



Small island leaders call for action on plastic pollution

Press Release

New York, 22 September 2016 – Small island leaders met with partners from the private sector, civil society and United Nations in New York this week to discuss the eradication of plastic pollution from the ocean and formulate an alliance to avoid, intercept and redesign plastics.

At a High-Level Luncheon co-hosted by The Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Parley for the Oceans and the Governments of the Republic of the Maldives and Grenada, participants stressed that plastic pollution is one of the biggest threats to the marine ecosystem and presented viable solutions to its eradication. A Call to Action was formally extended to all UN Small Island Developing States (SIDS) members to join Parley and support and endorse the Parley A.I.R. Strategy, which aims to avoid plastics wherever possible, intercept plastic waste and redesign the plastic economy.

Speakers at the event included H.E. Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly 71st Session, H.E. Dr. Mohamed Asim, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of the Republic of the Maldives, H.E. Gyan Chandra Acharya Under-Secretary-General and High-Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Cyrill Gutsch, Founder of Parley for the Oceans, Dr. Sylvia Earle, Explorer and Chief Science Officer, Parley, Eric Leidtke, adidas Executive Board Member, Global Brands, member of the Parley Steering Committee.

The UN SIDS x Parley Call to Action for the Oceans is seen as an opportunity for SIDS to rally together in targeting ocean plastic pollution and set a tone of unity and action towards the 2017 Oceans and Seas Conference to be held in New York.

“Small islands depend on collective action and partnerships from a multitude of diverse stakeholders to safeguard rich marine resources. Sustainable Development Goal 14, for the world’s oceans, aims to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution. With this goal in mind and through collaborative efforts these vital ocean states can tackle some of the most significant challenges facing the planet including eradicating plastic pollution from the oceans.” Said Gyan Chandra Acharya Under-Secretary-General and High-Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States,

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.

Through the Parley A.I.R. Strategy and initiatives under its comprehensive Ocean Plastic Program, Parley and partners unite with governments and local organizations worldwide in the diversion of plastic waste from remote and vulnerable ecosystems and landfills. With the support of its global network, Parley helps coastal communities avoid unnecessary plastic, intercept and recycle waste, and drive eco innovation, education and awareness, and economic development for long-term solutions.

"Island nations are the first to witness and suffer a changing ocean. In extending this Call to Action, we look to them not only as our partners, but as our leaders and teachers as we define a blueprint to end ocean plastic pollution through the Parley A.I.R. Strategy. Each nation, industry, community, and citizen holds a unique piece of the solution. Our goal at Parley is to be the glue that joins it all together, the space where agreements and strategies are made and, most importantly, implemented." Said Cyrill Gutsch, Founder, Parley for the Oceans

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.

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