

**Hon. Sigmar Gabriel
Minister of Environment, Germany**

The Life Web Initiative and its contribution to the Programmes of Work on Island Biodiversity and Protected Areas

Your Excellency President Remengesau,
Prime Minister Ingraham of the Bahamas,
Minister Morgan of the Seychelles,
Minister Aguinaga of Ecuador,
Vice Minister Santana of the Dominican Republic,
Executive Secretary Djoghla of the CBD,
Director General Marton-Lefevre of IUCN,
Mr. Fonseca of the Global Environmental Facility,

Dear participants,

I wish to thank first of all our host, the government of the Bahamas, then President Remengesau of Palau and President Michel of the Seychelles for inviting me here to this extraordinary event, organized by an extraordinary initiative. Ahmed Djoghla has focused our view on the very special role of islands. Islands are rich in cultural diversity, and a surprising number of states are island states or composed mostly of islands. Islands are also rich in biological diversity, but they also harbour a proportionally high level of endangered species. This is the reason why the need for work to conserve biological diversity and biological resources is often very great. The challenge to use limited resources in a sustainable way is also very obvious in an island environment – often more so than in mainland states.

One answer to this, on islands as elsewhere, has been the establishment of various categories of protected areas, or of protected area systems. Islands and island nations, too, face the challenge of 2010 and 2012. In fact, it is in and around islands that terrestrial and marine protected areas systems form the closest links, and really complement each other. As far as protected areas are concerned, islands need both terrestrial and marine protected areas.

This is also recognized in the Programme of Work on Island Biodiversity adopted at COP 8. And this is where the Life Web Initiative comes in. For to establish and to ensure sustainable management in protected area systems, we need, among others, dedicated funding. We also have to know the exact needs that this funding will cover. And we need a platform to match these needs with the available funds in a very open, voluntary and transparent way.

The Life Web initiative can provide this platform and match needs in protected area financing and available donor contributions. Life Web, in essence, is a brokering platform. It brings together Parties wishing to create new protected areas, or better manage existing ones, with donors who are invited to allocate additional and preferential resources. Life Web should operate in a very simple and transparent manner and depend upon the input of the states and organizations that wish to participate. A basic infrastructure like a web page is envisaged, as well as informal meetings of all interested stakeholders.

I use the word stakeholder because this initiative should in the long run also be open to the involvement of civil society and business. Especially in the context of islands, there are promising examples of how governmental and non-governmental stakeholders join hands to ensure that resources are managed in a sustainable way. These examples range from community-managed fisheries to public-private partnerships including tourism developers, park authorities, non-governmental organizations, local communities and other stakeholders.

Germany itself is prepared to contribute to this initiative: by supporting its infrastructure now and in the future, by integrating funding for Life Web projects into its development cooperation and especially by investing a part of the money gained by the trading of carbon credits under EU regulations into biodiversity projects with high relevance for mitigating climate change.

Where does the Global Island Partnership join in with the Life Web initiative? I welcome the initiatives that GLISPA is undertaking to make progress along the road to 2010 and 2012. GLISPA for me is a model of

how very diverse Parties and organizations that are scattered around the globe join together to formulate their needs and take control of their destiny. The initiatives arising out of this global partnership such as the Coral Triangle, Micronesia Challenge and in the future the Caribbean Challenge are for me ideal candidates for Life Web. In fact, two projects – one in the Coral Triangle, one under the Micronesia Challenge – are currently in a screening process within the German government for funding in a first round of Life Web projects.

I am certain that we will be hearing a lot from the GLISPA partnerships. I hope that other groups of countries will take up the idea of joining together, formulating their needs and seeking the means to address them. By linking with initiatives like Life Web, may we truly create a web of life on Earth.

Thank you for your attention.