

MicronesiaChallenge

MICRONESIA

Micronesia is home to some of the most vibrant cultures and diverse variety of plant and animal life on Earth. The unique heritage and traditions, still strongly held by the people of Micronesia, have been shaped by their geographic remoteness and the rich resources of their lands and seas which contain habitats and species found nowhere else on earth. Yet the features that make these islands unique also make them especially vulnerable to environmental threats such as deforestation, overharvesting, climate change and invasive species.

Without immediate action, the people of Micronesia face continued degradation of the natural resources on which their culture and livelihoods depend. The Micronesia Challenge now provides a framework for action on an unprecedented scale.

Micronesia Challenge: effectively conserve at least 30% of the near-shore marine resources and 20% of the terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020.

Covering 6.7 million square kilometers of ocean, the Micronesia Challenge represents more than 20% of the Pacific Island region - and 5% of the largest ocean in the world.

The Micronesia Challenge is a commitment by the Chief Executives of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Territory of Guam to effectively conserve at least 30% of the near-shore marine resources and 20% of the terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020.

This ambitious challenge far exceeds current goals set by international conventions and treaties, which call for countries to conserve 10% of terrestrial and marine resources by 2010 and 2012 respectively. The challenge also emphasizes the need for Micronesian leaders to work together at the regional level to confront environmental and sustainable development issues.

While resource conservation has always been a core element and practice of the Micronesian culture, we have come to the realization that the degradation of biodiversity is a global phenomenon that calls for a concerted response by the international community as a whole.

The Honorable Emanuel Mori, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (2008)



maintaining the

micronesian way of life

Throughout Micronesia, the majority of people living on these small islands depend on natural resources for their food, livelihood, traditional cultures and hopes for future long-term economic prosperity.

- * The annual net benefits to the Pacific from coral reefs have been estimated at \$2 billion, and approximately \$800 million worth of benefits annually may be distributed across Micronesia.
- * Healthy ecosystems provide important services, such as food, clean drinking water, income from tourism, fishing and diving, and protection from storms.

The Micronesia Challenge will help maintain these ecosystem services and protect:

- * at least 66 threatened species recorded on the IUCN Red List:
- * More than 480 coral species 60% of all known corals, and
- more than 1,300 species of reef fish, 85 species of birds and 1,400 species of plants (200 of which are endemic).

Photo Credits: (from left to right) Katrina Adams, Amy Vitale, Susi Menazza Olmsted, Leslie Ware, Bryan Jones













Implementation and Sustainability

Each jurisdiction is developing their own strategies for implementation including identifying the most biologically important areas, establishing or strengthening protected areas and ensuring continued effective management and oversight. The other key goal in the Micronesia Challenge is to create sustainable and continuous sources of funding to assure that the precious natural resources of Micronesia are maintained in perpetuity. All five governments have already made initial impressive strides. For example, the Republic of Palau has developed and started to implement a nationwide comprehensive set of regulations for identifying protected areas sites, and is now developing management and enforcement regimes.

Vital Funding: A Commitment From Concerned Donors

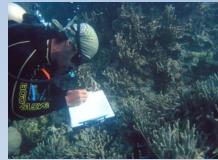
It is currently estimated that an endowment of approximately \$75 million will need to be raised to support the long-term sustainability of the Challenge in all five jurisdictions.

To assist in this effort, The Nature Conservancy and Conservation International have together pledged \$6 million to leverage an additional \$12 million for the first phase of the Challenge. The leaders and their partners are working to secure matching funds for this pledge and the additional funding to support the long-term expansion and effective management of protected area networks for each of the Micronesia Challenge jurisdictions. The Global Environment Facility has pledged a \$6 million match as part of a new Pacific Alliance for Sustainability initiative.

The Micronesia Challenge serves as a model for island conservation, initiated by a coalition of regional governments, endorsed at an international level, and implemented on the ground with local communities. With funding in place, accompanied by technical support for the implementation, the natural resources essential to the livelihoods of the Micronesian peoples will be preserved and unique ecosystems saved.

Supporters of the Micronesia Challenge

German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety; the Government of Turkey; the Global Environment Facility; the David and Lucile Packard Foundation; the Micronesia Conservation Trust; U.S. Department of the Interior; U.S. Department of Commerce—National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; National Fish and Wildlife Foundation; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Development Programme; The Nature Conservancy; Conservation International; RARE; and Anonymous Private Donors.



global island partnership

The Micronesia Challenge is not a standalone initiative. Rather, it is part of a much larger and growing commitment by island nations throughout the world to take action in protecting nature and preserving livelihoods. This commitment has been supported through the Global Island Partnership, a partnership that assists islands in addressing one of the greatest world's challenges-to protect and sustainably manage the invaluable natural resources that people, cultures, support and livelihoods in their island homes around the world. The Global Island Partnership is a platform to champion the interests of 500 million people on 130,000 islands worldwide.

Inspiring Others to Action

- * In May 2008, the governments of the Bahamas, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, St. Vincent and Grenadines committed to the Caribbean Challenge to protect 20% of near-shore marine areas by 2020 and develop conservation finance mechanisms to support their national systems of Protected Areas.
- * In May 2009, leaders of the six Coral Triangle countries Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands officially launched the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security, a broad-based initiative to ensure the sustainability of marine and coastal resources that provide livelihoods to over 120 million people in the region.

Photo Credits: Island Aerial ©Jez O'Hare, Diver ©Eugene Joseph