



The Cowrie

“SIDS Times Magazine”

2017 September Edition

Small Island Developing States Unit



Small Island Developing States Unit
UN DESA

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Chief's Corner

A very warm New York greetings to all, welcome to "The Cowrie" our new look UN-DESA SIDS Times Magazine. There is a new team at the SIDS Unit and it is on our behalf that I express our gratitude and sincere thanks to those who have kindly contributed articles and items to be published in this edition of The Cowrie.



The September 2017 edition is dedicated exclusively to Ocean related matters. We figured that it is entirely appropriate, following the success of the UN Ocean Conference, that The Cowrie must snail through to recount the event, ensuring that appropriate reflection and action is directed towards implementation.

SIDS footprints were found everywhere during the UN Ocean Conference and is now fossilised in the annals of time as a significant contributor to its success. From the organisation of side-events, to participation in panel discussions, contributions to voluntary commitments and in the overall conduct and leadership of the Conference, the SIDS flag flew proud and high. Efforts must now be exerted to ensure that this spirit of success and momentum continues. The implementation of the outcome document of the Conference, "Our Ocean, Our Future: call for action" and of SDG 14 are the only sure currents that will guarantee the benefits, to drift back to SIDS.

To the curious, the cowrie shell is found in reefs and coasts around the world, including in many SIDS. Over the century, it has come to symbolise many things to many cultures. To some it means the ocean spirit of wealth and power, to others destiny and prosperity or fertility. Some wear the shell simply for decoration. For us at the SIDS Unit of UNDESA, our Cowrie is a platform for disseminating information showcasing the good work currently being undertaken by all SIDS stakeholders to further the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We trust that you will be informed and encouraged!

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Follow up to the Ocean Conference By UN DESA

The high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 5 to 9 June 2017, coinciding with World Oceans Day, to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development contains sustainable development goal (SDG) 14, which aims to “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”. SDG14 comprises 10 targets, among others, in the areas of marine pollution, marine and coastal ecosystem protection, ocean acidification, ending overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, economic benefits to SIDS and LDCs, and means of implementation.

Following the decisions of General Assembly resolutions 70/226 and 70/303, the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, the Ocean Conference, took place on 5-9 June 2017 at UN Headquarters. The Conference comprised of plenary meetings, partnership dialogues, a special event commemorating World Oceans Day, side events and exhibitions. Thousands of participants attended the Conference, including Heads of State and Government, other high-level representatives from Governments, the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, as well as civil society, the scientific community, the business sector and other relevant stakeholders. Several SIDS made statements during the plenary sessions and partnership dialogues and organized side events and exhibitions.

The Conference raised global consciousness on ocean issues, produced strong ambitious outcomes, including an intergovernmentally agreed political declaration “Our ocean, our future: call for action”, the co-chairs’ summaries of the seven partnership dialogues, and 1,395 voluntary commitments from Governments, the UN system, IGOs, the Major Groups and other stakeholders - individually or in

partnership – to advance the implementation of SDG 14 and related targets. The advance unedited version of the report of the Conference is available at the Conference website: <https://oceanconference.un.org>.

The political declaration “Our ocean, our future: call for action” was adopted by the General Assembly on 06 July 2017 through resolution A/71/L.74. In the Call for Action, Member States acknowledged that each country faced specific challenges in its pursuit of sustainable development, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and African States, including coastal ones, as do others recognized in the 2030 Agenda. They recognized the special importance of certain targets in Goal 14 for small island developing States and least developed countries. Member States also recognized that the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources required the necessary means of implementation in line with the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and other relevant outcomes, including the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

Follow-up

At the Conference, many delegations stressed that effective follow-up to the Ocean Conference will be critical to ensuring that all nations are working together to meet their SDG14 implementation obligations, inclusive of science, business and civil society. There was a call upon the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to support the implementation of Goal 14 in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular by enhancing interagency coordination and coherence throughout the United Nations system on ocean issues, taking into consideration the work of UN-Oceans. In the Call for Action, Member States agreed on the follow up to the Ocean Conference, among others, with regards to voluntary commitments and input to the high-level political forum (HLPF). Subsequently, session 12 on SDG14 was held on 13 July as part of the 2017 HLPF meeting (see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf> for more information).

Possible Ocean Conference in 2020

Kenya and Portugal offered to host the next possible Ocean Conference in 2020.

Special Envoy for Oceans

To help guide collective efforts until the next Ocean Conference, many delegations at the Ocean Conference called for the Secretary-General of the United Nations to appoint a Special Envoy or Representative of the Secretary-General for Oceans to galvanize efforts to support SDG14 implementation, maintain the momentum for action and ensure a coordinated and concerted effort to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Voluntary commitments

SIDS registered a large number of voluntary commitments. Under the guidance of the President of General Assembly and Fiji and Sweden, the Co-Presidents of the Ocean Conference, the Secretariat has started follow-up work on the voluntary commitments. A preliminary analysis of the voluntary commitments, addressing in broad terms the measures and actions identified in the voluntary commitments, types of resources committed, links with other SDGs, and relation to the Call for Action, was conducted, which is available on the Conference website: <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/>

A more in-depth analysis of the voluntary commitments is envisaged, including through enhancing Registry of Voluntary Commitments; holding regular webinars with communities of practice for sharing updates; producing Ocean Action Digest every 2 months; preparing Learning Modules on linkages VC's and SDG 14 targets; as well as workshops and other face to face meetings.

The Secretariat is also in the process of building a database of actors who have made voluntary commitments, to facilitate online discussion and timely exchange of information on the status of voluntary commitments, consideration of further ways and means of implementation, and mobilization of potential partners. Work will also be undertaken to identify synergies between voluntary commitments and existing partnerships emanating from the Rio+20 process, the Samoa Conference on small island developing States and the high-level political forum.

The registration of new voluntary commitments on sustainable development is continuing under: <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/>.



Secretary-General Appoints Peter Thomson of Fiji Special Envoy for Ocean



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has appointed Peter Thomson of Fiji as his Special Envoy for the Ocean, aiming at galvanizing concerted efforts to follow up on the outcomes of the United Nations Ocean Conference in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, maintaining the momentum for action to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Mr. Thomson will lead the United Nations advocacy and public outreach efforts inside and outside of the United Nations system, ensuring that the many positive outcomes of the Ocean Conference, including the close to 1,400 voluntary commitments, are fully analysed and implemented. He will also work with civil society, the scientific community, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders to coalesce and encourage their activities in support of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. [Read more](#)

Container Deposit Laws “A Winner for Preventing Ocean Plastics Pollution”

Ocean plastics have rapidly emerged as one of the most significant and fastest growing threats to marine ecosystems and the myriad services they provide to humanity. We now have a pretty good handle on the volume of plastics entering the ocean, between 8 and 20 million metric tonnes per year, with possibility to increase a further ten-fold by 2025 in a ‘business as usual’ scenario. Since the advent and subsequent explosive growth in plastics production starting in the early 1950’s, we have produced about 8 billion metric tons of plastic, the vast majority of it still in existence and a sizeable fraction, about 60 percent, either in landfills or the environment, including the ocean. That’s about one ton of plastic for every human being on earth – or 10 pounds of plastic for every pound of human! Only about 7 percent of the plastic every produced has been recycled so we remain a long way from truly ‘closing the loop’ on ocean plastics pollution.



PHOTO CREDIT- MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

We also know that rivers represent a major vector for introduction of plastics to the ocean, transporting some 1.15 – 2.41 million metric tons per year or between 6 - 30% of the total. We know that marine plastics can entangle marine mammals and turtles, damage coral reefs, cause ‘ghost’ fishing and be ingested by many organisms, from the smallest plankton to the largest whales. UN Environment estimates that marine plastics pollution causes economic damage of at least \$8 billion per year. Because a sizeable fraction of plastics that reach the oceans from the land masses are moved into the huge central gyres in each of the major oceans (causing the so called ‘garbage patches’), many Small Island Developing States that lie in the path of these gyres receive a disproportionate ‘share’ of these wastes with associated damage to their economies and livelihoods, so vitally dependent upon clean oceans and coasts. One of the most common types of plastics found in the ocean and on beaches is polyethylene, or PET, which is the main polymer used for soft drink, bottled water and selected other containers.

In the US, Europe, Canada and Australia, one of the most successful strategies for closing the loop on PET

(and aluminum and glass) bottle waste has been Container Deposit Laws (CDL), also known in the US as ‘bottle bills’. These apply a very simple but effective approach: each bottle a consumer purchases includes in its price a ‘deposit’, typically ranging from US 5 to 25 cents, which the consumer receives back when they return the bottle to a redemption center (usually a machine, or manual receipt and processing). In the US, where around ten states have CDLs with deposits ranging from 5-10 cents, recycling rates for PET bottles average 48%, vs. only 20% for non-deposit states. Not surprisingly, the highest rate (93%) is in Michigan with a 10 cent deposit. In Germany, a deposit equivalent to about US 28 cents delivers back 98% of all PET bottles for recycling; Netherland’s 28 cents deliver 95%. In sum, the basic economics of CDLs work as one would predict: higher deposits deliver higher returns.

Studies in the US have demonstrated that CDLs have no discernible impact on the prices of beverages (compared to states without CDLs) nor on the range of consumer beverage choices. Most CDLs are designed such that the beverage companies and consumers pay the costs of administering the programs, not municipalities or taxpayers, e.g. application of the polluter pays principle, and these costs average only one to two cents per container. Studies in Hawaii, Canada and Australia and elsewhere have demonstrated that CDLs reduce local marine plastics pollution – and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, helping to mitigate climate change. Lastly, CDLs create jobs to support the various steps of collection, processing and remanufacturing; for example, Michigan’s CDL led to a net increase of 4,648 jobs.

While voluntary curbside recycling programs are also part of the solution, they are not sufficient; while the percentage of Americans with curbside recycling access rose from 15 to 64 percent between 1990 and 2010, PET recycling rates barely budged over that period (only one new bottle bill was added, in Hawaii). In addition, ‘single stream’ curbside recycling is more expensive and produces lower quality recyclables due to higher rates of contamination and residue, leading to lower recycling rates. Lastly, curbside programs don’t target or address beverages consumed away

from home which can be a sizeable fraction, especially in cities - about one third of beverages sold in the US



PHOTO CREDIT: CHRIS JORDAN/US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

are consumed away from home.

In addition to the 10 US states, CDLs are in place or anticipated in most Canadian and Australian provinces, many European countries, and Israel. Interestingly, the only developing countries that appear to have taken steps to introduce CDLs are ALL SIDS – Fiji, Micronesia,

Kiribati, Barbados, and Palau. Kiribati’s program (on both PET and aluminum) reduced landfill waste by 60%. SIDS like these are showing leadership and commitment in introducing innovative waste reduction strategies – but of course much more remains to be done especially in the countries whose waste often makes its way onto SIDS shores.

In sum, Container Deposit Laws are a proven, cost effective, polluter pays strategy that can help countries and communities make important progress in reducing plastics pollution to the ocean and overall environment. To learn more about CDLs, visit websites such as www.container-recycling.org, www.bottlebill.org, www.reloopplatform.eu/ and others which have a wealth of useful resources. UNDP looks forward to working with its SIDS and other programme countries towards closing the loop on ocean plastics pollution.

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Emerging Contaminants: Hitchhikers in Caribbean Waters



Countries of the Wider Caribbean acknowledged over 30 years ago, that untreated wastewater had damning effects on human and environmental health. Improving the quality of wastewater that entered our waterways therefore became a priority for countries; but dangerous chemicals hitchhiking in treated and untreated wastewater was a more distant thought. While projects like the Global Environment Facility-funded Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (GEF CRW) have supported Caribbean countries in improving their wastewater management, the presence and detectability of chemical contaminants in treated wastewater are now a further cause for concern.

Contaminants of emerging concern (CECs) or emerging contaminants, as these chemicals or micro-pollutants are called, primarily include pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs) that are intentionally or unintentionally released into our environment. There is no in-depth understanding of the risks they may pose to humans, the environment, and aquatic life. However, they often come from household cleaning agents, paints, medicines including antibiotics given to animals, fragrances, pesticides, preservatives, toiletries, laundry detergents, cosmetics and a range of other domestic and industrial products that are released from factories, farms, wastewater treatment facilities, hospitals and our homes. The widespread use, diverse points of origin of these contaminants and their contact with other chemicals makes them difficult to study, bringing into question their effect on lifeforms.

Impacts on human and environmental health

The Caribbean relies heavily on marine and coastal resources for food, livelihoods and tourism;

coincidentally these resources are also receptacles of our treated and untreated wastewater. Emerging contaminants have hitchhiked through sewers and wastewater treatment plant outfalls into our marine and coastal waters, and sometimes through leaching from landfills into ground water. As many countries rely on ground and surface waters for drinking, recreation and economic growth, there is a concern about chemically-contaminated effluent seeping into these waters. The thought process becomes- what harms the marine environment, harms food security, exports, ecotourism, livelihoods and perhaps human health.

The risks to human and environmental health continue to be investigated and are yet to be fully understood. In fact, the effects of emerging contaminants might not be readily visible or identifiable for years to come, over which time the damage may become extensive. There is some consensus on the potential for these contaminants to influence various cancers, developmental, reproductive and other defects and illnesses resulting from their toxicity and the endocrine disrupting properties they possess. Endocrine disruptors generally have adverse effects on the hormones in human and other lifeforms. While the concentrations of these micro-pollutants might be too low to determine human health impacts, it is suggested that they are high enough to potentially harm aquatic ecosystems. Negative effects detected through laboratory testing on fish and organisms suggest transmissible threats to human beings and lifeforms within the food chain. However, research into the correlation between exposure to emerging contaminants and human health must also take into consideration mixtures with other contaminants, and external and pre-existing conditions which have led scientists to more reserved conclusions on the short- and long-term effects. What is clear is that scientists and wastewater engineers must now devise financially-feasible methods and wastewater treatment infrastructure options capable of removing chemical matter from wastewater.

Investment in Wastewater Treatment – a Challenging Solution

The Global Environment Facility-funded Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (GEF CRW) project 2011-2017, tested financial mechanisms for investment in wastewater management. Across the project's 13 participating countries, ways of sustainably financing wastewater management were found, capacity in wastewater management was enhanced, legislative and policy

reforms were done, and wastewater treatment plants across four countries were upgraded, decommissioned and refurbished. Despite this, the challenge throughout the Region is that domestic and industrial sewage are generally discharged through the same sewers thereby increasing the chemical content in wastewater that enter our marine and coastal environments. Additionally, pretreatment of industrial chemicals before discharge to wastewater treatment plants is not heavily regulated nor is it standard practice across the region.

Furthermore, Wider Caribbean countries share a challenge of identifying sustained funding for improvements in the wastewater sector including the maintenance of wastewater treatment plants. Moreover, even at the tertiary level, conventional methods of wastewater treatment cannot accommodate the removal of some micro-pollutants. This becomes further compounded by the emerging need to design and upgrade wastewater treatment infrastructure to adequately address the fast-growing issue of chemicals in our wastewater and consequently our water bodies. Additionally, chemicals linger in wastewater sludge- which is sometimes used as fertilizer for crops, eventually seeping into water bodies, meaning that there is further processing required for chemical content to be removed from sludge before its application to soil.

The lack of scientific evidence and an understanding of the effects of emerging contaminants on humans, ecosystems, soil and our waters present a challenge for states to take political action. Nevertheless, taking an environmentally-responsible approach to wastewater disposal considering the concern for emerging

contaminants is gaining traction as a regional priority. The successes and lessons learnt from the GEF CReW's testing of financial mechanisms avail an opportunity for countries to find innovative solutions for ensuring environmentally sound and cost-effective wastewater management. By encouraging investment in the wastewater sector, the Wider Caribbean can potentially join other parts of the world that are using advanced technology options for removing chemicals such as using activated carbon; and identify an integrated approach for managing harmful chemicals in our wastewater and for securing funding in this regard.

The issue of emerging contaminants and their threat to human and environmental health brings into perspective the interrelationship between the choices we make in our daily lives and their impacts on our environment. Proper wastewater management is everyone's responsibility and the conditions for an enabling environment for investment in wastewater management must be seen as a national and regional priority to promote a sustainable future for all.

A series of case studies from the GEF CReW project demonstrate the lessons learnt, challenges and successes in wastewater management across the region and guide us in creating the conditions conducive to sustainably managing our wastewater sector.

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1. Upcoming Events - UN DESA

SIDS Retreat “FOLLOW UP TO THE OCEAN CONFERENCE AND HLPF 2017 & RELATED MATTERS”, 29th-30th Sept. 2017

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) is planning a SIDS Retreat from September 29th-30th at Glen Cove Mansion, Long Island as a follow up to the UN Ocean Conference as well as to identify and discuss important issues to SIDS. During the two days of the retreat, several sessions will take place to discuss various agendas including the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs, Voluntary National Reviews at the High Level Political Forum, and International Cooperation etc. This retreat is supported by UNDESA and the funding has been supported by the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD), the Republic of Korea.

Wetlands: A Natural Safeguard Against Disasters



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The Wider Caribbean region is one prone to natural hazards and technological disasters. Active hurricane seasons and sometimes large amounts of rainfall often result in severe flooding and damage to infrastructure, which in turn, affects economic growth and productivity.

Infrastructure, agriculture and production are all industries that are essential to life in the Caribbean. Tourism and fishing, industries which are dependent on the region's rich biodiversity and even more essential to its economy, often bear the brunt of the damage during natural disasters.

Fortunately, the Wider Caribbean also possesses rich natural resources that can help to mitigate and even minimize the impact of disasters. One such natural resource is its wetlands.

An important source of fresh water for humanity and home to more than 100,000 freshwater species, which continue to increase in number; the Caribbean region is blessed with various wetland types such as: marshes, lagoons, swamp forest, mangroves, corals, rivers and other coastal wetlands.

Their functions include providing habitat for biodiversity, both animals and plants, with the added benefit of purifying waterways through a natural filtering system and storing water for future use. This ensures a clean and constant water supply.

Caribbean wetlands also play an important function, that of disaster mitigation as they control and regulate the flow of water, protect shorelines from coastal surges during hurricanes, absorb excess rainfall to reduce flooding, and provide windbreaks. In essence, Caribbean coastal areas have a natural, protective buffer from hurricane and storm damage.

However, there is bad news for regional and worldwide wetlands.

Mangroves, wetlands and coral reefs have proven to be some of the most degraded ecosystems in Latin America and the Caribbean. Threats such as burning, overfishing, pollution, housing developments on swamp lands, drainage through agriculture, as well as the cutting down of trees for timber and charcoal result in the loss of valuable ecosystem services, such as sewage treatment by mangrove wetlands systems and the eco-tourism essential for many Caribbean economies.

Scientific estimates show that 64% of the world's wetlands have disappeared since the 1900s and the remaining ones are being degraded faster than any other ecosystem.

Mangrove forests too, are disappearing at a rate of 1 to 2 percent per year, a pace that surpasses the destruction of adjacent coral reef and tropical rainforests.

A survey of 220 Eastern Caribbean coastal wetlands (predominantly mangroves) between 1989 and 1991 revealed that virtually every site visited in the 16 islands showed evidence of damage, and more than 50 percent showed severe damage (*Bacon 1993*).

As a result, these losses, combined with increasing fragmentation of mangroves reduce their viability and the quality of the services they provide.

Overall, the region is losing mangrove forests at 1 percent per year, although the rate is much faster on the Caribbean mainland (1.7% per year) than it is on the islands (0.2% per year). The region's fisheries are declining at a similar rate, as most commercial shellfish and finfish use mangal for nurseries and/or refugia.

Further to this, few Caribbean states have legislation or enforcement capabilities to protect or manage mangal, although at least 11 international treaties and conventions could be applied to conserve or sustainably use these forests.

If wetlands are allowed to function as intended, then Caribbean governments could avoid spending millions in the restoration process following disasters. By serving as a source of food or income, wetlands enable local communities to be more resilient and less vulnerable to disasters.

The Wider Caribbean region stands to benefit from conservation and protection of their wetlands; whether as a source of energy/food, recreation/tourism

opportunity, and waste-water treatment facility or simply for its aesthetics.

On a more positive note, Caribbean countries such as Anguilla, Aruba, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, and the Turks and Caicos Islands have maintained their mangrove areas relatively constant over the past 25 years. As a result of increased awareness in the region, the annual rate of mangrove area loss has decreased in the last five years in 24 countries within the Caribbean.

The Ramsar Convention and UN Environment’s Caribbean Environment Programme through its Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) protocol continue to work with several local, national and regional groups and organizations to conserve and sustainably manage the use of wetlands and their resources; yet national commitments have to be made to reduce the threat of humans on wetlands.

Every country and citizen can get involved in the conservation of Caribbean wetlands through simple activities such as bringing an end to the draining or filling of wetlands, clearing of mangroves for agricultural purposes and housing developments, destroying coral reefs, and burning of peatlands.

Local and regional environmental groups can be supported as they seek to protect and conserve the region’s natural resources. Commitment can be made to simple actions to preserve wetlands by saving water, recycling garbage and reducing harmful waste, use as little fertilizer as possible and avoid the use of toxic pesticides.

The preservation of wetlands is everybody’s business.

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Taking the Circular Approach to Waste in the Caribbean



Caribbean Waste Management Conference

The diverse nature of biodiversity and wildlife in the Caribbean makes the islands popular “go-to” stops for tourists. Rich marine life and fertile lands also provide food for its families, jobs for its people and revenue for its economies.

However, growing populations and increased consumption of resources have made Caribbean Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) particularly vulnerable to high concentrations of solid waste and plastic litter, far beyond the capacity of the region to cope.

Most islands have been engaged in a balancing act to ensure that their islands remain attractive to tourists and sustain wildlife while ensuring that waste does not overflow their boundaries. But sometimes it does overflow.

Marine debris, which comprises of “any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material that is discarded, disposed of, or abandoned in the marine or coastal environment” (UNEP 2009), especially obvious during rainy periods, impact key industries; which in turn lower the resilience of local economies.

Caribbean SIDS also face other challenges in tackling waste; their small size raises a significant challenge in organising inter-island logistics, and their limited resources lead to bigger challenges regarding the management of waste compared to their mainland counterparts.

Nevertheless, there have been significant strides in waste management for several Caribbean countries.

At the recently concluded Caribbean Waste Management Conference, held in Jamaica from July 4-6 at the Jamaica Conference Centre, UN Environment, in collaboration with the Government of Jamaica and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Caribbean countries were allowed to share

their achievements, their hopes for inter-country strategies as well as solid plans for the future of the waste management in the Caribbean.

Most evident was the shift from the current linear “take-make-use-dispose” tendencies towards a more circular economy.

A circular economy focused on a number of actions, including: re-thinking and redesigning products and packaging, implementation of business processes to ensure that the utility and value of discarded materials is maximised as well as increased resource efficiency through activities aimed at reducing resource consumption and creating an enabling policy environment that will encourage more sustainable consumption patterns based on the **3 Rs: reduce, reuse and recycle**.

Several islands have already taken steps to integrate the circular economy into their national policies through local initiatives and targeted actions. These include steps to substitute plastic and Styrofoam with biodegradable, recycled content, compostable materials and products and the introduction or increase of already existing circular economy products, for instance, sugarcane bagasse, recycled PET bottles, burlap/crocus/jute, cotton/linen canvas and hemp.

These are products that place value on local knowledge, prioritising locally available products and therefore, ensuring sustainability.

Since 2016, Antigua has banned the importation of plastic bags, in an effort to decrease the pollution levels in the country’s waters. The government has even been willing to waive duties and other taxes to assist the private sector as they seek alternatives to the use of plastic bags.

Similarly, Guyana has banned the use of Styrofoam which currently contributes to approximately 2-5% of the waste stream and is primarily used in the food service industry.

Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica and Jamaica are all taking steps to address their waste problem.

Jamaica generates approximately 1.2 million tonnes of solid waste every year, 75% of which ends up in the landfill and only a small portion of the remaining 25% is recycled by small operators.

With a recently launched Plastic Waste project combined with other in- country initiatives, Jamaica aims to reduce the high volume of plastic waste, mostly PET bottles.

During the Caribbean Waste Management Conference countries compiled their best practices implemented in the region and lessons learnt from strategies that were not as successful. These will result in a strategy document and a call to action - "A Guide to Best Practice for the Caribbean".

However continued follow-up is critical and Caribbean governments cannot do it alone.

Every person must take responsibility and engage in activities that will sustainably address the problem.

Governments, civil-society and the private sector must work hand in hand in order to ensure a way forward for the Caribbean.

It is time to act! The challenges are too large for any one country acting alone. Success, therefore, depends on

working together in a concerted way within countries and across borders.

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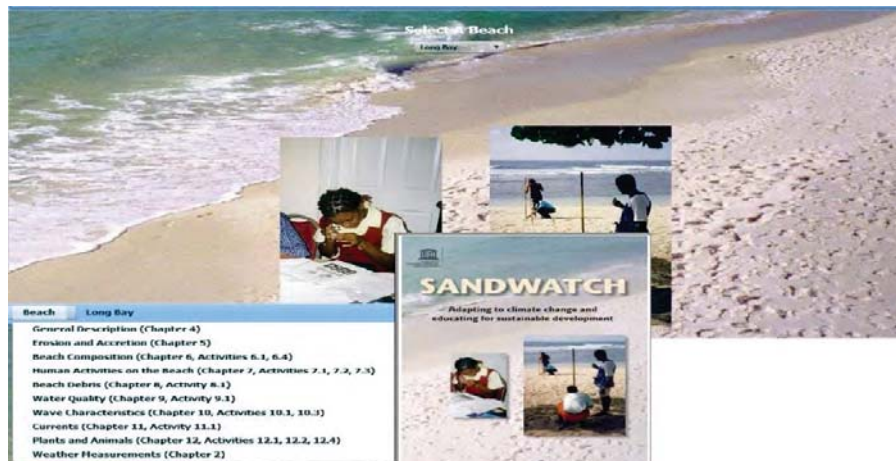
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2. Upcoming Events- UNESCO's SANDWATCH WORKSHOP

UNESCO and the Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO, will conduct a regional workshop for the Caribbean region titled "Sandwatch: a combined approach to climate change adaptation and Education for Sustainable Development", from 2 to 5 October 2017, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

The training workshop aims to i) discuss the value of citizen science in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, ii) take stock of Sandwatch achievements in the Caribbean during the last 16 years, and iii) provide further training on Sandwatch methodology to consolidate skills and enhance capacities to respond to environmental, shoreline and beach change, including those induced by climate change.

The workshop will gather teacher trainers, community educators and curriculum development professionals who will be trained to trigger behavioral change of children, youth and adults in their respective countries through learning and practice to showcase the fragile nature of their marine and coastal environments and the need to use them wisely.



Supporting Blue Growth in Commonwealth Small States

The 'blue economy' is an evolving concept that recognizes the need to maximize the enormous economic potential of oceans, while preserving it for future generations. Increasingly, small states are embracing the blue economy as a mechanism for realising sustainable growth. It presents a promising avenue for small states to overcome some of their inherent economic challenges, by developing blue businesses, increasing economic diversification and realising growth embedded in the fundamental principles of environmental sustainability. With recent advances in technology, potential blue economy growth areas for small states have increased and now include aquaculture, ocean-based renewable energy and marine biotechnology.

The Commonwealth has a long history of supporting small states on ocean management and sustainability, and is at the forefront of promoting the blue economy as a holistic concept that can address sustainable development policies and programmes at multiple levels. An issue of The Commonwealth's triannual publication *Small States Digest* (Commonwealth, 2016) explored the requirements for small states to effectively pursue a blue economy development approach. This article briefly summarises the section focused on the six enabling factors necessary to fully realise a blue economy. It also highlights the Commonwealth's efforts to support the development of the blue economy in our small member states.

1. Creating an Enabling Environment for Blue Growth

Blue economy growth requires a range of framework conditions to be fulfilled. Most importantly, there are six key interlinked enablers that are vital for catalyzing blue investment and growth: 1) ensuring a healthy marine environment; 2) improving ocean governance; 3) marine surveillance, monitoring and enforcement; 4)

infrastructure; 5) ocean business development; and 6) improving marine education and capacity.

Each factor is discussed below.

1.1 A healthy, resilient and productive marine environment

A principle of the blue economy is the inextricable link between ocean health and sustainable economic livelihoods. For SIDS, where tourism and fisheries are economic pillars, the health of coral reefs and the biodiversity that they provide are of critical importance both from an environmental and economic perspective. Effective management of the marine environment and the maintenance of ecosystem health is fundamental development.



1.2 Ocean governance

Successful blue growth relies on an approach to ocean governance which recognises the full portfolio of possible uses and activities within the blue economy and coordinates management across this portfolio. The integrated system should establish, strengthen, and implement effective governance mechanisms that contribute to the implementation of the blue economy. The Commonwealth and International Seabed Authority's collaboration to develop a new international regulatory regime on deep sea mining is a step in the right direction.

1.3 Maritime surveillance, monitoring and enforcement

Although legal frameworks for many marine activities exist in most countries, the Commonwealth's experience with stakeholder engagement in small states has brought to light the difficulties of enforcing the existing rules and regulations, particularly for fisheries. Improving the procedures for monitoring and enforcement and clearly defining the institutional and organizational responsibilities for managing marine activities and resources between the various

ministries and departments is crucial and must be addressed.

1.4 Infrastructure

Coastal and port infrastructure are critical for catalysing economic growth and development in small states. However, these assets are at risk of damage from rising sea levels and relocation or fortification may prove financially burdensome. Planning for investments in coastal infrastructure should simultaneously mitigate against the effects of climate change and the hazards of flooding and erosion. Work on ports development and increasing trade competitiveness is ongoing.

1.5 Business development, investment and finance

Small states need to design and implement strategic ocean development policies to stimulate growth in their ocean space in order to increase investments in and development of the blue economy (EIU, 2015). Such strategies should 1) increase investment for developing existing sectors; 2) promote investment and innovation to support the development of new and emerging sectors; and 3) further develop the backward and forward linkages into the value chains of existing sectors.

1.6 Education and capacity building

The lack of education and training in marine management has led to chronic technical gaps in marine planning and decision-making in many small states. Identifying the future skills needed and labour market supply and demand trends along with adapting and developing existing education, vocational and professional training programmes to improve capacity in these areas will be essential if the blue economy is to become a reality.

2. The Commonwealth Blue Charter

The Commonwealth Blue Charter is a blueprint for integrated ocean management and governance.

Consistent with SDG14, the Blue Charter initiative aims to improve the sustainability of States’ existing marine activities whilst also showcasing efforts branching into innovative, regenerative and new marine sectors. It builds on the Commonwealth’s strong commitment to principles for the sustainable development of marine resources and the protection of the marine environment, and the impetus to deliver effective measures for marine conservation and development of multi-stakeholder partnerships articulated at the UN Ocean Conference held in June 2017.

To ensure its practical use, the Blue Charter flagship product (for leaders) will be accompanied by a toolkit of pragmatic guidance (for officials) which addresses different aspects of ocean governance and blue economies. This will in turn be supported by trainings, knowledge and innovation exchanges amongst member countries, with the Commonwealth Secretariat exploring different regional and thematic country groupings to maximise effectiveness. Blue Charter principles are complementary to attainment of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG’s) and are intended to support the Commonwealth’s commitment and leadership in ocean issues. Accordingly, the tools and trainings developed through it would assist member countries in meeting their various national and international commitments (e.g., SDGs, CBD, UNFCCC, etc.) as they address ocean priorities

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By Heather Cover-Kus

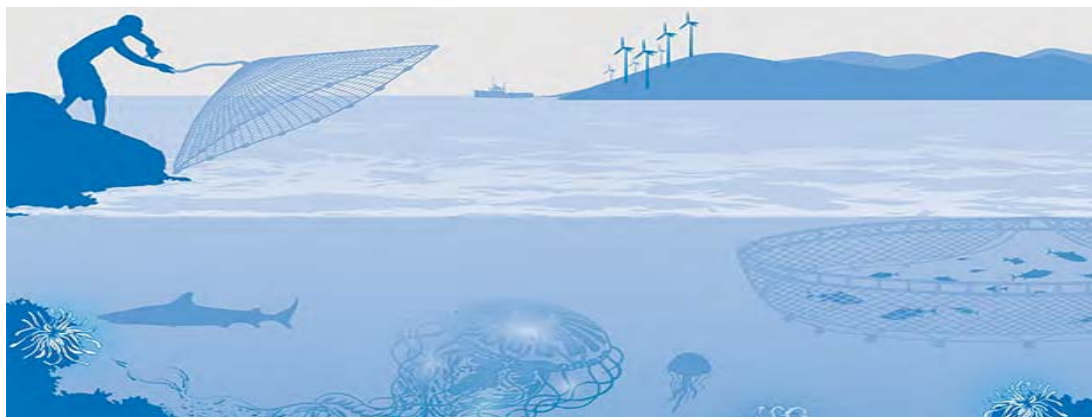
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The Ocean and the OECS: Harnessing the Benefits for Sustainable Development



For the small island developing states (SIDS) and territories which comprise the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)¹, the ocean and its resources “... assumed a new importance as possibly the last frontier for resource exploitation ... which underpins their aspirations for self-reliant development”. This developmental aspiration of these ‘great ocean developing states’, was articulated near 30 years ago by Sir Vaughn Lewis, first Director General of the OECS and Mr. Brian Challenger, a member of staff.² The recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underscores the significance of the ocean in

development, particularly for SIDS, including those in the Caribbean which are among the most vulnerable.³

The Ocean is the life blood of our planet”.⁴ The ocean covers 71% of the earth’s surface, contains 97% of the earth’s water, provides more than 50% of the oxygen terrestrial beings breathe, drives global weather patterns, absorbs around 30% of human-produced carbon dioxide and serves as a critical buffer to the ever-worsening impacts of global warming. It’s an ecological treasure trove, estimated to contain over 80% of world’s plants and animal species, and provides an estimated US\$24 trillion in ecosystem services annually. Ocean goods and services include food as well as genetic, pharmaceuticals

¹ The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) was established on June 18, 1981. It currently comprises Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines which are full Member States in addition to Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and Martinique which are Associate Member States (www.oecs.org).

² Lewis V.A., and Challenger, B., (1988). *Regional Cooperation and Development: The OECS experience*. In E. Gold (Ed.), *A new law of the sea for the Caribbean* (p. 255). New York, Springer-Verlag.

³ The Development agenda of is enshrined in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, and the Call to Action from the June 5 to 9, 2017, United Nations Oceans Conference to support the implementation of SDG 14; the preamble of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; and, in the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A.) Pathway.

⁴ Opening quotation and following statistics from H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the 71st Session of the General Assembly, on December 13, 2016, during the briefing concerning the United Nations Ocean Conference.

and biotechnological resources. Concurrently, human activities including those which contribute to “the inconvenient truth” of climate change, put the health and sustainability of the ocean, and by extension, the planet and human existence at risk. Greenhouse gas emissions are contributing to ocean acidification and destruction of ocean resources; illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing is causing depletion of fish stocks; and, marine pollution from ships and land based sources is adversely impacting marine life and ocean goods and services.

The Caribbean Sea, a biodiversity hotspot, directly supports the economies of 34 coastal SIDS and territories and 41 million people. It provides significant marine ecosystems, goods and services including seafood consumption well above the global average⁵; marine-based tourism and recreation, the largest economic sector;⁶ coastal protection and resilience from reefs and mangroves valued at about US\$1 to 3 billion per year; and carbon sequestration by mangroves and seagrass beds (See Figure 1).

A 2016 report by the World Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the OECS Commission and Duke University,⁷ affirmed the potential of the ocean to underpin sustainable economic and social development in the region. It found that ocean activities in the Caribbean generated US\$407 billion in 2012, equivalent to 14% - 27% of the global ocean economy.

The *Revised Treaty of Basseterre Establishing the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union* of June 18, 2010⁸ provides, among other things, that “... the Member States shall ... endeavour to coordinate, harmonise and undertake joint actions and pursue joint policies particularly in the fields of matters relating to the sea and its resources.”⁹ Consequently the Member States have adopted an OECS-wide approach to integrated ocean governance and established the Eastern Caribbean Regional Ocean Policy and Strategic Action Plan (ECROP) which *inter alia* articulates a vision for the ocean; promotes and guides future sustainable use and

development of the region’s marine waters and resources; outlines a full range of priorities and actions as well as institutional reforms to transition to a ‘blue economy’.¹⁰

The ECROP is being actively implemented to realize OECS’ vision for the ocean through ‘blue growth,¹¹ and by transitioning to a blue economy. Achievement of these should be supported, by the best available scientific information for protection, sustainable utilisation, preservation and where possible, restoration of resources, participatory management and stewardship. Regional and national coordinating mechanisms are also being strengthened to enhance implementation of ECROP and related national ocean policies.

Consistent with the Call to Action from the United Nations (UN) Ocean Conference the OECS continues to pursue partnerships to set the Region on a path of blue growth to transition to blue economies. In this regard the Caribbean Regional Oceanscape Project (CROP),¹² which contemplates, among other things, national and regional marine spatial planning is at an advanced stage of preparation. The OECS is also one of the agencies which has established the Interim Coordinating Mechanism for CIME+ Strategic Action Programme and is a member of the related Project Execution Group.¹³

The OECS has long recognized the potential of the ocean to contribute to development at the individual community through to the global level and continues to actively pursue measures to support sustainable health and wealth at all levels to achieve sustainable development that supports people, planet, prosperity, partnerships and peace.

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⁵ In 2013 fish consumption across the Caribbean Regional Mechanism Region was 24 kilogram per person and 26 kilogram per person in the OECS. (See *CRFM Statistical and Information Report for 2014*, p.76.) Global average consumption in 2012 was 12 kilogram per person.

⁶ Tourism and recreation accounted for 15 percent of GDP and almost 2 million direct and indirect jobs in 2011.

⁷ World Bank. (2016). *Toward a Blue Economy: A Promise for Sustainable Growth in the Caribbean*. Washington D.C.: Author.

⁸ The Revised Treaty of Basseterre entered into force on January 21, 2011.

⁹ Provision in Article 4 (2) (o) – Purposes and Functions of the Organisation.

¹⁰ Blue Economy means “a sustainable ocean economy where the wealth derived from ocean assets are in balance with the ocean’s ecological health”.

Definition from The Economist (2015); and World Bank Report *Toward a Blue Economy: A Promise for Sustainable Growth in the Caribbean*. The ‘blue economy’ was first conceptualized at the Rio+20 conference in 2012.

¹¹ Blue growth is “the means by which an unsustainable ocean economy can transition towards a more balanced and sustainable one”.

¹² CROP is funded by the Global Environmental Facility, (GEF), administered by the World Bank and executed by the OECS Commission

¹³ Interim Coordination Mechanism for the Sustainable Management, Use and Protection of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems.

An Abyssal Relation: UN DESA and the International Seabed Authority advancing Blue Growth in SIDS

Not until recently, the generic idea of ‘development’, in contrast to the notion of sustainable utilisation of natural resources, has generally been, conceptually restricted to areas within a State’s territory or jurisdiction¹. Sustainable development was thus, perceived primarily in terms of endogenous economic growth and its linkages to social improvements. When oceans were considered for instance, it was usually either from a fisheries or food security perspective or because of concerns relating to marine pollution from ship or land based sources².



PHOTO CREDIT- NAUTILUS MINERALS

Today, the governance of the “Area” (i.e. the seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction), is slowly but firmly beginning to be understood by reference to sustainable development. The developmental, in contrast to the purely commercial objective and role of the International Seabed Authority (the Authority) to contribute to socio-economic development, within environmental limits, is gathering momentum. This is not a new phenomenon at all; it is an agreed idea as old as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) itself.

The declaration in UNCLOS that the “Area” (which represents over 45% of the planet’s surface) and its resources are “*common heritage of mankind*”³ was a milestone in the realm of international co-operation.

The achievement of the goals UNCLOS as envisaged by its framers, will contribute to the realisation of “*a just and equitable international economic order which takes into account the interests and needs of humankind as a whole, in particular, the special interests and needs of developing countries, whether coastal or landlocked*”⁴.

In line with Part XI of UNCLOS, four Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), namely, the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and Tonga, are sponsors of Entities that are now holders of Exploration License issued by the Authority, thus helping advance developing States’ interests and participation in deep seabed mining activities on an equal footing with developed States.

A study⁵ carried out by the World Bank, reveals certain capacity characteristics common to PSIDS in as far as their quest for deep-sea mining is concerned. These include but not limited to: capacity deficiency on collection and dissemination of geological and mineral resources data and information; varying and largely untested national laws and policies; weak understanding of appropriate environmental framework for deep marine environment; near total neglect of the social policies necessary for deep-sea mining to ensure adequate and commensurate benefit sharing; and institutional weaknesses across licensing, regulatory, compliance monitoring and revenue management.

Cognisant of these capacity characteristics, in a collaborative and deliberate disposition, UNDESA, dutiful to its role as the UN Secretariat’s upholder of the global development pillar, for today and tomorrow’s prosperity and the Authority, genuinely reverent of its mandate as the organizer and controller of activities in the Area, announced during the UN Ocean Conference in June 2017, a voluntary joint commitment to contribute to, facilitate and advance the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 and its associated targets, through capacity building initiatives targeting in particular, Small Islands Developing States (SIDS). This collaboration, in their own words, is a voluntary “*abyssal relation*”.

¹ French D. “From the Depths: Rich Pickings of Principles of Sustainable Development and General International Law on the Ocean Floor—the Seabed Disputes Chamber’s 2011 Advisory Opinion” *Int’l Journal of Maritime & Coastal Law* 26 (2011) 525-568

² *Ibid.*

³ UNCLOS, Art.136

⁴ Preamble – UNCLOS.

⁵

<http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/125321460949939983/Pacific-Possible-Deep-Sea-Mining.pdf>

According to their respective capacity building mandates, UNDESA and the Authority will facilitate and organise meetings or events on “Blue Economy” in the Pacific during 2018 to define strategies and means to strengthen marine scientific research, formulation of appropriate policies, rules and regulations and other capacity building initiatives in order to better define the role of deep-sea mining in advancing national and regional sustainable development priorities, implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of SDGs.

The fact that deep-sea mining has unknown associated risks has been a continued source of concern to many. Large-scale mining on land has a long and mixed history of contributing towards positive development outcomes, and resource-rich and/or resource-dependent nations have struggled to leverage natural

resource development towards broader economic diversification and sustained growth. Resource development undertaken today will undoubtedly impact a nation for generations to come, therefore the need for good sector governance, strong institutions and highly skilled professionals to develop and implement sound policies, laws and regulatory oversight is paramount to deriving lasting benefits. These new *abyssal relations* aim to address this.

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3. Upcoming Events- FAO

Pacific Week of Agriculture (16-20 October, 2017)

This celebration will take place in Vanuatu and bring together all Pacific Island countries and territories, and four developed countries with direct interests in the region. There will be a series of events related to agriculture and tourism as well as technical meetings. Towards the end of the week, there will be a Ministerial meeting (agriculture and forestry) at which important discussions on the way forward for agriculture and forestry will be discussed. The way forward for the GAP will also be discussed, and FAO Sub regional Office for the Pacific Islands(SAP) is developing a Pacific GAP strategy.

The High-Level Roundtable (11 November, 2017)

This roundtable with the Heads of Government of the Pacific will be held in Rome in November. On their way to Bonn for COP23, Heads of Government will make a stopover in Rome to be received by Pope Francis.

Africa’s Blue Economy: A Policy Handbook by UNECA

The Blue Economy can play a major role in Africa’s structural transformation. The approach advocated in the “Africa’s Blue Economy: A Policy Handbook” is premised in the sustainable use, management and conservation of aquatic and marine ecosystems and associated resources. Through better linkages to other sectors of the economy, it situates the aquatic and marine economies as part of integrated ecosystem services based on the harvesting of living and non-living resources, benefitting both coastal, island states and landlocked countries. Thirty-eight of the fifty-four African States are coastal States and more than 90 percent of Africa’s imports and exports are conducted by sea. Maritime zones under Africa’s jurisdiction total about 13 million square kilometres including territorial seas and approximately 6.5 million square kilometres of the continental shelf. Mauritius with its 1850 square kilometres is one of the smallest countries in Africa and in the world but with its territorial waters, it becomes a country with 1.9 million square kilometres, the size of South Africa. This Policy Handbook, offers a step by step guide to help African member States to better mainstream the Blue Economy into their national development plans, strategies, policies and laws. *More information:* https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/blue-eco-policy-handbook_eng_1nov.pdf



Section II - Recent Activities

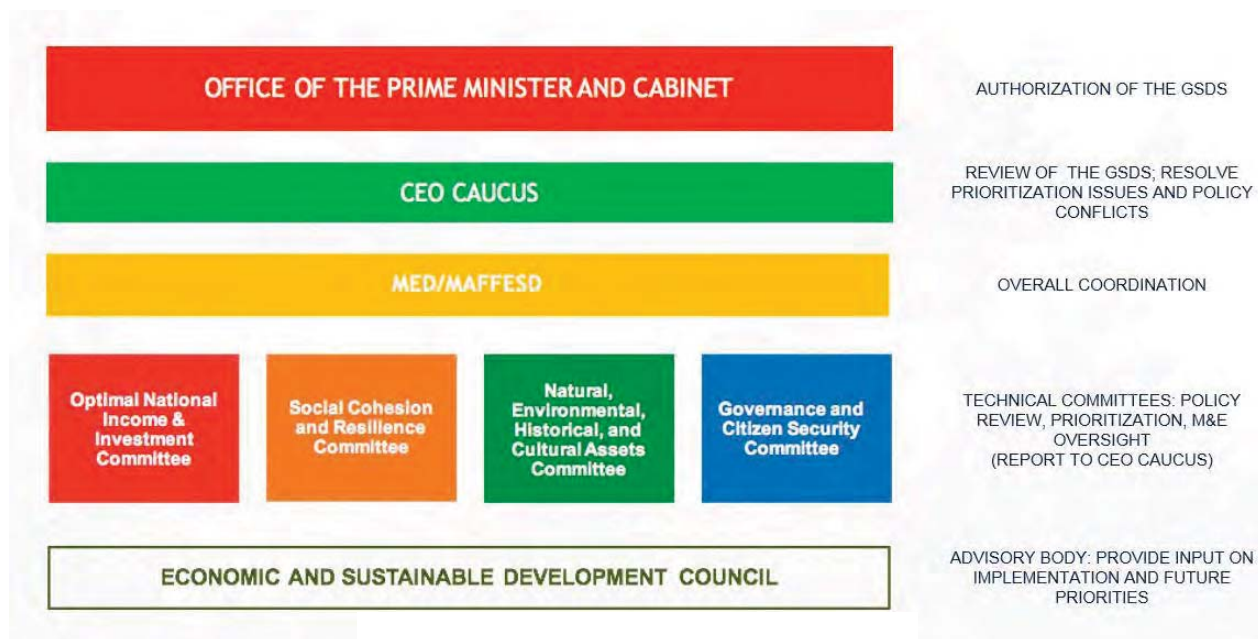
Presentation of VNR from SIDS (Belize and Maldives) during HLPF 2017

In 2014, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities for Action (SAMOA) Pathway was agreed by the international community as a blueprint for the further implementation of the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). One year later, the “2030 Agenda” with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals was adopted by the UNGA in September 2015. The 2030 Agenda confirmed the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) as the central UN platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, and that the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC will carry out regular voluntary reviews of implementation. For SIDS, the 2030 Agenda is the main vehicle through which the Samoa Pathway can be implemented. These countries have now, begun to focus their attention on the structures and strategies that must be put in place to implement the 2030 Agenda. The Voluntary National reviews (VNRs) present an opportunity for SIDS to assess progress and challenges on the road to implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In 2016 Samoa was the first SIDS country to present its VNR. In 2017 two SIDS -Belize and Maldives presented VNRs. Following is an overview of these two presentations. Belize’s “Horizon 2030: National Development Framework 2010-2030” guides long-term national development planning and establishes a set of development goals and targets for the country. To guide SDG implementation in the medium-term, Belize has

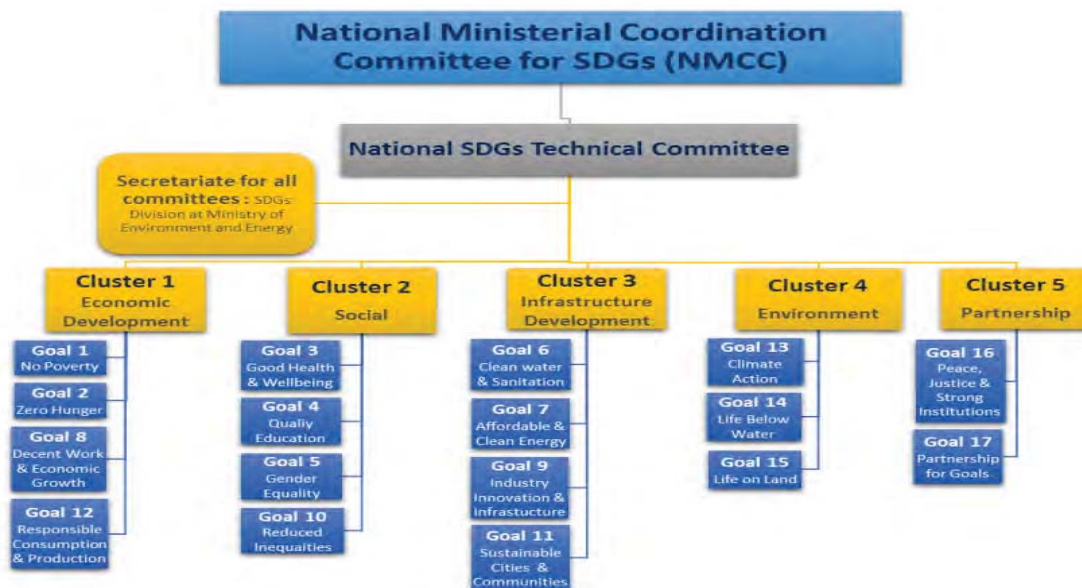
adopted the “Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) 2016-2020”. The Strategy aims to improve quality life for all Belizeans. For this purpose, four critical success factors have been identified;

- 1) Optimal National Income & Investment
- 2) Social Cohesion Resilience
- 3) National Environmental, Historical and Cultural Assessment
- 4) Governance & Citizen Security.

Under each of these critical success factors, Belize will strengthen institutional arrangements thus ensuring that interlinkages and overlaps between goals are addressed and gaps are identified. Four technical committees related to the critical success factors have been created to review, modify and approve reports from state and non-state sources on progress towards achievement of the goals. These reports are then sent to a Chief Executive Officer’s caucus along with recommendations, for onward transmission to the Prime Minister’s office. The Ministries of Economic Development and Environment and Sustainable Development provide secretariat support to the process .



Belize Structure for Implementation



Coordination for Implementation in the Maldives

Like many of the SIDS, Maldives faces significant challenges in all three dimensions of sustainable development which are exacerbated by vulnerability to climate change and internal and external shocks. The geographic insularity, dispersed population among numerous island and high transaction costs result in limited potential for economies of scale. Despite these challenges, Maldives has been successful in implementing of the Millennium Development Goals and achieved a ‘MDG plus’ status. The country made substantial progress in eradicating extreme poverty, achieving universal education and health care and protecting terrestrial and marine biodiversity. Maldives has announced the will to continue its efforts on the SDGs by building on the successes of the MDGS and to focus efforts where progress has been slower such as empowering women, strengthening mechanisms of governance and justice, minimizing economic disparity and sustainable consumption and production to ensure no Maldivian is left behind.

With regard to the institutional arrangement for the implementation of SDGs, the National Ministerial Coordination Committee, provides overall policy guidance and political support. The Ministerial Committee is supported by a Technical Committee on SDGs, which brings together experts from various government institutions and civil society. The two committees together ensure country ownership and broad participation that will be critical for the successful implementation of SDGs. The SDGs Division at the Ministry of Environment and Energy coordinates work related to the implementation of SDGs including monitoring, reporting and follow-up on the implementation process.

Maldives has made a total of nine voluntary commitments as lead entity during the Ocean Conference.

The voluntary commitments cover various topics covered during the Ocean Conference and targets of SDG 14, such as and “Introduce legal framework to reduce plastic pollution”, “Scaling up the Marine Conservation fund launched on October 2015- Improving marine scientific research and safeguarding marine resources of the Maldives through sustainable harvest”, “Avoid and Intercept ocean plastics by the fisheries industry of the Maldives”, “Implementation of strengthened and coordinated Monitoring, Control and Surveillance scheme to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing” made by Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture

Both Belize and Maldives recognized the importance of an inclusive and participatory approach by involving of different stakeholders in the implementation of SDGs which also contributes to awareness-raising. During the presentations as well as in the reports, it was demonstrated that preparations for VNRs at the national level had mobilized various stakeholders from governments, private sector, CSO, academia, scientists and other stakeholders to generate the momentum for implementation. Furthermore, this process assists countries to identify gaps, challenges and support planning process at the national level which is important also in regards to partnerships with development partners to prioritize areas for support. Considering all these, it is strongly recommended that more SIDS present VNRs to make known to the international community of the efforts and progress SIDS are making as well as define areas where support is necessary from national and international development partners. Next year seven more SIDS, Singapore, Jamaica, Cabo Verde, Dominican Republic, Kiribati and Bahamas has announced their plans to present and more is encouraged in the future HLPFs.

Authors for IPCC's Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate Selected

(Aug 17,2017) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has invited 101 experts from 41 countries to begin work on the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC) Lead Authors and Review Editors.

This Special Report is one of the three Special Reports which was decided to be produced by IPCC at its 43rd Session in April 2016. The first of the Special Report to be finalized in September 2018 is the Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways. The other Special Report is on Climate Change and Land of which author team was also selected which will be finalized in September 2019.

The outline of the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate was agreed in March 2017, of which Chapter 4 is on sea level rise and implication for highly vulnerable coastal zones, particularly SIDS, coastal cities and infrastructure.

"This Special Report is unique in IPCC history and reflects the increasing awareness of how important and at the same time how fragile the ocean is as a life-sustaining unit

of our planet," said Hans Pörtner, Co-Chair, IPCC Working Group II. "The ocean offers many services to ecosystems and humankind, from climate regulation to food supply. At the same time, ocean-cryosphere-atmosphere interactions will shape sea-level rise as a major challenge to human civilization." Working Group II assesses climate change impacts, adaptation and vulnerability.

The IPCC received a total of 569 nominations from 57 member countries. The selection process for Coordinating Lead Authors, Lead Authors and Review Editors was conducted by members of the IPCC Working Group I and II Bureaus and led by the Co-Chairs. Of the selected experts, 18 are writing on Chapter 4: Sea Level Rise and Implications for Low Lying Islands, Coasts and Communities.

The full list of Coordinating Lead Authors, Lead Authors and Review Editors is here: <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/authors/>.

For more information, contact:

IPCC Press Office Email: ipcc-media@wmo.int.

What is the IPCC:

https://www.ipcc.ch/news_and_events/docs/factsheets/FS_what_ipcc.pdf

1st High-level Pacific Blue Economy Conference Concludes with a Blueprint for Pacific Islands

The Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF), in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the Governments of Solomon Islands and Fiji, organized the first Pacific Blue Economy Conference on August 23rd- 24th 2017, in Suva, Republic of Fiji Islands. The two days high-level conference built on the outcomes of the UN Ocean Conference and on existing Pacific commitments and frameworks related to the SDG 14 and provided a knowledge platform on the blue economy for the Pacific Islands and explore lessons learned, innovations and emerging industries based on ocean resources.

The Conference witnessed the contribution of excellent speakers from outside the region including like James Michel, former President of the Seychelles, Professor Gunter Pauli representing the innovative entrepreneur, H.E. Angus Friday, Ambassador for Grenada with incredible experience of Blue Economy, Jean-Michel Cousteau, President of Ocean Futures Society, H.E. Hersey



Kyota, Ambassador of Palau to the US and Chair of the Board of the Global Island Partnership, Jeff Ardron, from the Commonwealth Secretariat, and Paul Holthus, President and CEO of the World Ocean Council (WOC) among many distinguished contributors.

The 200 participants which took part in the conference were a very various audience made of government, private sector, civil society, research institute and academia, representatives of multilateral institutions, the UN, and other development partners, international and regional organizations. This was truly a multi-sectoral

and multi-stakeholder conference on the Blue Economy for the Pacific Islands.

The summary of outcome in final preparation and the Proceedings of this Conference will form the blueprint for the Pacific Islands Development Forum Strategic Plan on the blue economy to be approved by leaders later this year. More importantly, it will form a collective contribution to the regional Sustainable Development Goal roadmap for SDG14 (Life under water), with special emphasis on target 14.7 to which the concept of the blue economy has been associated. The PIDF Chair, the Government of the Solomon Islands, will provide this as our contribution for SDG14 to the Pacific regional SDG Roadmap and to the UN President of the General

Assembly as part of PIDF's commitment made for the Ocean Global Conference Call for Action. For more information, please follow the link below: <http://pacificidf.org/1st-high-level-pacific-blue-economy-conference/>

Guest speakers :

<http://pacificidf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/PBEC-Guest-Speakers-Highlight.pdf>

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UNESCO's recent activities on Ensuring a Robust and Reliable Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System for the Pacific Region.

1. 5th regional meeting of the Pacific Tsunami Warning Systems (PTWS)

(August 7-9, 2017) The UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Pacific Tsunami Warning Systems (PTWS) Working Group on Tsunami Warning and Mitigation for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICT's) has held its 5th regional meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands from the 7th to the 9th of August to improve tsunami warning and mitigation services and information sharing within the concerned countries. The two-day meeting gathered 30 representatives from Pacific countries, experts and observers, and was supported by the Solomon Islands Government, UNESCO-IOC, Oceania Regional Seismic Network (ORSNET) project and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The meeting allowed the participants to review tsunami detection, warning and response capabilities of the PICT's and tsunami mitigation activities in the region. This meeting was also very important for the Working Group to discuss their priorities and future actions.

For more information: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/apia/about-this-office/single-view/news/ensuring_robust_and_reliable_tsunami_warning_and_mitigation/

2. Tsunami warning training for Fiji, 10-14, July

In order to support Fiji Government to improve warning and response to tsunami threat and streamline tsunami messages for dissemination to the public, UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO) in coordination with the NOAA International Tsunami Information Centre (ITIC) Training Programme International (ITP-International) organized a technical training for the authorities in Fiji from 10-14 July 2017 at Fiji Meteorological Service, Laucala Bay, Suva, Fiji. The IOC-UNESCO and ITIC ITP-International held the programme in partnership with the Government of Fiji, the Pacific Community (SPC), the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with support from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the European Union and the ACP Group of States.

For more information: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/apia/about-this-office/single-view/news/tsunami_warning_training_for_fiji/

3. Savaia Lefaga - Samoa's first tsunami ready community.

Savaia village, on the southern coast of Upolu, is recognized by the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) as Samoa's first Tsunami Ready community. Savaia has been selected as the pilot village for this program as it has already completed the community disaster and climate risk management program and had participated in the UNESCO-IOC's Exercise Pacific Wave 2017 (PACWAVE17). To be selected, Savaia had to implement 10 guidelines covering hazard assessment, tsunami signage, evacuation mapping and planning, education and outreach, and 24hrs x 7days communications and response planning. The achievements were put into action through a community exercise that was part of IOC's PACWAVE17. This program will be up-scaled to become a multi-hazard readiness recognition program for Samoa". Samoa is the first Pacific Island Country to implement the program.

For more information: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/apia/about-this-office/single-view/news/savaia_lefaga_samoas_first_tsunami_ready_community/

Pacific leads High Ambition Coalition for maritime Shipping emission reduction



Mr. Cornie HUIZENGA - Secretary General, Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport speaks on the PPMC Initiative, Bunker emissions post-Paris, NDCS and SDGs during the PIDF Side Event on The High Ambition Coalition for Shipping Emissions Reduction.

(May 1, 2017) Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands have submitted a paper to the forthcoming meeting of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) calling on shipping to show high ambition in tackling climate change causing emissions from shipping, in line with Pacific Leaders calls for no more than 1.5 degrees warming.

The paper is one of five submissions to the IMO co-sponsored by a number of Pacific countries, (RMI, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Kiribati and Tuvalu) with European and other countries under the banner of the High Ambition Coalition for Shipping. The IMO has agreed to a Roadmap to set shipping's role in combatting climate change and reducing Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the sector. The first meetings began in June and July this year in London.

These Pacific island countries have supported a Pacific Island Development Forum (PIDF) position paper prepared by Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands, as part of a High Ambition Coalition for Shipping. The countries were represented by their Ministers of Transport and/or Energy at the Third Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministerial Meeting held in Nuku'alofa Tonga from the 26th to the 28th of April. The Ministers communiqué noted Pacific and European

cooperation and leadership in the High Ambition Coalition for shipping to ensure that IMO provides its contribution towards the Paris Agreement goals. This issue has long been a priority for the PIDF and with Marshall Islands and Fiji, side event, "The High Ambition Coalition for Shipping Emissions Reduction" was held in Tonga.

The Pacific position paper noted that numerous declarations by Pacific leaders have called for the need to curb global warming within a 1.5-degree Celsius guardrail if the existential threat posed by climate change on their countries is to be combated.

The PIDF Secretary General said "We need to see progress in emission reductions negotiations within the IMO and it is truly encouraging to see the same level of ambition that the Pacific took to the Climate Change negotiations at the UNFCCC, also making its way into the negotiations at the IMO and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)."

The submissions lodge with IMO from the High Ambition Coalition for Shipping note the need for shipping to move rapidly to decarbonisation if Paris Agreement objectives are to be met. The Marshalls/Solomon's submission requests that the IMO agree that the level of ambition in emission reductions should be high and an overall target for shipping's emission reductions be consistent with a 'fair share' of the global burden of reductions necessary to achieve a target of no more than 1.5 degree Celsius temperature increase. The Ministers Meeting in Tonga focussed on "Affordable, reliable and sustainable energy and transport services" and it saw prime-ministers, ministers and officials from the region discuss the closely interacting topics of energy and transport decarbonisation, and climate change.

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Official Launch of Global Action Programme:

Addressing unique nutrition and climate change challenges for SIDS countries

Officially launched on the sidelines of the 40th Session of the FAO Conference on 4 July 2017, the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) provides an integrated, multi-stakeholder framework with which to address the unique but diverse food security and nutrition challenges faced by SIDS.

The GAP, set to be the guiding tool for implementing the SAMOA Pathway, focuses on three mutually reinforcing objectives and takes a multi-sectoral approach across all agricultural sectors – fisheries, forestry, livestock and crops: 1. Enabling environments for food security and nutrition; 2. Sustainable, resilient food systems that support healthy diets and nutrition and; 3. Empowered people and communities for improved food security and nutrition, with a focus on vulnerable groups

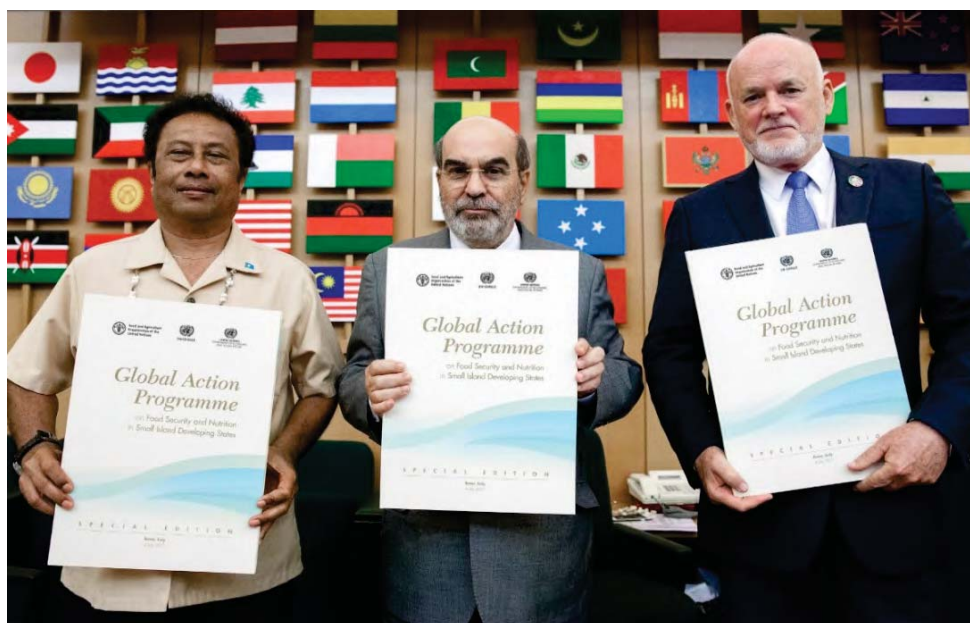
Focus on the SIDS

FAO has scaled up its work with SIDS in recent years including in areas aimed at improving the management and use of natural resources; promoting integrated rural development; and building resilience to extreme weather events.

Looking to emphasize opportunities for SIDS to promote sustainable development while boosting their food security and nutrition, during the recent Ocean Conference in New York, FAO committed to increase economic benefits to SIDS countries. By leveraging its Blue Growth Initiative through three specific regional SIDS projects, with approximately US\$16 million in funding from FAO, SIDS countries can become better stewards of their marine resources. For example, people in many Pacific SIDS consume three to four times the global average of fish, a key source of animal protein. Promoting local food systems that deliver healthier ocean-based diets—in line with the GAP outcome 2.1.1, “Oceans and seas and their resources are sustainably managed and used for food security and nutrition”—would also improve sustainable use of natural resources, resilience and nutrition.

All relevant entities working on food security and nutrition issues in SIDS are encouraged to incorporate the GAP as a programmatic framework for ensuring that a coordinated and coherent set of actions is implemented for addressing the ongoing food security and nutrition challenges.

[Full text of the Global Action Programme](#)



04 July 2017, Rome, Italy - L to R: Tommy E. Remengesau, President of the Republic of Palau, FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva and Peter Thomson, President of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly

2017 Pacific Year for the Oceans #myoceanmatters Photo Contest Winners Announced

With a total of 174 photographs submitted from across most Pacific Island countries over three months (March-May 2017), winners for the 2017 Pacific Year for the Oceans #myoceanmatters campaign were announced on 21st of June, after selecting from the top 20 submitted photographs, by the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) internal judging committee on their social media platforms.

“The #myoceanmatters Photo Contest was an exciting opportunity for our communities to participate in acknowledging 2017 as the Pacific Year for the Oceans and documenting why it matters to them”, said PIDF Secretary General, François Martel and he further added “we encourage the use of photography to inspire, illuminate and inform our communities about our ocean world and beyond.”

Secretary General Martel also acknowledged all participants and said that everyone was a winner in a way for participating in the contest and for their continued efforts on ocean advocacy.

All entries into the photo contest can be viewed on [PIDF Facebook page](#) and top 20 entries can be viewed on the PIDF [website](#) as well.

Photos courtesy - PIDF Strategic Communications Unit, Pacific Year for the Ocean 2017, #myoceanmatters campaign.

Winners



Ist place winner:

Photographer: Grahame Stageman (grayandsanya@connect.com.fj)

Location: Nasese, Suva, Fiji

About the photo: **Camakau under the moon** -Taken – 17th April 2017 5.23am

“The photo reminds me that there was a time when we sailed the oceans without burning fossil fuels, without the associated pollution of the modern day and with navigation accomplished by our knowledge and use of the stars. Methods and traditions so easily overlooked if it were not for the people that build and maintain these craft for us to admire”.



2nd place winner:

Photographer: Lee Arkhie

Perez (leearkhieperez@gmail.com)

Where: Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

About the photo: **Sunset in Sokeh's**

Beautiful Sunset in the backdrop as Fishermen passed by the Sokeh's Rock! The ocean provides for us but now it is our turn to provide for it to ensure our survival".

3rd place winner:

Photographer: David Lum (dave_fi@hotmail.com)

When & Where: 13th March, 2017- Queen Elizabeth Drive, Suva, Fiji.

About the photo: **Sustenance Through Harmony in Nature**

The ocean sustains not only the creatures that live in it and humans that depend on it for source of food, but also mangrove trees that create that vital balance in our ecosystem. As the ocean and mangroves coexist in harmony, so should humans with the seas and the mangroves. Indiscriminate pollution of the ocean is causing irreversible damage to a much bigger ecosystem.



Most Liked on Social Media Platform:

Photographer: Chelsie C. Gumabon

Location: Guam, March 9, 2017

About the Photo: Hila'an Beach,

"Calling all ocean warriors to join me. Let's figure out what we can do to keep our oceans healthy for the next generation".

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Section III Partnerships

Pacific Launch Green Business Centre, New Partnership for Private Sector Engagement in SDG



Front row, third left: Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO) board chairman Howard Politini and Pacific Islands Development Forum Secretary-General François Martel with members on the 26th of July, 2017 at the Hexagon Hotel in Nadi, Fiji

The Pacific Islands Development Forum launched the Pacific Green Business Centre at the Hexagon Hotel in Nadi on 26th of July, 2017. The Pacific Green Business Centre is the first digital platform dedicated to support businesses and the private sector in engaging in green growth, the blue economy and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is a partnership between PIDF, UNDP and the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organization (PIPSO).

The Pacific Green Business Centre is a virtual platform designed to enhance existing initiatives, explore new, “Greener” business models and best-practices to transition to greener modes of doing business. This platform will stimulate the Private Sector to build a low-carbon, climate-resilient future. The Pacific Green Business Centre will also be a depository of information on green climate financing and SDGs financing to assist the Private sector in preparing funding proposals.

New Partnership for the Pacific with the Global Green Growth Institute



(Jun 27 2017, Suva) In efforts to bring transformational change through mainstreaming the blue-green economic model, PIDF undertook formal partnership with the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI). This partnership follows exchanges and discussions held with the GGGI Pacific office here in Suva over the last 18 months and PIDF's participation in the GGGI Annual Summit held last September 2016 on Jeju Island, South Korea. During the official Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony with the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)

held at the Nasese-based Secretariat, PIDF Secretary General François Martel mentioned that as a Pacific leader organization, “we look forward to establishing some model projects in our island countries to demonstrate that blue-green economy is actually implementable, good for island communities’ resilience and profitable for businesses.” He also added “To mainstream the blue-green economy, countries need to ensure this permeates all policies developed by government and its institutions and we also need to ensure this is integrated into our educational systems, both formal and informal, as well as through traditional leadership, and here we look forward to implementation of such efforts with GGGI.” The Director General of GGGI also expressed similar enthusiasm towards the new partnership. “We look forward to this partnership and are also excited about potential projects that will eventuate from this MoU as we are confident this will develop into a very close and genuine partnership between the two organisations”, said GGGI Director-General Frank Rijsberman. Members of GGGI in the Pacific are Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and Kiribati.

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Our Oceans, Our Islands, Our Future



Kate Brown of GLISPA, Ambassador Dr. Spencer Thomas of Grenada, Deputy Premier Kedrick Pickering of British Virgin Islands, President Tommy Remengesau Jr. of Palau, Vice-President Vincent Meriton of Seychelles and Mayor Perla Cecilia Tun Pech of Cozumel united in the Global Island Partnership.

“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 at the UN Oceans Conference

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 members and friends, the Global Island 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.

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.

From UNSIDS in Apia to COP21 in Paris and recently the UN Oceans Conference in New York, the Global Island Partnership is mobilizing a movement of island leaders and their supporters taking action to build island resilience. To build on this momentum and to support strong outcomes for the UNFCCC COP 23 and Fiji as COP President, the Global Island Partnership is coordinating events at COP 23 to showcase island leadership in resilience.

To learn more about the outcomes of the Global Island Partnership at the UN Oceans Conference, please read the [Event Spotlight](#).

For more information on the Global Island Partnership go to: www.glispa.org or email Jessica Robbins (jessica.robbins@glispa.org), Partnerships Manager of Global Island Partnership.

Section VI Upcoming Events

SUMMARY OF UPCOMING SIDS RELATED EVENTS

September 2017 – December 2017

Date	Venue	Time	Event	Organizers (Related Links)
29-30 Sept	Glen Cove Mansion, Long Island, NY		SIDS Retreat	UN DESA
2-5 Oct	Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago		Regional Workshop: <i>“Sandwatch: a combined approach to climate change adaptation and Education for Sustainable Development”</i>	UNESCO, Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO
26-27 Oct	Port Vila, Vanuatu		SIDS Expert Group Meeting: <i>“Resilient urban development in SIDS: harnessing opportunities for enhanced connectivity”</i>	OHRLLS
16-20 Oct	Vanuatu		Pacific Week of Agriculture	FAO
11 Nov	FAO, Rome		High-Level Roundtable	FAO
23 Oct	FAO, Rome	09:00 – 18:30	Seminar: <i>“Aquaculture and Blue Growth Development Opportunities in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)”</i>	FAO http://www.fao.org/cofi/iaq/73970/en
26 Oct	FAO, Rome	09:00 – 11:00	COFI-SCA Agenda Item: <i>“Aquaculture in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Blue Growth Opportunities for SIDS in a changing climate”</i>	FAO 9 th COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture http://www.fao.org/cofi/iaq/73970/en
25-27 Oct	Bali, Indonesia	10:00-16:00	Fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities	UN Environment
23-24 Oct 20	Bali, Indonesia	09:00 – 17:00	Global Conference on Land-Ocean connections	UN Environment
4-6 Dec. 2017	Nairobi, Kenya	10:00 – 18:00	Third Session of UN Environment Assembly	UN Environment
7-9 Dec. 2017	Nairobi, Kenya	09:00-18:00	International Coral Reef Initiative General Meeting	ICRI Secretariat and UN Environment