



CHARLOTTETOWN STATEMENT

Building Small Island Resilience to Global Climate Change

Islands and archipelagos are home to ten per cent of the world's population and comprise one-fifth of the world's sovereign states. Small islands are uniquely vulnerable and resilient to the impacts of climate change. For many islanders, facing the challenges of rapid environmental change is a new normal condition of island life. The small(er) size and large "coast to land area" ratios of islands enable indigenous and other traditional strategies and responses among their peoples, including temporary or permanent migration. A strong sense of social and political community in many island societies encourages a rapid, effective, and observable policy response capability. Small islands have a more manageable and human sense of scale, and they demonstrate the results of climate change impacts and climate change-related policies more quickly and more visibly. Such conditions make islands significant sites, not just to their own and other island inhabitants but also to mainland societies.

As representatives to the International Symposium on "Building Small Island Resilience to Global Climate Change," we affirm that:

1. Island peoples have historically developed culturally grounded ways of confronting climate change. Such indigenous and other traditional knowledge or island-made solutions must be acknowledged and nurtured in climate change-related adaptation and mitigation dialogues and strategies;
2. Island peoples must be encouraged to maintain and revive specific traditional methods of food production in order to reduce dependence on imported foods;
3. Island peoples must be encouraged to develop lifestyles that are energy-efficient and renewable energy systems that are sustainable and resilient;
4. Island peoples must be encouraged to reinforce and harness their diverse cultural identity, societal cohesion, independence, and interdependence;
5. Island peoples must be encouraged to pursue creative and innovative approaches towards climate change effects, including harnessing market opportunities as well as "civil society" community resources.

We believe that the challenges posed by climate change are of utmost importance and require immediate collaborative actions. These actions will help islands adapt to

climate change by building their resilience, reducing their vulnerability, and improving the health and well-being of their peoples. Such actions include:

- i) Maintaining a process for collaborating, co-producing, and sharing knowledge, innovations, and adaptation measures relating to climate change, including through the UNESCO Chair in Island Studies and Sustainability housed at the University of Prince Edward Island, in Canada, and the University of Malta, in Malta;
- ii) Tabling this symposium statement at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP) 22 in Marrakech, Morocco, in November 2016, and at similar international and national events;
- iii) Helping to host similar symposia around the world which bring together policy makers, experts, scientists, researchers, academics, practitioners, and managers, as well as communities, non-government organizations, and other civil society stakeholders, to build awareness of and resilience to climate change;
- iv) Providing annual communications through a continuing global network of policy-makers, academics, researchers, and others on small-island climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience;
- v) Supporting the move towards clean energy and blue/green economy initiatives, particularly on small islands where the effects of such initiatives can be more easily observed;
- vi) Encouraging the development of “green” behaviour and eco-friendly attitudes in school curricula.

Finally, we note how small island jurisdictions continue to offer global leadership in climate-change policy. Of the 197 Parties to the Paris Agreement adopted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties held in Paris, France, in December 2015, 61 have ratified the agreement at the time of writing; 27 of these are island states and territories. In this spirit of offering global leadership through nimble and flexible public policy, we exhort all stakeholders on small islands to champion, commit, and resolve to transform their jurisdictions to be carbon neutral by 2030.

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