

EVENT SPOTLIGHT

Good News Out of Rio+20: Six Heads of State Commit to Invest in Nature

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil – June 21, 2012



Vice President Faure of Seychelles and Prime Minister Gillard of Australia commitment to advancing a blue economy



"It is only together that we can achieve sustainable growth with equity in our oceans and coastal areas," President Yudhoyono of Indonesia



Prime Minister Thomas of Grenada and Vice President Faure of Seychelles leading the way for islands



Left to Right: Glenn Prickett (The Nature Conservancy), Chairman Yohei Sasakawa (The Nippon Foundation), Prime Minister Julia Gillard (Australia), President Yudhoyono (Indonesia), Prime Minister Winston Baldwin Spencer (Antigua and Barbuda), Prime Minister Tillman Thomas (Grenada), Vice Minister Soto (Colombia), Vice President Danny Faure (Seychelles)

"The blue economy is our next frontier," stated President Yudhoyono of Indonesia during his opening address to the leaders that came together to announce a suite of significant commitments to achieve a "green" and "blue" economy.

The heads of state and government of six countries and a foundation made bold commitments to preserve natural resources that provide livelihoods, food security, protection and other benefits to people.

The high level breakfast was held in parallel to the Rio+20 conference and co-hosted by Prime Minister Thomas of Grenada, on behalf of co-chairs of the Global Island Partnership, and President Yudhoyono of Indonesia to focus attention on how leaders will implement innovative natural solutions to achieve sustainable development and to set the course for a new global development framework following Rio+20.

The event, coordinated by The Nature Conservancy and the Global Island Partnership, was a significant opportunity to demonstrate the considerable leadership and commitment of island countries and countries with islands towards a blue and green economy.

"We are all united in our determination to see us do better to preserve and to nurture the world's oceans. This really is a historic opportunity to come together to renew our commitment to the marine environment of our world," stated Prime Minister Gillard of Australia.

"For our islands, nature underpins all aspects of our lives, our culture and our livelihoods."
—PRIME MINISTER THOMAS OF GRENADA AND CO-CHAIR OF THE GLOBAL ISLAND PARTNERSHIP

The participating leaders committed to:

Antigua and Barbuda, Prime Minister Winston Baldwin Spencer committed to protecting 20 percent of their near shore marine area and 15 percent of their terrestrial area by 2020, thereby formally joining the Caribbean Challenge Initiative. The country has also committed to creating the Antigua and Barbuda Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (ABCCAT) and developing sustainable finance mechanisms such as user fees and debt-for-climate adaptation swaps to provide a sustainable source of funding to protect marine and coastal resources and adaptation to climate change.

Australia, Prime Minister Julia Gillard made a national commitment to establish the world's largest and most comprehensive network of marine reserves – placing more than 3 million square kilometers of Australia's oceans under conservation management. They will also help other countries achieve the "blue economy" by almost doubling their longstanding support of the Coral Triangle Initiative, to AU\$8 million and an additional AU\$25 million in funding for fisheries and climate change adaptation in the Pacific.

Colombia, Vice Minister Soto on behalf of President Juan Manuel Santos committed to put in place an innovative nationwide mitigation program that will ensure that environmental impact compensation are made in the most strategic locations and actions. The framework will enable companies to plan ahead and implement their offsets in an efficient way and ensure the greatest return on investment for nature. Colombia also committed to taking an integrated planning approach to development of the Magdalena River Basin. The country will also create new programs to reduce deforestation and increase significantly its 1.2 million hectares Chiribiquete National Park to enhance protection of the Colombian Amazon basin.

Grenada, Prime Minister Tillman Thomas committed to co-host a Caribbean Political and Business Leaders Summit with Sir Richard Branson of the Virgin Group, along with Premiere Orlando Smith of the British Virgin Islands in 2013. The Summit will build and expand on the Caribbean Challenge Initiative commitments of placing 20 percent of near shore marine area under protection by 2020 and developing sustainable finance mechanisms to finance the management of protected areas.

Indonesia, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono committed to strengthen Indonesia's efforts to build a "blue economy" that will ensure sustainable growth with equity in all oceans and coastal areas. He reaffirmed his leadership of the Coral Triangle Initiative for coastal livelihoods, food security and climate change and outlined a multipronged approach to recognize the value of nature for coastal communities and Indonesia's economy.

Seychelles, Vice President Danny Faure stated that if they were able to complete a debt-for-climate adaptation swap that created a funding stream of at least US\$2,500 per year, Seychelles would establish 30 percent of their coastal zone as marine protected areas, with half of this area in no take zones. Seychelles further committed to providing three years of financial support to the Global Islands Partnership and to continue to support the formation of the West Indian Ocean Coastal Challenge.

The Nippon Foundation, Chairman Yohei Sasakawa committed to provide resources to nations that have made "blue economy" commitments at Rio+20. The Foundation, which has provided expertise and resources to improve ocean management in 110 countries, has committed to launch a new initiative involving a ten-year, high-level dialogue process and the development of new programs to advance sustainable use of ocean resources.

The Nature Conservancy, Vice President of External Affairs Glenn Prickett committed to help the leaders implement the commitments to ensure the greatest benefit for people and the natural resources necessary for sustainable and equitable growth. Key actions will include facilitating debt-for-climate adaptation swaps and other innovative finance mechanisms.

The Nature Conservancy is a leading conservation organization working around the world to protect the lands and waters on which all life depends. The Conservancy and its more than 1 million members have protected nearly 120 million acres worldwide. Visit The Nature Conservancy on the Web at www.nature.org.

The **Global Island Partnership**, co-chaired by President Michel of Seychelles, President Toribiong of Palau and Prime Minister Thomas of Grenada, promotes action for island conservation and sustainable livelihoods by inspiring leadership, catalyzing commitments and facilitating collaboration -- www.glispa.org.