

**3rd Third International Conference
On Small Island Developing States**

**GLISPA High Level Event Remarks
by His Excellency,
Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President of the Republic of Palau**

Good evening everyone. It is wonderful to see so many friendly faces tonight. Before I get started, I would like to give a special welcome to Prime Minister Keith Mitchell and the Foreign Minister Jean-Paul Adam of Seychelles representing the GLISPA Steering Committee. And I would like to thank all of those in the room who have taken an idea and converted it into a movement. I must include in that group Italy, the Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, the many agencies of the United States Government, the Convention on Biodiversity Secretariat, the IUCN, the Global Environment Facility. I must also include other GLISPA supporters who are almost too many to list. They include, the Indian Ocean Commission Islands Programme, Hawaii Green Growth, Island Conservation, the Convention on Biodiversity Lifeweb, the Micronesian Conservation Trust, PCI Media Impact, Rare, UNDP, the GEF Small Grants Programme, the Republic of China.

We could not proceed tonight without recognizing the World Wide Voyage, Nainoa Thompson, the Polynesian Voyaging Society and crew who are with us tonight, for undertaking their inspiring three and a half year round the world journey to train the next generation of navigators and to spread the message on the urgency of dealing with the threats to our oceans and islands. GLISPA stands ready to support their efforts.

Finally, I would like to recognize the winner of the GLISPA Bright Spots Award: Grand Sable Women Planters, Farmers and Entrepreneurs Association from Mauritius, represented here by Ms Geraldine Fine Aristide the President of the Association. Grand Sable won the award earlier this year in a global search of island bright spots for their efforts working on alternative and diversified livelihoods to protect farming households from finance and crop losses during flooding or drought.

My friends, it seems like only yesterday that we all met in Curitiba Brazil with a new idea. With our TNC and CI partners, with our neighbors from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Marianas, with the idea of GLISPA rattling around in communal heads, we introduced the ‘*Micronesia Challenge*’ to the World. Did we think then that this initiative would provide a new way of viewing national and regional responses to biodiversity losses throughout the world? Did we then comprehend the true potential for partnerships that existed between nations, between states, between the public and private sectors, between governments and NGO’s? I hate to say it, but the answer is No --- But we did suspect, and that made it worth the effort.

Because we suspected, we now see protected area challenges and programs across the broad expands of our planet’s oceans. We also see an effective global organization, the Global Island Partnership, which we all know as GLISPA, that defines the very term partnership. Through their continuing voluntary support for our world’s oceans, we see an ever expanding array of innovative approaches to protecting our Ocean. Following on their on-going

inspiration, Palau will formally announce the Palau National Marine Sanctuary. Through this initiative, Palau will institute a no-take Marine Sanctuary that covers over 80% of the Palau EEZ, establish a highly regulated Fishing Zone that covers approximately 20% of the EEZ, immediately establish a complete prohibition on purse seine fishing that covers 100% of the EEZ, establish a prohibition on fish exports; and create a reformed modern domestic commercial long-lining fishing fleet with observer oversight on 100% of its vessels.

We do this at a time when The Cook Islands, New Caledonia, Kiribati, and the United States are all establishing large scale protected marine areas. I guarantee that all were inspired by, and anticipate on-going support from the Global Islands Partnership

**Ladies and Gentlemen, let me offer a toast to a partner amongst Partners.
“To expanded partnerships and new beginnings.”**

Thank You.