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14 August 2013

NOTIFICATION

Results of the recent Caribbean Challenge Initiative Summit, implementation of the Programme of Work on Island Biodiversity and links to the 2014 Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Apia, Samoa

Dear Madam/Sir,

As you are aware, in its decision XI/15 paragraph 1(a), the Conference of the Parties “*urges* Parties, and invites other Governments, financial institutions and other relevant organizations to strengthen the implementation of the programme of work on island biodiversity and to build on successful island approaches by promoting and supporting high-level regional commitments, such as the Micronesia Challenge, the Caribbean Challenge initiative, the Coral Triangle Initiative and the Phoenix Island Protected Area, which in turn inspired the development of the Western Indian Ocean Coastal Challenge and the Far West Africa Challenge, and the development of the Charter on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity on European Islands under the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats and other large-scale efforts, that have demonstrated success in rapidly increasing protected areas and achieving other Aichi Biodiversity Targets relevant to the programme of work on island biodiversity”.

Regional and well-planned initiatives like these in fact implement, in first line, targets 11 and 12, but as its members apply the ecosystem approach in ensuring the resilience of ecosystem services and prioritize support to sustainable livelihood options for steward communities, targets 5, 6, 7 and 10 are increasingly addressed. Moreover, these regional initiatives are evolving towards incorporating the networks of protected areas and their sustainable economic use and value into “blue economy” National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and sectorial plans, thus results are also expected in “goal A” targets.

To assist in implementing these trends, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was recently invited to contribute to the Summit of Caribbean Political and Business Leaders hosted by the Government of Grenada, the British Virgin Islands and the Virgin Group from 17 to 18 May 2013. I would like to recognize the Caribbean governments and business leaders for their visionary commitments, with particular appreciation to the Government of Grenada and the British Virgin Islands as an overseas territory of the United Kingdom, as well as the Virgin Group, the Global Islands Partnership (GLISPA) and The Nature Conservancy, for their leading roles in the success of the event. At the request of the Government of Grenada, nominated as interim Secretariat to the Caribbean Challenge Initiative at the event, I would like to disseminate the outcomes of this event as pledges to implement the Aichi Biodiversity Targets recognized in the Biodiversity Champions campaign launched at COP 11 (please see more details at www.cbd.int/champions/list/) and to the United Nations process leading to the

To: CBD National Focal Points



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third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Samoa, whose mandate applies to all United Nations member States and not only SIDS (see more at www.sids2014.org/).

In accordance to decision XI/15, I would also like to invite all CBD Parties, Governments, relevant partners, major groups and businesses to:

1. Promote and support high-level regional commitments that effectively mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services into “green and blue economy” approaches towards sustainable development, such as these island challenges;
2. Adapt and expand those proven and cost-effective mechanisms to strengthen local capacity, and consider developing these and other innovative financial arrangements to mobilize additional resources in support of the implementation of the Programme of Work on Island Biodiversity;
3. Support GLISPA as an effective coordination and exchange mechanism open to all Parties and partners (see more at www.cbd.int/island/glispa.shtml); and
4. Join in the Second Phase of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative with further pledges and support to meet its overarching goals for the region by 2020.

In this regard, I would welcome any suggestions on how the Secretariat can make these and other regional challenges more effective, to invite further pledges to the Biodiversity Champions campaign to be highlighted at COP 12 in the Republic of Korea, and to invite Parties to bring examples of island solutions and commitments to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on the Review of Implementation of the Convention (WGRI) towards COP 12 in the Republic of Korea in 2014. Please find attached, for your information, a short outline of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI) Summit outcomes.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias
Executive Secretary

Attachment

Annex

Outline of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative

Since 2008, the Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI) has attracted new financial commitments of US\$55million, including US\$42Million for a permanent endowment to be managed by the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. Almost 50 new marine/coastal protected areas were declared across the participating countries and territories.

The most significant commitment of the initiative's Phase II which was launched in the British Virgin Islands at the Caribbean Challenge Initiative Summit, contained in the Leaders Declaration signed by eight Caribbean governments, is to effectively conserve and manage at least 20% of the marine and coastal environment by 2020 ("20 by 20"), thus surpassing Aichi target 11. A set of seven more specific actions were agreed to achieve this goal. Fifteen Caribbean leading tourism-related companies signed a Corporate Compact containing key commitments to marine and coastal conservation, funding, and changes in business practices, thus addressing also Aichi targets 3 and 4. In the Summit Communique, the Summit Co-hosts (Hon. Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada, Hon. Orlando Smith, Prime Minister of the British Virgin Islands, and Sir Richard Branson, Founder of Virgin group) highlighted three specific areas prioritized in the CCI Secretariat's immediate work:

- (i) creating protection systems for sharks and rays across the whole Caribbean region with the aim of stopping extinction risks within two years (target 12);
- (ii) establishing a clear regulatory framework with a systemic and regional approach to conservation of the marine and coastal environment, including a considerable increase in the number of marine protected areas (targets 5 and 11); and
- (iii) committing to a dramatic transition from fossil fuels to alternative energy sources over the next five years and contributing to Aichi target 10.

Additional information is available at: www.cbd.int/champions/list/