

**THE DECLARATION OF POLITICAL LEADERS
AT THE
CARIBBEAN CHALLENGE INITIATIVE
SUMMIT OF POLITICAL AND BUSINESS LEADERS
AT NECKER ISLAND, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS ON 17 MAY 2013
(CARIBBEAN CHALLENGE INITIATIVE LEADERS DECLARATION)**



**Caribbean Challenge Initiative Leaders Declaration
on Marine and Coastal Resources**

(British Virgin Islands: May 17, 2013)

We, the Leaders of The Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

PREAMBLE

ACKNOWLEDGING the vast marine and coastal resources of the Caribbean region, and recognizing the essential role that these resources play in providing income, livelihoods, food security, shoreline protection, social benefits, and overall economic prosperity for the people of the Caribbean;

EMPHASIZING that the rights of those special groups in our countries and territories, such as fisherfolk, tour operators and dive groups, whose way of life and livelihood are integrally linked to the environment, must be protected, and that they must be involved in the management of the resources of our natural heritage;

RECOGNIZING that the Caribbean region is intrinsically linked to the marine environment and the sustainability of the Caribbean's marine and coastal resources, and that investing in this is an investment in our economic future;

RECOGNIZING ALSO the continuing and urgent need to promote sustainable development, which will assist in alleviating poverty and addressing development challenges facing our people, and in particular our coastal communities, thereby achieving progress toward internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

EXPRESSING grave concern, despite regional efforts, in relation to the declining condition of many marine and coastal environments and the loss of biodiversity in the Caribbean region, resulting from the negative impacts of, *inter alia*, unsustainable coastal development, land and sea-based sources of pollution, unsustainable fishing, and climate change;

RECOGNIZING in particular the new and tangible threats to marine and coastal resources posed by climate change, and the important role that sustainable management of these resources can play in helping coastal communities and the tourism sector, in particular, to become more resilient and to better adapt to climate change;

RECOGNIZING ALSO the opportunity for collaboration geared towards mitigating against the impacts of natural hazards as well as anthropogenic activities which now have or are likely to have negative implications for the Caribbean Sea as a whole, bearing in mind that the Caribbean Sea represents a shared resource that connects all of the countries and territories of the region;

REAFFIRMING ALSO our commitments, contained in international, regional, and sub-regional agreements and understandings that promote the protection, conservation and sustainable use and

management of our shared marine and coastal resources, and noting also that the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative* is designed to accelerate and expand concrete action to further the achievement of the objectives and provisions of these agreements and understandings;

RESOLVING to initiate and lead adaptive efforts toward safeguarding the Caribbean's marine and coastal processes and resources to contribute to regional efforts to preserve, conserve and provide for the benefit of present and future generations;

EMPHASIZING FURTHER that national/territory strategies involving beneficiaries are indispensable for the implementation of the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative*;

RECOGNIZING that the implementation of the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative* by governments is a voluntary arrangement and is intended to be without prejudice to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and sovereign rights of the participating countries and territories respectively over their coastal and marine resources;

EXPRESSING appreciation to the efforts of stakeholders, particularly those of leaders in the business and private sectors, as well as bilateral and multilateral organizations, to support the implementation of the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative*, to promote dialogue between the governments and these stakeholders, to mobilize financial and other resources, and accelerate actions to safeguard the region's marine and coastal resources.

DECLARATION

Therefore, and with the understanding that the Preamble is an integral part of the Leaders Declaration, we:

DO HEREBY RESOLVE AND UNDERTAKE TO:

1. **OFFICIALLY LAUNCH** the second phase of the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative* (CCI) (2013 – 2018), designed to accelerate and expand efforts to safeguard the region's marine and coastal environment, further promote the sustainable use of those resources through new commitments to conservation action and/or scaling-up of existing actions, including financial commitments, engage the private sector and partners in the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative*, and expand the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative* to include additional Caribbean governments;
2. **EMPHASIZE** that the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative* serves to support and accelerate effective implementation of many important existing agreements and commitments previously made by our governments, including, "The Future We Want" - Rio+20 Outcome Document (2012);
3. **ENDORSE** the Framework for Action for the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative* (Annex I);
4. **CALL UPON** governments participating in the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative* to develop or finalize their National / Territory Caribbean Challenge Initiative Action Plans by the end of 2013, for the implementation of the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative*;

5. **CALL UPON** governments participating in the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative* to develop a Regional Caribbean Challenge Initiative Action Plan on or before December 31, 2014, based on National / Territory Caribbean Challenge Initiative Action Plans and other regional priorities;
6. **CALL UPON** public and private entities to provide new and additional financial resources to support implementation of the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative*, channeled through Caribbean governments and other mechanisms, and emphasizes the importance of organizing a *Financing Roundtable* no later than 2014;
7. **INVITE** other Caribbean governments to join the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative*;
8. **WELCOME** the *Corporate Compact* signed at this Summit by private sector leaders, and encourage close collaboration between our governments and the private sector to forge new public – private partnerships that will advance our common agenda to safeguard the region's marine and coastal environment;
9. **INVITE** other public as well as private sector entities to sign or otherwise endorse the *Corporate Compact* and join us in this initiative, and call also upon other partners, including NGOs, local communities, and academia, to participate in and support the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative*;
10. **AGREE** to consider, as a matter of priority, the establishment of mechanisms to support implementation during Phase II of the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative*; which may include:
 - Interim CCI Secretariat, to support implementation efforts during Phase II of CCI
 - Permanent CCI Secretariat. Requests the assessment of the need for a permanent Secretariat, along with various operational options
 - CCI Council (CCIC), a regional implementation support mechanism composed of governments, companies, and partners
 - Committees at the country / territory level, that will build on existing structures, that could include multiple stakeholders: government, private sector, civil society, and others
11. **WELCOME** the formation of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative Partners Network at this Summit, and express our appreciation to partners for their financial and technical support for the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative* to date, and welcome also participation by new partners;
12. **AGREE** to convene the next Summit as necessary, on a date mutually agreed by the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative* governments, and no later than 2016.

Annex I
Caribbean Challenge Initiative Framework for Action

Over-arching goals

To support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for the maintenance of critical ecosystem services provided by marine and coastal resources, that support livelihoods and the economic and social future of the countries and territories of the Caribbean through the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative*.

By 2020:

- **"20 by 20" Goal:** In each participating country and territory, to effectively conserve and manage at least 20% of the marine and coastal environment.
- **Sustainable Finance Goal:** To achieve the "20 by 20" Goal, to have in place fully functioning sustainable finance mechanisms that will provide long-term and reliable funding to conserve and sustainably manage the marine and coastal resources and the environment in each participating country and territory.

Principles

To follow the criteria of effective conservation established in the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, namely (i) appropriate conservation management in place; (ii) threats are adequately abated; and (iii) marine and coastal resources being targeted for conservation are viable.

The following principles will guide our actions under the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative*:

- Principle #1:** **Support people-centered development** in marine / coastal conservation, generating the following benefits: poverty reduction, sustainable development, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and equitable benefit sharing.
- Principle #2:** **Prioritize capacity building** efforts needed in Caribbean countries and territories to better manage marine and coastal resources.
- Principle #3:** Be based on **science** and the application of the precautionary principle / approach, in the absence of conclusive scientific information, and therefore be guided by **ecosystem-based management (EBM)** and **ocean governance**, including **integrated ocean and coastal management (IOCM)**.
- Principle #4:** As a catalyst for action, **incorporate quantitative goals and timetables**, to the extent possible.
- Principle #5:** Advance the implementation of **existing global and regional agreements**, as appropriate, and **build on existing efforts** in participating countries and territories.
- Principle #6:** **Promote greater trans-boundary collaboration** and information sharing with respect to marine and coastal resources.

Principle #7: Engage multiple stakeholders and seek to include:

- (i) other national / territorial governments, local governments and communities;
- (ii) NGOs and community-based organizations;
- (iii) private sector companies;
- (iv) bilateral and multilateral agencies;
- (v) the academic and research sector; and
- (vi) south-south cooperation and triangular cooperation as opportunities for additional sources of funding and partner institutions.

Framework for Action

The governments of the participating countries and territories will undertake a range of actions based on, but not limited to, the following action themes, beginning with the priority areas listed in Annex II to be carried out under Phase II (2013 – 2018) of the *Caribbean Challenge Initiative*, contingent on available funding.

Action #1: Caribbean Challenge Initiative Action Plans

Complete National / Territory Caribbean Challenge Initiative Action Plans by 2013 and a Regional Caribbean Challenge Initiative Action Plan by 2014.

Action #2: Marine and Coastal Protected Areas

Establish and effectively manage marine and coastal protected areas.

Action #3: Restore Marine and Coastal Resources

Restore marine and coastal resources, including coral reefs, mangroves and other marine habitats of importance.

Action #4: Sustainable Coastal Tourism

Promote sustainable coastal tourism.

Action #5: Sustainable Fisheries

Promote a sustainable fisheries sector.

Action #6: Adaptation to Climate Change

Promote and implement ecosystem-based adaptation actions.

Action #7: Marine Pollution

Reduce major sources of pollution impacting the marine environment.

Annex II
Government Priority Areas for National Strategic Action Plans¹

The Bahamas

- Creation of Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF)
- Financing or capitalization of BPAF by Government
- Expansion of marine protected areas system by new declarations

British Virgin Islands

- Declaration of new marine protected areas
- Implementation of sustainable finance architecture
- Sustainable yachting and wetlands management

Dominican Republic

- To be inserted after the Summit

Grenada

- Water resource management
- Energy and renewable energy options
- Coastal zone management

Jamaica²

- Financial sustainability for protected areas
- Integration of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in protected area planning and management strategies
- Provision of an enabling environment (policy, institutional and socio-economic) for protected areas

Puerto Rico

- Nature based tourism and scientific research opportunities to increase knowledge and improve coastal and marine biodiversity conservation and effective management, as well as revenue generating activities to fund sustainable financing mechanisms.
- Ecosystem based Adaptation to Climate Change: Develop a portfolio of priority actions to be implemented in marine protected areas (MPA) to ensure Caribbean biodiversity resiliency and sustainability.
- Develop and support sustainable fishery practices including the enhancement, surveillance and enforcement of commercial and recreational fisheries and navigation through public-private and community based initiatives and actions.

¹ Below are 1 - 3 immediate actions being taken by each government signing this Leaders Declaration, exemplifying intentions to translate commitments into concrete actions
² Please note that these are still draft and are subject to change following feedback from all stakeholder agencies.

St. Kitts and Nevis

- Sustainable land management
- Marine resources conservation and protection
- Development of renewable energy

St. Lucia

- The review, updating, endorsement and operationalization of Saint Lucia's National Systems Plan
- Develop and operationalize sustainable financing mechanism for protected and marine management areas
- Review, update and develop legislation for protected areas

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

- Ocean governance
- Protection of biodiversity
- Adaptation to climate change

Signed on May 17, 2013 in the British Virgin Islands by:

Government of
Commonwealth of The Bahamas



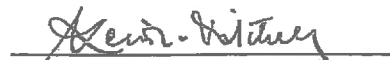
Hon. Minister Kenred M. A. Dorsett, MP
Minister of the Environment and Housing

Government of British Virgin Islands



Dr. the Hon. D. Orlando Smith, OBE
Premier

Government of Grenada



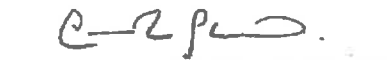
Dr. The Right Hon. Keith C. Mitchell
Prime Minister

Government of Jamaica



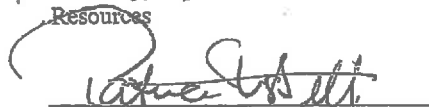
Hon. Robert Pickersgill
Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

Government of Puerto Rico



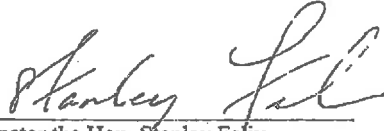
Hon. Carmen R. Guerrero Pérez
Secretary, Department of Natural and Environmental
Resources

Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis



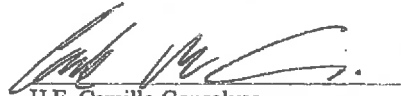
Hon. Patrice Nisbett
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Homeland Security, Labor,
Justice and Legal Affairs

Government of Saint Lucia



Senator the Hon. Stanley Felix
Minister for Physical Development, Housing
and Urban Renewal

Government of Saint Vincent and
The Grenadines



H.E. Camillo Gonsalves
Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and
The Grenadines to the United Nations