

HIGH LEVEL EVENT (dinner)
***BUILDING RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE ISLAND COMMUNITIES THROUGH
INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS***

Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States
Apia, Samoa, 3 September 2014, h. 19:00

Event organizer: Global Island Partnership (GLISPA).

Participants: Hosts: President of Seychelles, President of Palau, and Prime Minister of Grenada.
Prime Minister of Samoa (tbc).

Aim of the event: Announcements and new commitments of HL participants in support of the sustainable development of SIDS. During the event Italy will be formally acknowledged for its long term commitment to island development, both at technical and policy level.

Speech

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Italian Government allow me congratulate with the Secretariat of GLISPA for organizing this remarkable event and let me thank all our old and new GLISPA partners for their proactive participation and support to a steadily evolving Partnership.

Italy has been a proud founding member of GLISPA and has been a committed supporter to its consolidation since the beginning.

It is not a coincidence that Rome gave birth to the first *GLISPA Strategy Agenda* in 2007, when the Italian Government with both its Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment, recognizing the potential of the new-born alliance, decided to host and sponsor its first strategy meeting.

Since then, Italy made much progress in consolidating its support to SIDS and islands, with GLISPA becoming the most consistent and credible reference framework for our island initiatives. GLISPA has allowed us to capitalize on a long history of experience and challenges related to protecting, conserving and supporting the development of even our own (Italian) vulnerable islands, and has

broadened and strengthened our capacity to support the development efforts of our international partners.

We have always kept this Partnership high in our agenda and, among all partners, we were the first to place all our island initiatives under the GLISPA umbrella, linking them all together in the common effort to achieve the sustainable development of many unique and vulnerable ecosystems.

In 2007 we launched a long-term partnership Program on renewable energy with 14 Pacific SIDS, investing 13 million USD and committing additional 6 millions USD. The Programs has proved so successful and concrete that it has catalysed the participation of several other donors.

In 2008, when the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative* was launched, Italy was the first donor to financially contribute to its capacity building activities. As a follow up to that contribution we have recently launched a new conservation and development program in the region with UNEP.

This year is particularly important for SIDS and islands, and it is happening during Italy's Presidency to the European Union and only a few months before the opening of Milan EXPO 2015. My country is willing to take advantage of both occasions to consolidate its special relationship with the islands and the SIDS.

In this spirit Italy has financially supported, through UNDESA, the organization of Samoa's Conference and is looking forward to work with its partners beyond Samoa.

As a first step, we would like that the food and nutrition challenges faced by SIDS in the framework of the climate change adaptation efforts, which are also themes of next years' Milan EXPO, could be discussed at High Level outreach event to be organized in Rome during the next FAO Council in December and during a follow-up event to take place in Milan in 2015 during EXPO. We believe that Milan could be a unique opportunity for stocktaking on progress made by SIDS and Donors on the outcomes of Samoa's Conference, to monitor the commitments made in Samoa and to connect them to the themes of the EXPO.

In parallel, during our current Presidency of the EU we look forward to working together to renewing and strengthening EU's championship on island issues. The outcomes of Samoa's Conference will guide us on this pursuit, and we will very much appreciate GLISPA's steering committee recommendations and guidance on this.

Therefore, we would be glad to invite GLISPA to be part of this process beyond Samoa, and to organize in Milan the next Steering Committee Meeting of the Partnership in 2015.

Finally, Italy here commits to continue to support the consolidation of GLISPA and its Secretariat.

Let me conclude with renewing my sincere thanks to the conveners of today's event together with my wholehearted wishes of a very successful outcome and a fruitful work on the way ahead.