Leaders in Island Resilience

The Global Island Partnership at COP23, Twenty Third Conference of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change Convention, Bonn, Germany, 6 to 17 November 2017

“Leadership is partnership”
—H.E. TOMMY E. REMENGESAU JR., PRESIDENT OF PALAU

With the leadership of H.E. Tommy E. Remengesau Jr., President of Palau, H.E. Hilda Heine, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (new GLISPA Leader), The Hon. Didier Dogley, Minister of Environment, Energy & Climate Change of the Republic of Seychelles and The Hon. Dr. Kedrick Pickering, Deputy Premier of the British Virgin Islands, and 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 build island resilience. The Partnership also continued to build the movement of people willing to take action to build island resilience globally through the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA).
OUTCOMES

New Leadership and Initiatives

• **H.E. Hilda Heine, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands was announced as a new Global Island Partnership Leader.** The first female leader to be a Leader in the Partnership. RMI joins as a Leader for their considerable leadership locally and globally through Micronesia Challenge, Reimaanlok, Blue Fee as well as in leadership through the high ambition coalition that led to the Paris Agreement.

• **President Remengesau of Palau together with Mayor Tun Pech of Cozumel launched Front-line cities and islands:** a movement of mayors and leaders of island economies at the front-line of climate change impacts with mayors and leaders of resilience working together to champion local action in urban areas to build resilience: on islands and globally. Front-line is championed by Fiji with the Leaders of the Global Island Partnership and the Mayor of Cozumel with mayors and leaders of ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability to elevate the importance of sustainable urbanization in building resilience across islands and lay the groundwork for targeted and joint action across all islands.

Accelerating Implementation

• **“Leaders in Island Resilience” high level reception** at Godesberg Castle demonstrated the leadership of islands and their supporters united in strong partnerships, such as the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems, as well as emphasized the need for women’s empowerment in island resilience.

  • **WATCH the “Leaders in Island Resilience” IISD video coverage here**
  • **See IISD report and photos on the event here**
  • **See our Facebook page for more photos of our members and friends**

• **“Building Island and Community Resilience” high level side event** demonstrated how partnerships can help connect community-based adaptation initiatives with implementation of national and global sustainability goals.

Building the Island Resilience Movement

• Deputy Premier Pickering of British Virgin Islands captivated our GLISPA members meeting sharing the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma in the British Virgin Islands. Dr. Pickering highlighted that 80 to 90% of homes and cars, including his own, have been destroyed. The recovery efforts will be long and difficult. Dr. Pickering emphasized “we need money” to aid recovery and anyone who can assist BVI should reach out. GLISPA members also shared their priorities at COP 23. To learn more about personal stories from Hurricane Irma go to: [www.TheIrmaDiaries.com](http://www.TheIrmaDiaries.com)

• New members were recognized including the Bahamas National Trust, Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development of SIDS based in Aruba, James Michel Foundation (the Foundation of the co-founder of GLISPA - former President of Seychelles) and the Smithsonian Institution.

• Fiji and ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability became Friends of GLISPA to more closely work together on island urban resilience.

Hosted by the GLISPA Leaders, this high level reception supported strong outcomes for the UNFCCC COP 23 and Fiji as COP President by showcasing island leaders and their solutions at the forefront of the movement and united in strong partnerships building island resilience. The event showcased how integrated island solutions are addressing climate adaptation, preparedness for extreme events, early warning systems, women’s empowerment and mobilizing and leveraging resources to support action.

- **H.E. Tommy E. Remengesau Jr., President of Palau**, speaking on behalf of the GLISPA Leaders as co-hosts reflected on how members and friends of the Partnership are leading and working collaboratively, “we launched the Partnership eleven years ago when we recognized that islands were at the forefront of innovating new solutions to their sustainable development challenges. Whether it is the Seychelles pioneering blue bonds and debt for adaptation swaps, Hawaii scaling up renewable energy, or my own country establishing one of the largest marine sanctuaries in the world. Big ideas are coming from small places.” Remengesau concluded by stating that resilience cannot be achieved if certain members of society are excluded, emphasizing the need for women to have an equal seat at the table, and for social safeguards.

- **H.E. Hilda Heine, President of the Marshall Islands**, was welcomed as a new GLISPA Leader who outlined challenges relating to basic socio-economic development aside from climate change. Discussing high levels of vulnerability and issues related to relocating people away from hazardous areas, she emphasized that impacts severely affect the health of the general population. She described her country as the “new kid on the block” in terms of the Partnership, and looked forward to working with the more experienced GLISPA Leaders. Highlighting ongoing efforts and national initiatives, she outlined: the Micronesia Challenge, a commitment to preserve natural resources; collaboration on strengthening national legislation on protected areas; and locally tailored community resilience-building processes bringing together coastal communities and island leaders to ensure sustainable use of resources.
Leaders in Island Resilience continued

- The Hon. Semi Koroilavaesau, Minister of Fisheries, Fiji, recalled the recent UN Ocean Conference, observing that climate change is not only impacting the oceans but also reducing their ability to provide services for the climate. He called for a concerted effort to create momentum towards 2020. Minister Koroilavaesau also announced Fiji has officially joined GLISPA as a Friend of the Partnership.

- Dr. Albert Martis, Director of Meteorological Services, Curaçao, reflected on the progression and aftermath of Hurricane Irma, which severely impacted Saint Martin. Looking ahead, he explained that the focus would be on improving early warning systems to provide better information to the public, highlighting plans to partner with GLISPA.

- Ravind Kumar, Director, Meteorological Services, Fiji, noted the need for early warning systems for preparedness and response in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Winston in 2016. He highlighted the timeliness of the Climate Risk and Early Warning System (CREWS) Partnership being implemented by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and partners in the Pacific that would help to strengthen his organization’s capacity.

- Anna Mendiola, President and CEO, Federated States of Micronesia Development Bank, called for mainstreaming gender in climate change action, noting that women are powerful agents of change and have a critical role in climate adaptation.

- Mary Power speaking on behalf of the Secretary General of WMO pointed out that 90% of natural disasters result from weather and climate. She called for investments in hydro-meteorological services, and highlighted the WMO’s role in supporting and investing in these services to save lives and protect citizens.

Master of Ceremonies Ngedikes “Olai” Uludong, Permanent Representative of Palau to the UN, and Spencer Thomas, Ambassador and Special Envoy for Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Grenada, observed that the event demonstrated the leadership of islands and provided an opportunity to build strong partnerships for island resilience, climate preparation and disaster preparedness, and to mobilize finance for climate action.

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Minister Koroiavaesau of Fiji announces Fiji as a Friend of GLISPA. PHOTO CREDIT: IISD.

Ms Anna Mendiola, President & CEO of the FSM Development Bank emphasizes that women are powerful agents of change in building resilience. PHOTO CREDIT: IISD.
Leaders in Island Resilience continued

Mary Power of WMO called for investments in hydro-meteorological services in building island resilience. PHOTO CREDIT: IISD.

This event is generously supported by

- CCREWS
- WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION
- European Commission
- Global Island Partnership
- Foundation for the Sea
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- The Nature Conservancy
- rare

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Mayors and leaders of islands at the front-line of climate change, from the President of Palau to Mayor of Cozumel (Mexico) came together with mayors and leaders of cities around the world to join forces in taking action to address climate change and build resilience through the launch of Front-line cities and islands at COP23.

Front-line is championed by COP23 President Fiji with the Presidents of Palau and Seychelles, Prime Minister of Grenada, Premier of British Virgin Islands as the Leaders of the Global Island Partnership and mayors and leaders of ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability including Cozumel and Auckland to elevate the importance of sustainable urbanization in building resilience across islands and lay the groundwork for targeted and joint action across all islands.

Islands are often recognized for being at the front-line of climate change impacts however they are also at the front-line of spearheading integrated solutions to climate change and sustainable development. Palau itself is strengthening the resilience of marine ecosystems, Hawaii was an early mover on climate and sustainability and Cozumel has shown leadership on sustainable, smart development.

Mayor Tun Pech of Cozumel, Mexico highlighted that it is critical to devise and implement solutions locally, while empowering local governments to take action. “We are here to unite our voices and thereby generate co-responsibility and commitment with the inhabitants of the world,” said the mayor.

“The involvement of national governments is needed to support local government efforts,” said Assistant Minister for Local Government, Lorna Eden, Fiji. This is particularly important in island states, where local governments are closely linked to the national level, and are less economically independent than local governments in other, larger nations.

Front-Line Cities and Islands is a movement that pushes forward on collaboration, joint action and global mobilization on adaptation and mitigation. Going forward, the Front-Line Cities and Islands will:

• Cultivate city-to-city and island-to-island learning and strategic partnerships
• Determine priority issues that cities and islands can work on together
• Identify island leadership and practical solutions that can be shared
• Identify and develop funding sources and financing mechanisms for the long term
• Promote dialogue and agreement to implement innovative resilience solutions

For more information:
• Islands team up cities on climate change, Reuters, 2 November 2017
• About the Front-line cities and islands
Island leaders and mayors came together to exchange resilience solutions as part of the “Talanoa Exchange”. This world cafe style session brought together the Environment Minister Sengebau of Palau, Fisheries Minister Koroilavesau of Fiji, Mayor Tun Pech of Cozumel and Mayor Mua of Honiara with champions of island resilience to exchange solutions around oceans and sustainable coastal fisheries, climate change and energy and island resilience priorities including smart cities and sustainable tourism.

French Member of Parliament, Maine Page shared: “We have a common responsibility to make an ecological corridor. It is not only for us but the rest of humanity. One way will be through creating a common regional EEZ policy.”

Gerald Miles summarized the Talanoa exchange sessions concluding, “We need smart decisions for island resilience.”

- WATCH Facebook Live of Gerald Miles wrapping up the Talanoa Exchange

Seeding the Talanoa Exchange with their island solutions. Left to right: Mayor Mua of Honiara, Mayor Tun Pech of Cozumel, Melisa Mendoza of Cozumel, Willy Kostka of Micronesia Conservation Trust and Deputy Mayor of Castries Genevieve St. Croix of Saint Lucia.
President Remengesau of Palau, Minister in Assistance to the President David Paul of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner came together with representatives of Australia, GEF Small Grants Programme, Pacific Island Development Forum and Precovery Labs to discuss how partnerships can help connect community-based adaptation initiatives with implementation of national and global sustainability goals.

President Remengesau highlighted how “Islands can be the incubators of new strategies and technologies and be examples that new ways of life are possible.” Minister Paul followed with examples of how national and regional commitments, such as the Micronesia Challenge, “brings together local communities, local and nationally government to ensure access to sustainable resources.” He connected that these commitments are “important guiding tools to inform transformative actions from national, regional, and global partners. We must rise to the challenge to define our own future on our own terms and transform them into results.”
Achim Steiner concluded that “small projects in small economies can produce very big results. They can transform pathways that nations may choose.” Steiner also emphasized the high degree of success of projects in small island developing states through the GEF Small Grants Programme implemented by UNDP. He further emphasized the importance of partnership, “What GLISPA speaks to is leadership. Change comes from leadership."

Mr. Salvio of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia recognized that “climate change is a security, environment, health, and economic issue. A key way of addressing this challenge is through leadership.”

These leaders came together during “Building Island and Community Resilience” coordinated by GLISPA, GEF Small Grants Program implemented by UNDP, Pacific Island Development Forum, Precovery Labs, European Commission and Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity.
SPOTLIGHT ON GLISPA SUPPORTED EVENTS

Building upon traditional culture, Pacific Islands take the lead in Sustainable sea transportation

During this high level side event, President Remengesau announced plans for submission of a regional proposal to the Green Climate Fund for a Pan-Pacific network of traditional polynesian voyaging canoes based on the Okeanos Vaka Motus. The Okeanos Vakas (canoes) are traditionally designed sailing canoes built with modern materials and propelled by fossil-fuel-free technologies: solar and biofuel (coconut oil).

President Remengesau said, “We can work together to make sure this is implemented for island nations who can make it their mission to have clean energy in their transportation.” President Heine noted that “between 2012 and 2017, the international communities have pledged more than 2 billion worth of projects across the Pacific for reducing our dependency on diesel imports. To date they have almost exclusively targeted the electricity sector. Transport, which uses more than 70% of [diesel] imports, has been ignored.”

President Remengesau and President Heine were joined by Vice President George of Federated States of Micronesia, Pacific Ocean Commissioner Dame Meg Taylor, OECC Senior research Dr. Emiko Matsuda, Okeanos Foundation for the Sea CEO and Founder Dieter Paulmann and Fiji Voyager and Okeanos Skipper Iva Nancy Vunikura and moderated by Director of SPREP Kosi Latu. For the full report on this event go to:

- [Watch the video of the event here produced by Okeanos](https://www.facebook.com/okeanosfoundation/videos/1769058866731387/)

Islands and climate change at the Frontline of Climate Change Solutions

This event convened speakers from European Overseas Countries and Territories and their Outermost Regions with representatives of island states to raise the need for action on all islands to build resilience and also showcase how islands are leaders in climate change solutions.

French Polynesian MP Maina Sage stated, “We are the frontline of climate change. We don’t want to be frontline victims but frontline warriors.”

The event showcased how initiatives such as European Union’s BEST Initiative, the voluntary scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European overseas, was created to promote the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of ecosystems and the valuable services they provide in the seven regions in which the EU overseas are located. Karin Zaunberger, European Commission, DG ENV stated, “The BEST Initiative is carried by the people who do all these activities and actions for biodiversity in the EU overseas that are spread all over the world.” For more information: [Watch the GLISPA Facebook Live coverage of the event.](#)
Fishing for Resilience: The importance of Oceans for coastal communities for climate change, conservation and livelihoods

The event showcased the importance of locally-led interventions that target behaviors and practices in the management of natural resources for the successful implementation of NDCs. Leaders across sectors and organizations ranging from the International Union for Conservation of Nature, to the International Climate Initiative, the Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs & Fisheries, the Philippines National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), the Micronesia Conservation Trust and Global Island Partnership joined Rare for this session. Together, they made the case for nature-based solutions to adapt to climate change and to build long-term resilience for and with coastal communities. Mercedita Sombilla, Assistant Secretary for Agriculture, the Philippines NEDA encapsulated the need stating, “Small scale fisheries are an important sector we prioritize in our national development plan and NDCs for building social, ecological and economic resilience.”

Mountains and Islands: Coalition for vulnerable ecosystems

Representatives of the Mountain Partnership and the Global Island Partnership came together to discuss the effects of climate change on the vulnerable mountain and island ecosystems. Grammenos Mastrojeni of the Italian Development Cooperation stated, “There are so many links and similarities between mountains and islands. Mountains and islands are linked by water. Melting glaciers impact on islands.”

Kate shared that “GLISPA has been looking at working more closely with the Mountain Partnership as we have a lot in common. We would like to see what practical things we can do together as Partnerships.”

The Mountain Partnership and the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) will be working together to explore issues related to ecosystem-based adaptation, climate change mitigation, and resource management; share experiences and lessons learned; and build synergies within the formalized relationship.

The Mountain Partnership is a United Nations voluntary alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain peoples and protecting mountain environments around the world. Currently, more than 300 governments, intergovernmental organizations, major groups (e.g. civil society, NGOs and the private sector) and subnational authorities are members.

You can watch the full event: https://www.facebook.com/glispa/videos/1970996376260825
Thank you to our Global Island Partnership Community at COP23

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Thank you to the generous support of all our GLISPA members in helping us showcase island leadership in resilience.

Ambassador Ndegikes “Olai” Uludong of Palau recognizes the members of the Global Island Partnership that are working together to build island resilience.  PHOTO CREDIT: IISD.
Francielle Lacle from new member Centre of Excellence for the Sustainable Development of SIDS based in Aruba with the GLISPA team. Left to right: Jenny Hawes, Jessica Robbins, Francielle Lacle and Kate Brown.

Team Seychelles. Ambassador Ronny Jumeau of Seychelles with the Seychelles youth team who supported the delegation at COP23 as an opportunity to engage future leaders in island resilience. Left to right: Shantana Barbe, Jellissa Julie, Stacy Nair and Rebecca Julienne. Stacy Nair also represented GLISPA's new member The James Michel Foundation (the Foundation of former President of Seychelles and GLISPA Founder). PHOTO CREDIT: IISD.

Lina Sjaavik of WMO and Mae Bruton-Adams of The Nature Conservancy Micronesia. PHOTO CREDIT: IISD.