



# GLOBAL ISLAND PARTNERSHIP

“Let us work together to help small islands survive and prosper; and to ensure that all people enjoy a sustainable future.” *U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, Mauritius, January 2005*



## *Mission Statement*

The Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) promotes actions for island conservation and sustainable livelihoods by inspiring leadership, catalysing commitments, and facilitating collaboration among all islands.

## *Importance of Islands*

- Earth's 175,000 islands<sup>1</sup> are home to more than 650 million inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>
- Almost one fourth of the world's countries – 43 out of 195 – are islands or archipelagos and more than two thirds include islands.
- Islands occupy less than 2% of the Earth's land area, but are home to 10% of the population, 13% of UNESCO's current World Heritage Sites and extraordinary cultural diversity.
- Island people are stewards for more than 17% of the Earth's total area, including many of the most unique and vulnerable plants, animals and ecosystems:
  - More than half of the world's marine biodiversity
  - 7 of the world's 10 coral reef hotspots
  - Thousands of bird species found nowhere else on earth
  - A quarter of the ecological regions of highest terrestrial priority
  - 10 of the 34 richest areas of biodiversity in the world
- Sadly, island species are overrepresented in terms of extinction with about 50% of all recorded animal extinctions in the last 400 years and 90% of bird extinctions.

Today most of the world's island countries and territories struggle with a variety of challenges in living on those islands made more difficult due to isolation and limited human resources. Yet island communities have demonstrated their ability to make major, rapid progress when they have the resources and tools to address their problems.

The most urgent environmental issues on islands include<sup>3</sup>:

- Destruction of coral reefs and mangroves
- Land degradation
- Invasive species
- Climate change and sea-level rise
- Endangered species
- Waste disposal
- Air and water pollution

“We aim for closer working relationships with islands around the world which share our issues, regardless of size or political status. We recognize that by working in partnership we can launch a unique island movement that could make a difference, that could sensitise the world to the bold steps that still need to be taken ”

*President James A. Michel, President of the Seychelles (GLISPA Co-Chair)*







## Island Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods: A Global Challenge

The Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) assists islands in addressing one of the world's greatest challenges — to conserve and sustainably utilise invaluable island natural resources that support people, cultures and livelihoods in their island homes around the world.

Recognising that islands have unique and isolated natural systems and are particularly vulnerable in a rapidly changing world, GLISPA brings together island countries and countries with islands — small and large, developing and developed — to mobilise leadership, increase resources, share solutions and catalyse action on island priorities in a cost-effective and sustainable way.

## Island Leadership

At the Mauritius International Meeting<sup>4</sup> in January 2005, former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan made an urgent call for high-level political commitment to the global challenge on islands. Island countries and partner organisations made significant pledges to the long-term protection of important island habitats. Inspired by these commitments, President Tommy E. Remengesau Jr. of Palau and President James A. Michel of the Seychelles called for greater collaboration through an international partnership for island conservation and sustainable livelihoods. The Global Island Partnership grew spontaneously without formal structure or official status based on the needs of participating governments and partners. It was officially launched at the 8th Conference of the Parties (COP8) for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Curitiba, Brazil in March 2006.

GLISPA is officially recognised by the CBD as one of the mechanisms to implement the Island Biodiversity Program of Work. It has been included within the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Biodiversity Strategy to help address high priority issues in island states, such as marine protected areas and invasive alien species.

## Achievements

Since its inception in 2005, the Partnership has engaged leaders all over the world. More than 60 governments of Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), large island countries, countries with islands, overseas territories, multi and bilateral agencies, and international, national and regional organisations have worked with GLISPA to advance high-level commitments and on the ground action for island conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Without formal structure or dedicated staffing, GLISPA has helped catalyse more than US\$70 million in commitments to island conservation.

## GLISPA's Role

Each government and organisation active in the Global Island Partnership shares goals articulated in the CBD Programmes of Work and other international, regional and national plans. Each partner comes with its own priorities and mandates, which drive the GLISPA commitments that partners make. GLISPA's role is to provide a mechanism for advancing, accelerating and leveraging partner efforts and achievements.

GLISPA's main goals are to:

1. Support successful implementation of commitments to island conservation and sustainable livelihoods.
2. Catalyse new commitments to address critical island issues.
3. Establish and maintain a flexible and efficient Partnership responsive to its participants' needs and aspirations.

## GLISPA Strategies

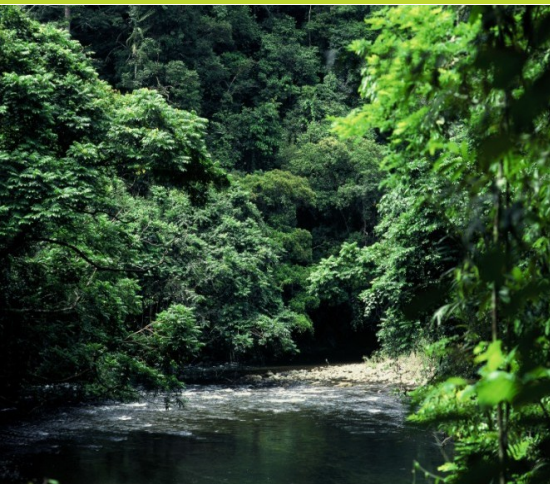
GLISPA was created to help bridge local and global initiatives, build upon existing networks and programmes and share knowledge among all islands. The Partnership defines its unique niche in the following way:

1. Inspire and recognise leadership and commitments to action for island conservation and sustainable livelihoods.
2. Strengthen partnerships to support implementation of commitments and to build local long-term conservation capacity.
3. Facilitate increased public and private funding for island priorities.
4. Promote targeted and cost-effective collaboration and exchange among islands.
5. Engage in effective communication strategies on island issues.
6. Build linkages between all islands, regardless of political status.
7. Track progress on GLISPA commitments.

## GLISPA Principles

1. GLISPA is an open partnership, available to any national or local government, agency or organisation that shares its mission and supports the advancement of its objectives.
2. GLISPA commitments are based on global, national, regional and/or organisational priorities, including helping countries accelerate and improve action on key international policies and agreements.
3. Partners are responsible for implementing and funding their commitments, while the Partnership assists through its global network and capacity to facilitate action.
4. Collaboration is encouraged and facilitated by the Partnership but is always voluntary.
5. GLISPA concentrates on adding value to existing networks and initiatives.





## *Commitments and Initiatives Conceived, Launched or Strengthened with GLISPA's Assistance*

To date, the Global Island Partnership has assisted participant countries and organisations in conceiving, launching or strengthening more than 12 major island commitments. The following are examples of island commitments and initiatives that are utilising GLISPA to advance their collaboration, planning and implementation.

### *Micronesia Challenge*

Five Micronesian governments – the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the U.S. Territory of Guam, and the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands – came together in a joint commitment to effectively conserve at least 30% of the near-shore marine resources and 20% of the terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020. The Micronesia Challenge inspired island leaders in the Caribbean, Indonesia and Western Indian Ocean to initiate similar regional conservation collaborations and quickly attracted more than US\$12 million from public and private sources for sustainable financing.

### *Caribbean Challenge*

With leadership from Grenada and the Bahamas, and involving Antigua & Barbuda, St Kitts & Nevis, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, the Dominican Republic, St Lucia and Jamaica the Caribbean Challenge is an ambitious regional framework of conservation commitments and sustainable financing for national systems of protected areas including the establishment of a Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. More than US\$75 million has been raised for this Challenge.

### *Phoenix Islands Protected Area*

In January 2008, the Government of Kiribati expanded the Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA) and declared it the world's largest marine protected area, encompassing an ocean wilderness the size of California. PIPA is partly financed through an innovative "reverse fishing license" which will fund an endowment to cover core management costs and compensate the government for foregone commercial fishing license revenues.

### *Sea Level Rise Foundation*

President Michel of the Seychelles has established a global foundation to bring together resources and expertise to support small island states, islands and other low-lying areas in adapting to the growing threat of sea level rise and avoiding the creation of the first climate refugees. The Foundation has been registered in the Seychelles.

### *Western Indian Ocean Challenge*

Led by significant leadership of the Seychelles and focused on the islands of the Western Indian Ocean and the islands and coastal areas of countries of East Africa, the Western Indian Ocean Challenge is emerging through 2009/10 as an initiative focussed on climate change adaptation and the promotion of resilient ecosystems, sustainable livelihoods and human security.





GLISPA for me is a model of how very diverse Parties and organizations that are scattered around the globe join together to formulate their needs and take control of their destiny.

Hon Sigmar Gabriel, Minister of Environment, Germany – GLISPA High Level Event at CBD COP 9, May 2008



## The Way Forward

Since GLISPA's formation in 2005, countries, territories, agencies, organisations and leaders at all levels have made inspiring commitments and taken actions to protect island habitats around the world. Each commitment acts as a beacon to others, offering hope for success and help along the way. All leaders and groups committed to taking significant action to sustain livelihoods, conserve nature and address global change on islands are encouraged to join or participate in the Global Island Partnership.

In 2009, a GLISPA coordinator was hired and based with IUCN. In 2010, the GLISPA Steering Committee met and determined the focus of GLISPA for the next three years. This revised focus will be supported by a collaborative GLISPA Strategy, a small dedicated Coordination Team and a Steering Committee of lead partners to support the growing Partnership. GLISPA's focus for the next three years sees it continuing to work with island leaders and organisations on strategic initiatives to strengthen island action on critical issues, including:

- Supporting leadership and commitments to action on ecosystem-based adaptation and mitigation including the threat of invasive species.
- Integrating island conservation and sustainable livelihoods into the development dialogue.
- Supporting current GLISPA initiatives to promote successes and lessons including through exchanges and sharing of effective practices.
- Supporting the Seychelles with the emerging Western Indian Ocean Challenge focused on adaptation.

**The Global Island Partnership is committed to continue supporting the outstanding leadership and extraordinary commitments of all its dedicated participants, and to sharing island successes and lessons with the world.**

More information including the GLISPA Strategy is available at <http://www.cbd.int/island/glispa.shtml> or by contacting:

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## Notes

1. According to the GSHHS dataset (<http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/mgg/shorelines/gshhs.html>), more than 175,000 islands have a land area of at least 0.1km<sup>2</sup>
2. For more island facts and discussion material see Godfrey Baldacchino, "Islands, Island Studies, Island Studies Journal", available at <http://www.islandstudies.ca/system/files/u2/ISJ-1-1-2006-Baldacchino-pp3-18.pdf>
3. "Island Voices - Island Choices. Articulating the Demand for Strengthening Island Ecosystem Management and Restoration Capacities." Report of a global survey by Simon Rietbergen, Chucuri Sayegh, Tom Hammond & Frits Hesselink, IUCN Ecosystem Management Programme, April 2007 Draft.
4. Mauritius International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, 10-14 January 2005.

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