

OUR OCEANS, OUR ISLANDS, OUR FUTURE: PARTNERSHIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SDG 14: 7 JUNE 2017

The high-level reception on ‘Our Oceans, Our Islands, Our Future: Partnerships for Implementation of SDG 14’ took place on 7 June 2017 during the high-level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development) at UN Headquarters in New York.

It was co-hosted by the four Leaders of the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA)—Tommy Remengesau Jr., President of Palau; Vincent Meriton, Vice-President of Seychelles; Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada; and Kedrick Pickering, Deputy Premier of British Virgin Islands—along with the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), the Nippon Foundation, the Waitt Foundation, the Waitt Institute, National Geographic Pristine Seas, the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS), Okeanos – Foundation for the Sea, and members of GLISPA. Approximately 500 participants attended the high-level event, including Nippon Foundation Alumni.

The event aimed to demonstrate the leadership of island countries, coastal states and countries with islands, and to showcase capacity-building efforts and other unique tools to support SDG 14. Speakers stressed the essential role of partnerships for building resilience and implementing global commitments and goals, including to translate the registered voluntary commitments into action following the Ocean Conference. The hosts and other high-level speakers also spotlighted capacity building needs in small islands developing states (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs), and outlined GLISPA’s role in catalyzing change and inspiring further commitments.

GLISPA promotes action to build resilient and sustainable island communities by inspiring leadership, catalyzing commitments and facilitating collaboration for all islands. Its “bright spots” are island-led commitments, which drive implementation of SDG 14 and other goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

REPORT OF THE SIDE EVENT

Kate Brown, GLISPA Executive Director, introduced the masters of ceremony for the reception, Ngedikes Olai Uludong, Permanent Representative of Palau to the UN, and Ronny Jumeau, Permanent Representative of Seychelles to the UN.

Tommy Remengesau Jr., President of Palau and GLISPA Leader, spoke on behalf of his co-Leaders and co-hosts as well as the members and friends of GLISPA. He said the commitments launched by GLISPA, including the Micronesia Challenge and the Palau National Marine Sanctuary – which he noted is approximately the size of France – are “our own locally and culturally appropriate solutions” for implementing SDG 14, as well the other SDGs, the Paris Agreement and the SAMOA Pathway. Such commitments are “our resilience sail plans” for implementing global goals, he said. Remengesau challenged each participant to “step up and make the Palau National Marine Sanctuary look like a small commitment.”

Remengesau noted that working through GLISPA allows diverse partners to share solutions and garner global attention. He welcomed its newest members, including Conservation International and the Pacifico Foundation, and invited other island and ocean champions to join the Partnership. Remengesau also expressed appreciation to Yōhei Sasakawa, Chairman, Nippon Foundation, for its support to Palau. Remengesau



Vice President **Vincent Meriton**, Seychelles, greeted by **Peter Thomson**, President of the UN General Assembly



Miguel de Serpa Soares, UN Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and Legal Counsel

concluded by saying that “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.”

Miguel de Serpa Soares, UN Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and Legal Counsel, and co-host of the reception, said the Conference had already underscored both the need to protect the oceans from the many pressures they face, and that

many actors are working to reverse the current trends.

De Serpa Soares called for ensuring that all have the necessary tools to better manage oceans and coastal areas. He highlighted the importance of capacity building to help SIDS and others meet their obligations under the SAMOA Pathway, the Law of the Sea, and the 2030 Agenda, among other agreements. He noted that, earlier in the day, DOALOS and the Nippon Foundation had announced a Sustainable Ocean Programme to build capacity for ocean governance in developing countries through training and research opportunities.

Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu, UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and reception co-host, called for balancing the ocean’s economic opportunity with sustainability, to ensure that today’s prosperity does not come at the detriment of future generations.

‘Utoikamanu said translating the 900 registered voluntary commitments “from words to action” will be the measure of the Ocean Conference’s success, and “strong, interconnected

partnerships” will be critical to accomplishing this task. She noted GLISPA’s important role as a catalyst of change and inspiration for building resilience in island regions.

Yōhei Sasakawa, Chairman, Nippon Foundation, said the capacity development project signed earlier in the day with DOALOS will support fulfilling the targets of SDG 14 by training ocean professionals from developing countries in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (BBNJ), among other issues. He expressed the Foundation’s commitment to supporting SIDS and LDCs in efforts to achieve SDG 14, and he added that the challenges facing oceans can only be met by reaching across areas of expertise and working together as a team.

Following the reception’s speaking programme, Jumeau encouraged participants to network and share their ideas and “bright spots” regarding SDG 14, and to forge new partnerships.



Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu, UN Under-Secretary-General and High-Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States



Yōhei Sasakawa, Chairman, Nippon Foundation



Front: Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama, Fiji; **Yōhei Sasakawa**, Chairman, Nippon Foundation; President **Tommy Remengesau Jr.**, Palau; and **Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu** UN Under-Secretary-General and High-Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

Middle: Perla Tun Pech, Mayor, Cozumel; **Miguel de Serpa Soares**, UN Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and Legal Counsel; and **Deputy Premier Kedrick Pickering**, British Virgin Islands.

Back: Spencer Thomas, Ambassador and Special Envoy for Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Grenada; **Ted Waitt**, Waitt Foundation and Waitt Institute; and Vice President **Vincent Meriton**, Seychelles.