“We have no choice but to put marine nature at the center of development. We are using nature as a driver of sustainable development,” said H.E. Ronald Jumeau, Seychelles Ambassador for Climate Change & Small Island Developing State Issues, during “Leaders Valuing Nature: Nature’s Benefits for Sustainable Development,” an event that highlighted the role that nature plays in achieving social and economic development objectives.

This focused event, held in parallel to the 68th session of the UN General Assembly, brought together the Governments of Seychelles, Marshall Islands and Germany, alongside representatives from the UNDP and Care International to provide an open information platform for global leaders to share practical experiences and lessons learned across the sectors of marine and coastal conservation, land management, and community-led conservation. The event was coordinated by The Nature Conservancy, United Nations Development Programme, and the Global Island Partnership.

The efforts of these leaders and organizations in being “pro-environment” are helping to lay the foundations for increasing food and water security, alleviating poverty, and increasing the resilience of communities to the impacts of climate change.

“Our development opportunities and those of future generations depend on biodiversity. There’s no doubt about it,” stated Mrs. Kerstin Faehrmann of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Highlights and Commitments:

H.E. SENATOR TONY DE BRUM, Minister in Assistance to the President, Republic of the Marshall Islands, spoke of the Majuro Declaration for Climate Leadership, a commitment endorsed by all 15 members of the Pacific Islands Forum. These countries, some of the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, are highlighted as leaders in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Declaration, which the U.S. State of Hawai‘i and the UK have recently signed on to, encourages new and improved actions by both SIDS and developed nations to further cut emissions.
**Highlights and Commitments, cont’d:**

**H.E. Ronald Jumeau, Ambassador for Climate Change & Small Island Developing State Issues, Republic of Seychelles,** spoke of nature’s value as a driver of sustainable development. He emphasized the reliance of the economy on fishing and marine resources, and noted that ecologically-minded solutions will be necessary to mitigate the already-felt impacts of climate change on vulnerable island nations.

**Mrs. Kerstin Faehrmann, German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ),** shared Germany’s experience with “development-oriented conservation,” where communities that combine biodiversity, human development, and poverty eradication initiatives are benefitting both nature and themselves. She noted that “in the long run it is much more successful to combine the ecological questions with the questions of the communities.”

**Charles McNeill, Senior Policy Advisor, UNDP,** stated that “nature based solutions will continue to be a pillar of UNDP’s solutions well into the future,” affirming that UNDP maintains a high level of commitment to the environment within a development framework.

**Ms. Kathleen Hunt, Representative to the UN Care International,** stated that Care International’s development programs are increasingly integrating environmental initiatives, as the clear benefits of valuing nature – such as increased food security, disaster risk reduction, and poverty alleviation – become more evident. She noted a recent evaluation that found that an investment of $1 in adaptation yielded a $1.45-$3.00 return for communities.

**Glenn Pickett, Chief External Affairs Officer, The Nature Conservancy,** moderated the session, stating, "These leaders are looking after nature for people and we are grateful to learn from their experiences. TNC is committed to stand alongside them as we work on how to better integrate nature into development planning processes globally."

The **Nature Conservancy** is a leading conservation organization working around the world to protect the lands and water on which all life depends. The Conservancy and its more than 1 million members have protected nearly 120 million acres worldwide. Visit The Nature Conservancy on the Web at [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org).

The **United Nations Development Programme** partners with people at all levels of society to drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. UNDP offers global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations – [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org).

The **Global Island Partnership**, co-chaired by the Presidents of Seychelles and Palau, promotes action for island conservation and sustainable livelihoods by inspiring leadership, catalyzing commitments and facilitating collaboration – [www.glispa.org](http://www.glispa.org).