



Republic of Mauritius



## **Business forum strengthens tourism partnerships for small islands**

### **Press Release**

Mauritius, 22 May 2018 – Representatives from governments, private sector, academia, civil society and the United Nations met at a Business Forum held in Mauritius to share best practices and lessons learned in strengthening partnerships for sustainable tourism in Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The two-day Small Island Developing States Global Business Network Forum (SIDS-GBN) which was held from 21-22 May, 2018 was co-organised by the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS). The overarching theme of the forum was “Strengthening private sector partnerships for sustainable tourism development.”

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Forum, Hon. Minister Prem Koonjoo, Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping of Mauritius said, “We are universally recognised as a prestigious tourist destination with a host of luxury beach hotels classified among the best in the world.” The Hon. Minister welcomed participants to the Forum and he acknowledged that the Forum provides participants the opportunity to exchange experiences and in strengthening partnerships for sustainable tourism in Mauritius.

“Tourism is the mainstay of many island economies and is a vital sector in achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth for island communities,” said Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu, High Representative for Least Developed countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. “The focus of the 2018 SIDS Global Business Network Forum on sustainable tourism offers an opportunity to build and foster private sector partnerships for SIDS which are also in line with achieving the SAMOA Pathway, the dedicated programme of action for SIDS, and the Sustainable Development Goals.”

Throughout the two days, the forum addressed the linkages between tourism in SIDS with other cross-cutting sectors such as cultural heritage, environment, renewable energy, connectivity, sustainable oceans and finance.

Several partnership announcements were made during the forum including that between Mauritius based Lux Resorts and the Austrian renewable energy company Swimsol to reduce fuel use through increasing the use of solar technology at Lux owned resorts in Maldives. Dutch company Elemental Watermakers, focused on renewable driven desalination systems, announced its commitment to partner with SIDS including with the South Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO) to work together with the private sector of South Pacific SIDS.

Furthermore, the World Ocean Council announced its commitment to partner with UN-OHRLLS in supporting the goals of the SIDS-GBN by bringing together the ocean business community to focus on SIDS. In addition, the Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and SIDS-GBN will collaborate with key national, regional and international partners to promote food tourism across SIDS. A partnership between the Vanilla Islands Organization and the International Coalition of Tourism Partners was also announced and furthermore that the Vanilla Islands Organisation will strengthen information technology and dissemination of information on the Sustainable Development Goals.

The forum has also been aligned to provide substantive inputs to other SIDS related events being convened by the United Nations during the year including the series of regional preparatory meetings for the review of the SAMOA Pathway taking place in the second half of 2018. The regional review meeting for the Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) is being held back-to-back with the business forum and will take place from 23-25 May, 2018 in Mauritius.

The 2018 forum was the third in a series of SIDS private sector fora convened by UN-OHRLLS and its partners. The SIDS Global Business Network (SIDS-GBN) was announced in 2014 at the first forum held in conjunction with the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, in Apia, Samoa. In 2016 a forum focusing on Public-Private-Partnerships for SIDS was held in Oranjestad, Aruba.

For more information: [www.sidsgbn.org](http://www.sidsgbn.org), [www.unohrlls.org](http://www.unohrlls.org)

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