



## **Small Island voyagers arrive at United Nations in New York to mark World Oceans Day**

### **Press Release**

New York, 8 June 2016 –Small island world voyagers docked their canoe, Hōkūleʻa, outside the United Nations in New York today, marking World Ocean’s Day and highlighting the importance of small islands and healthy oceans.

At an event on the banks of the East River, the voyagers from Hawaii, traveling the world using only traditional methods of navigation, presented the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon with ocean protection declarations collected on their 25,000 nautical mile journey. The crew also returned a message in a bottle, which had been handed to them by the Secretary General when they visited the 2014 Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Samoa.

“Two years ago in Apia, I boarded the Hōkūleʻa with President Remengesau. My message in a bottle promised to rally world leaders for a better future. After that, we went in different directions but we headed toward the same goal. This small boat braved rough tides and tough storms”, Said Mr. Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary General.

“We saw hope on our horizon. And with global support, we had the wind in our sails. On World Oceans Day, let us renew our resolve to protect these marine treasures for generations to come”.

The event saw an announcement by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and Mr. Cyrill Gutsch, Founder of Parley for the Oceans, which extended a special invitation to all Small Island Developing States to adopt a strategy which would eradicate one of the biggest threats to the marine ecosystem: plastic pollution. The announcement is seen as an opportunity for small islands to rally together in targeting ocean pollution and set a tone of unity and action towards the 2017 Oceans and Seas Conference to be held in Fiji.

“Small islands continue to count on the support of the international community, including the private sector, to ensure that the vast ocean spaces and rich marine resource for which they are custodians of remain healthy and sustainable”, Said Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

The announcement by UN-OHRLLS and Parley is also linked to the SIDS-Global Business Network, recently launched by UN-OHRLLS to link SIDS with international companies in partnering for the sustainable development of islands.

"Through this partnership, Parley aims to bring the unique challenges facing small island developing states to a global audience, alongside the most promising and crucial step towards solutions: collaboration. Maldives and Grenada have already stepped up to the Parley A.I.R. Pledge. With each country that joins the movement, we will work together to implement comprehensive strategies towards a plastic-free oceans. In the process, we will protect not only the beauty of the oceans, but also the life and cultures they unite and support — now and for generations to come", Said Cyrill Gutsch, Founder Parley for the Oceans.

The event highlighted the importance of healthy oceans which are innately linked to the sustainable development of small island developing States. So vital is the exerted influence of the oceans over islands that they impact directly on a spectrum of island issues that cut across the three pillars of sustainable development. Indeed islands and oceans are integral parts of a single environment.

While the ocean is the primary reason for their isolation and remoteness, it also offers opportunities for their sustainable development. Healthy, productive and resilient oceans and coasts are critical for inter alia, poverty eradication, nutrition and food security, livelihoods, economic development and essential ecosystem services. The oceans also represent an important element of identity and culture for island people.

The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing is proud to celebrate World Oceans Day 2016 alongside coordinated support from the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, Global Island Partnership, Government of the Republic of Palau, Parley for The Oceans, Polynesian Voyaging Society, The Pew Charitable Trusts, New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, The Waterfront Alliance, Hawaiian Airlines and the UN-Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea.

**Further Information:**

<http://unohrlls.org/>

<http://www.hokulea.com/www/>

<http://www.parley.tv/#fortheoceans>

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