Securing the Island Future We Want: 
*Enabling steps towards achieving a green/blue economy at regional scale*


The Hon. Ronny Jumeau, Seychelles Ambassador for Climate Change and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Issues announced that the leadership of the Global Island Partnership has expanded to include His Excellency Tillman Thomas, Prime Minister of Grenada as a co-chair of the Partnership, alongside President Michel of Seychelles and President Toribiong of Palau. He further highlighted that we need to work together in partnership for islands to survive.

Dr. Alfredo Guillet of Italy highlighted their long-term support towards development of islands and their early commitment to connect with countries and other development partners through the Global Island Partnership. As part of their continued commitment to islands, Dr. Guillet announced that Italy will fund the participation of SIDS that requested financial support in the upcoming 2012 World Conservation Congress as well as provide €1.5 million to a Pacific energy project, part of which will include a contribution to the Global Island Partnership Coordination staff costs.

**Leadership as a critical step towards achieving a blue economy at scale**

**Micronesia Challenge**

“Out of all attempts to unify islands in one challenge and one effort, this (the Micronesia Challenge) has been the most successful,” stated The Hon. Tony de Brum, Minister in Assistance to the President, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), one of the five jurisdictions involved in the Micronesia Challenge).

Minister de Brum identified that the flow of development assistance from the donor to the intended end user remain a hurdle but that through GLISPA and by working together between the three regions opportunities exist to address this. Minister de Brum reinforced that for islands, issues of public health, energy, land and oceans cannot be separated. They all must be addressed together.

It was highlighted that there is need for cooperation from the village level to the donor level and that governments play an important role in this. An example of this leadership is the Namdrik Atoll Local Resources Committee from the Marshall Islands who were presented with a 2012 Equator Prize at Rio+20 for its efforts to promote a model of community self-sufficiency, local food security and adaptation.

"I am not here to talk about saving islands; I am here to talk about saving the world.”

THE HON. TONY DE BRUM, MINISTER IN ASSISTANCE TO THE PRESIDENT, REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS
**Caribbean Challenge Initiative**
The Hon. Senator George Prime, Minister of Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs, highlighted that through strong Government leadership Grenada has made progress to conserve and protect the environment for future generations.

It was highlighted that through the strong focus on financing in the Caribbean Challenge many countries have put the Ministries of Finance as focal points alongside the Ministries of Environment. This has changed the dynamic of how the Caribbean Challenge Initiative is being implemented in the countries and has changed how government views environmental management.

Roland Baldeo, Grenada, highlighted the importance of champions at the highest level of Government to the community as well as the need for national system plans to guide on the ground activities. The impacts of the Challenge are showcased through a video launched at Rio+20 “Building The Future We Want: The Caribbean Challenge Initiative.”

It was announced that Prime Minister Thomas of Grenada will co-host a Caribbean Political and Business Leaders Summit with Sir Richard Branson of the Virgin Group, along with Premier Orlando Smith of the British Virgin Islands in 2013.

**Western Indian Ocean Coastal Challenge (WIO-CC)**
Ambassador Jumeau announced the vision of the WIO-CC as a 25 year vision for islands, coastal countries and other stakeholders to build climate resilient development options and strategies that achieve a balance between enhanced coastal livelihoods and economies and effective conservation of biodiversity. The formation of the WIO-CC vision, inspired by the Micronesia and Caribbean Challenges, has had the support of the highest level in Seychelles Government and across a range of Ministries from Foreign Affairs to Finance and the Environment. The next phase of the WIO-CC will focus on engaging the island countries and the coastal countries of east Africa.

Ambassador Jumeau emphasized the need to work in cooperation with partners that have a common vision, such as through the Global Island Partnership. He also emphasized the need to think big to tackle issues facing islands. He also identified the importance of the WIO-CC in learning from the experiences of the Micronesia and Caribbean Challenges.

**Resourcing a blue economy – innovative financing mechanisms**

**Rob Weary, The Nature Conservancy**, introduced the concept of the debt for climate-adaptation swaps an innovative financing mechanism for SIDS. High levels of indebtedness are a critical issue for many SIDS and by addressing this issue, SIDS can potentially achieve significant debt relief (both bi-lateral and commercial) and secure a financing stream into perpetuity for adaptation activities. TNC, the lead in GLISPA on debt for climate-adaptation swaps has a goal of concluding USD1billion in debt swaps for countries over the next decade that will ensure that countries have the resources to commit to protection of the natural infrastructure required to safeguard the marine and coastal environment.

**Nadia Henry, Debt Manager, Ministry for Finance, Antigua and Barbuda (A&B),** introduced that A&B is heavily affected by the global financial crisis. A&B has undertaken a debt restructuring however this resulted in significantly reducing available financing for adaptation activities. A&B needed to identify innovative ways to address this issue. With the support of TNC, A&B aims to be the first country to undertake a debt for climate adaptation swap. The debt swaps provide benefits to both creditors and debtors. The creditors benefit by receiving upfront payment, as opposed to smaller payments over the life of the loan and the debtors, in this case A&B, benefit by being able to reallocate the fiscal resources that would have gone into debt repayment into climate change adaptation activities.

As part of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative, A&B is in the process of establishing a national trust fund for adaptation. The national trust fund will be linked to the newly established regional Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. The financing from the debt swap can be used as a counterpart funding match to receive funding from the CBF. The trust fund model will enable A&B to establish an endowment from which interest will provide a sustainable stream of financing for adaptation activities into perpetuity.
Investing in nature
Nicole Glineur, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), indicated that the GEF is committed to continue to take a leadership role in supporting island livelihoods and in supporting investment in nature as already demonstrated through the Challenges and partnership with partners through the Global Island Partnership. She encouraged countries to apply for the Adaptation fund. She also said that it is inspiring to see how the Global Island Partnership has grown as a global movement to promote conservation and sustainable livelihoods as well as a platform that disseminates and promotes investment.

Peter Kristensen, World Bank, speaking on the recently launched Global Partnership for Oceans and how it might work with the Global Island Partnership, emphasized that Partnerships are necessary for us to be effective, “We know that none of us can take actions alone. We need to work together.” The Partnership for Oceans lines up both private and public partners to provide knowledge, capacity and finance for existing ocean initiatives, such as the Challenges and commitments through the Global Island Partnership.

In summarizing, Gerald Miles, The Nature Conservancy, highlighted the key messages and said that the Partnership (Global Island Partnership) is about People, Passion and Purpose. He said it was a partnership led by islands, through the leadership of the three co-chairs that is flexible, responsive and light and which is making progress. The side event demonstrated that the island approach is about getting things done.

The event was supported by: