

**Russell Mittermeier**  
**President**  
**Conservation International**  
(transcribed from video footage)

Mr President, Mr Vice President, Minister Carter of NZ, who I have had the pleasure of visiting several times in his wonderful country, Minister Marina Silva, Minister Antoine of Grenada who I just met tonight, I hope to be able to work with you in the future as well. I'd like to, Mr President, first of all to congratulate you and your fellow leaders from Micronesia for your commitment to this critically important issue of conservation of island biodiversity, both terrestrial and marine.

We have discussed this at length with our friends from the Nature Conservancy we at Conservation International are delighted to be able to pledge a match to The Nature Conservancy's commitment, an additional 3 million dollars towards the target of 18 million dollars for the Micronesia challenge. We believe that establishment and maintenance of strategically placed, well-managed protected areas is simply the most important step that any nation can take to prevent biodiversity loss and to meet the 2010 targets and it's really inspiring to see how you are taking a lead on this fundamentally important global concern.

We would also like to congratulate the government of Kiribati for the enormous commitment they have just made in the Phoenix Islands; a Marine Protected Area that was already mentioned as 185,000 square kilometres, the third largest Marine Protected Area in the world. This is a truly historic commitment as well. We at CI have already committed 600,000 dollars to this effort and we look forward to working with your government and the New England Aquarium to support the creation of a substantial, large endowment fund for the Phoenix Island Protected Area Trust Fund.

I am also pleased to announce the creation of a new CI program for the Pacific Islands; a program aimed at supporting the governments and civil society of the Pacific region to meet the 2010 targets and conserve the biological diversity of these wonderful islands and it will be run by Francois Martel who is standing in the back there. This program is based in Samoa, as you might be able to tell from Francois' dress and its being done in partnership with SPREP, and I would like to acknowledge here the great support that we have received from SPREP's director, Mr Asterio Takesy, in making all of this possible.

And I would be remiss if I did not mention the huge commitment made over the past 3 years by another enormously important island; this one not in the Pacific but in the Indian Ocean, and that is Madagascar. I've practically lived there over the past couple of years, I think I've been there 12 times, and I'm very excited about what their President, Marc Ravalomanana is doing for biodiversity conservation at that incredibly important place. And I'm sure we will be hearing a bit later from my very good friend, the Minister of Environment from Madagascar, Charles Silvain Rabotoarison, who is here with us tonight.

To conclude, congratulations once again to all of you in the Micronesia region for your leadership and commitment and we look forward to working much more with you in the future.