Initiative and Hawaii’s Aloha+ Challenge

and beyond, are our own locally and culturally appropriate solutions to help us implement not only SDG 14 but all SDGs and global priorities from the Paris Agreement to the SAMOA Pathway. Our island-led commitments are our resilience sail plans to implement the SDGs and priority global goals.

- Each commitment is mobilizing the momentum, locally and globally, needed to define our own path to a sustainable future. Together, through GLISPA we have worked with the diverse membership to develop and share solutions and bring global attention to our efforts. We are the Partnership in which islands who want to demonstrate leadership on important issues, come together to drive action.
- It is my hope that these commitments help to inspire other leaders around the world - from Presidents to Governors and Mayors, to the islands working with our members such as the Waitt Foundation to the Nippon Foundation Alumni and younger leaders here today. I challenge each of you to step up to make the Palau National Marine Sanctuary look like a small commitment.
- I would like to thank Chairman Sasakawa and the Nippon Foundation for their generous support to our country.
- I would also like to acknowledge: H.E. Hilda Heine, President of the Republic of Marshall Islands, The Hon. Perla Cecilia Tun Pech the Mayor of Cozumel, Mr. Ted Waitt of the Waitt Foundation & Waitt Institute and Mr. Dieter Paulmann Founder of Okeanos - Foundation for the Sea as well as Conservation International, Pacifico Foundation and Seasteading Institute for recently becoming members of our Global Island Partnership as we continue to build a diverse group of leaders supporting each other to take greater action on implementation.
- 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. I am on this voyage with you, on behalf of my fellow co-Leaders of the Global Island Partnership, I invite you as island and ocean champions to unite and join our Global Island Partnership to build island and ocean resilience globally.